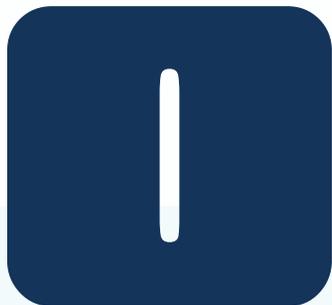


our lives



FOOD & DINING

A Look at Community Trends, Ideas, and Local Leaders.

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

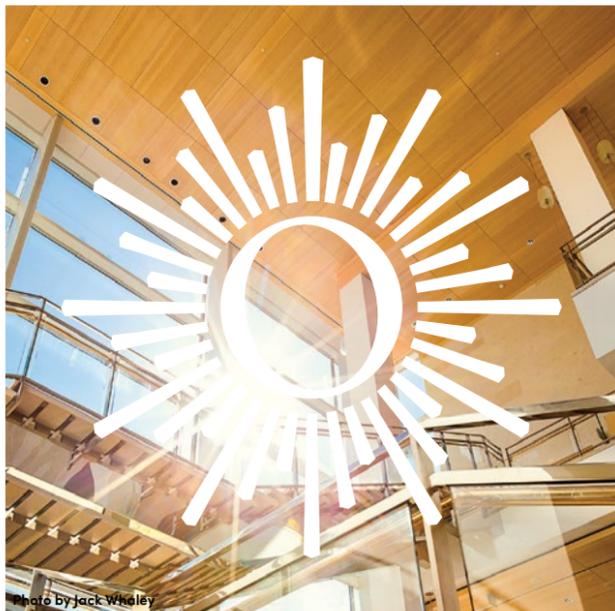
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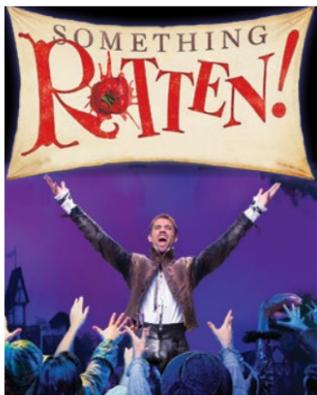


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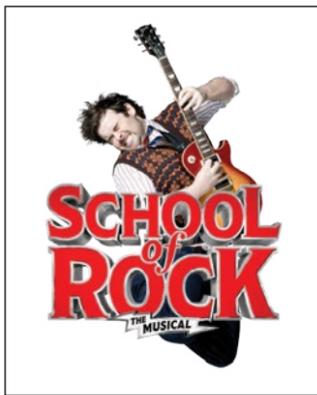
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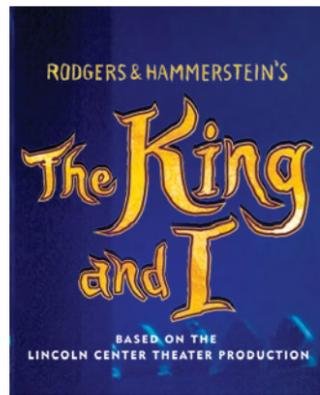
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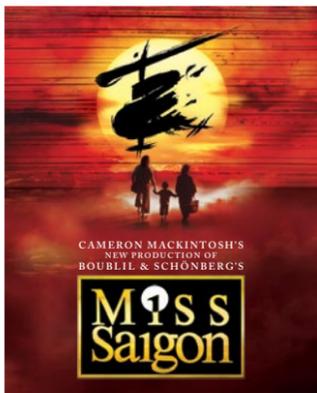
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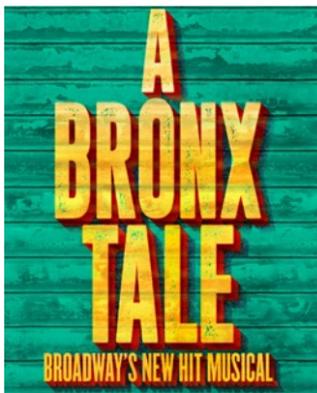
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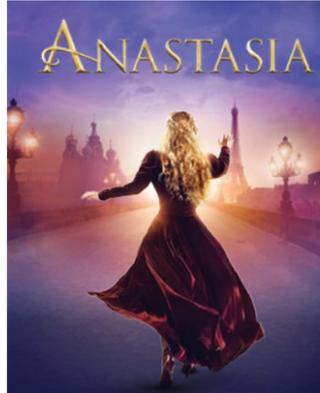
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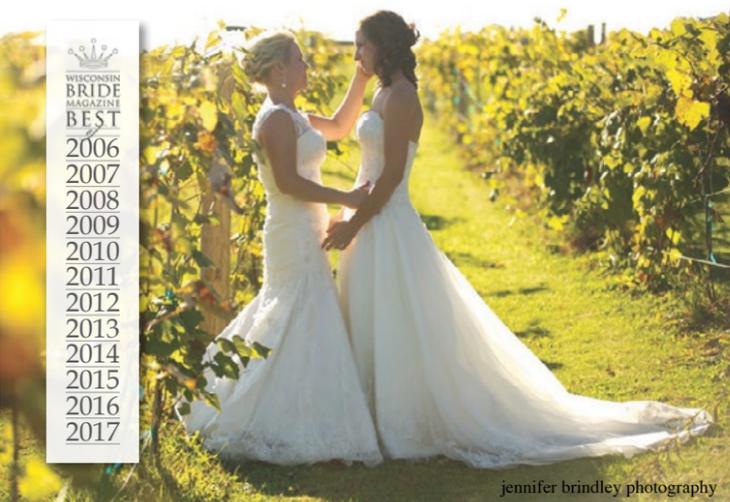
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EDITOR'S NOTE EMILY MILLS

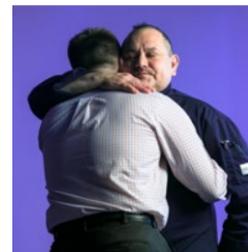
SETTING THE TABLE

In an era that often feels scary and confusing, finding ways to connect and improve each other's lives becomes all the more crucial.



THIS IS THE TIME OF YEAR when I start to get noticeably antsy to get outside more, explore my community, and connect (or reconnect) with friends new and old. All of that tends to make me very hungry, too. Which is why I'm so grateful to live in a city as rich with incredible options for eating as Madison.

Whether you're on a budget or looking to splurge, or even just hanging with friends or family at a cookout, Wisconsin is a state with a long and interesting culinary tradition. Food brings us together over dividing lines, and provides a means for healing that can be both physical and spiritual.



Our cover story this issue talks about just some of those themes, and I'm grateful to **Oscar Villarreal** and **Jordan Wegner** (of the Willy Street restaurant, Fuegos) for sharing their story with us. It's a great example of combining family and cultural traditions with newer or different approaches to healthy and sustainable diets. There's also a lot of heart (and heartache) that's gone into their new business, which you can read all about in their story. I'm personally thankful to have such a wonderful dining out option for my dairy-hating stomach (Fuegos vegan menu is a delight)!

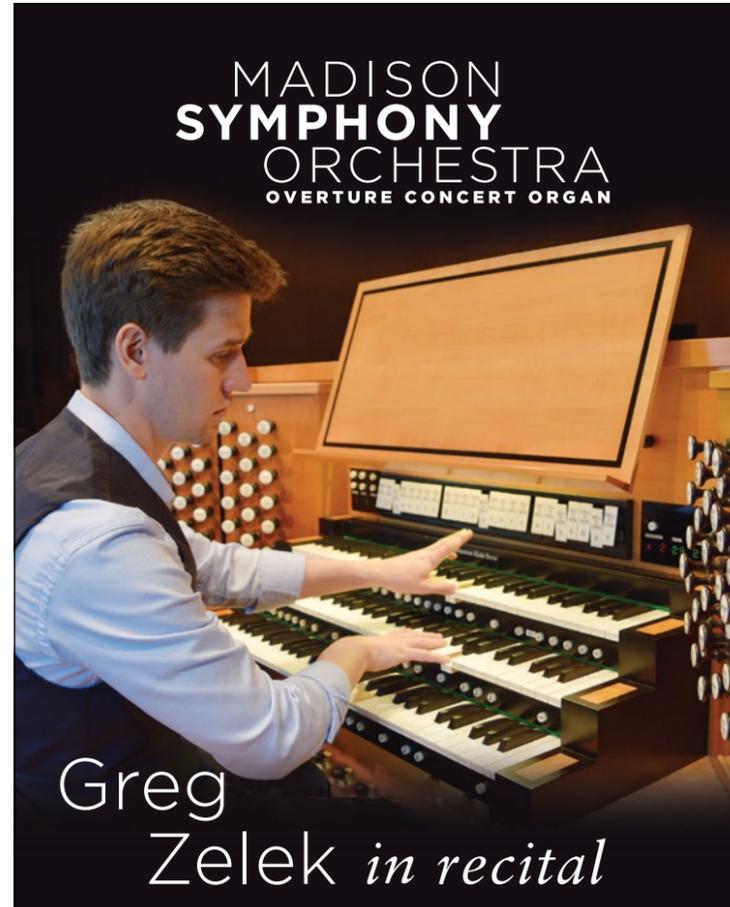


I was also pleased to meet and now help introduce all of you to **Tim "Pio" Piotrowski** and his efforts to start a new brewery in Madison with an eye on more employee-supporting business practices, as well as a dedication to bringing more diversity and inclusion to the beer world. I'll be referring to his tips and tales about hiking the Appalachian Trail for my own hoped-for excursion some day...or maybe just to dream about it.



We're also glad to include **Lori Stern** of Cow & Quince, the cozy spot that's brought incredible farm-to-table cooking to New Glarus, among other things. Her work ethic and ability to adapt and seek new and creative ways of following her ultimate passion for building and supporting community are inspiring. And the food is really darn good, too.

There's a lot within these pages to love and learn about, including what our crucial LGBTQ nonprofits, activists, politicians, and others are doing to help make the world a better place. From the grassroots on up to national and international levels, there are lots of ways to get involved and make a difference. Sometimes it's as simple as sharing a good meal. ■



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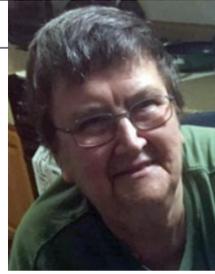
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IN MEMORIAM DJ WIPPERFURTH



LONGTIME MADISON LESBIAN ACTIVIST, bartender, and rabble rouser DJ Wipperfurth passed away on March 18, 2018 at the age of 73 after a long illness. DJ was remembered by a friend via the Lez Talk email list as someone who taught her to "Make friendships that last. You don't have to be wealthy, but it's good to be rich in family and friends."

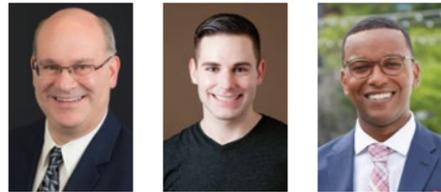
DJ worked as a driver for Union Cab for 30 years, and before that at the Cardinal Bar. The Cardinal's owner, Ricardo Gonzalez, remembered her as "one of the key people who contributed much to developing that particular personality that so characterized the Bird."

Gonzalez went on to reminisce that, "DJ and I locked horns more than once in the running of the Cardinal, but nothing stood in the way of my respect for her. After she left us to join Union Cab in 1979, our friendship deepened and blossomed into love and camaraderie."

She is survived by her brothers, Roger (Michele), Herman (Joan), Douglas, Richard, Bob (Nancy); sisters, Dorothy (John) Howat, Rosemary (Robert) Feltzkowski, Jane Dolphin, Janet (Paul) Rapp, Sandy (Bill) Pertzborn; and many nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Mabel Elizabeth (Tesch) and Herbert Joseph Wipperfurth in 1993, as well as niece (Christon Elizabeth Pertzborn) in 2013 and great niece (Eliza Rose Sheckley) in 2016. ■

CONTRIBUTORS



SCOTT SEYFORTH holds a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is in his 23rd year of work in University Housing where he is an Assistant Director of Residence Life. For over a decade Seyforth has been actively involved in collecting and archiving the history of the local LGBTQ community. He is one of the founders of the Madison LGBTQ Oral History Project and the Madison LGBTQ Archive at the U.W.-Madison Archives.

SPENCER MICKA is a professional photographer based out of Madison, WI. Spencer provides a variety of services including event coverage, portraits, and commercial photography through his business, Spencer Micka Photography. In addition to photographic services, Spencer also delves into the world of fine art through the use of a variety of liquids, high-speed flash photography, and mirror-image processing. His passion for photography also extends into his Shot-for-Shot program, giving back photographic sessions to inspiring individuals and organizations in our local communities.

CEDRIC JOHNSON is the Community Services Manager at Madison Gas & Electric, where he works specifically with communities of color and faith communities to ensure inclusive and fair access to services. He formerly worked as the Development and Communications Director at Briarpatch Youth Services, and prior to that he worked in development at the Madison Children's Museum. He makes a point to connect people with opportunities that would be a good fit for them and credits Madison as a great place to grow your personal and professional ties.

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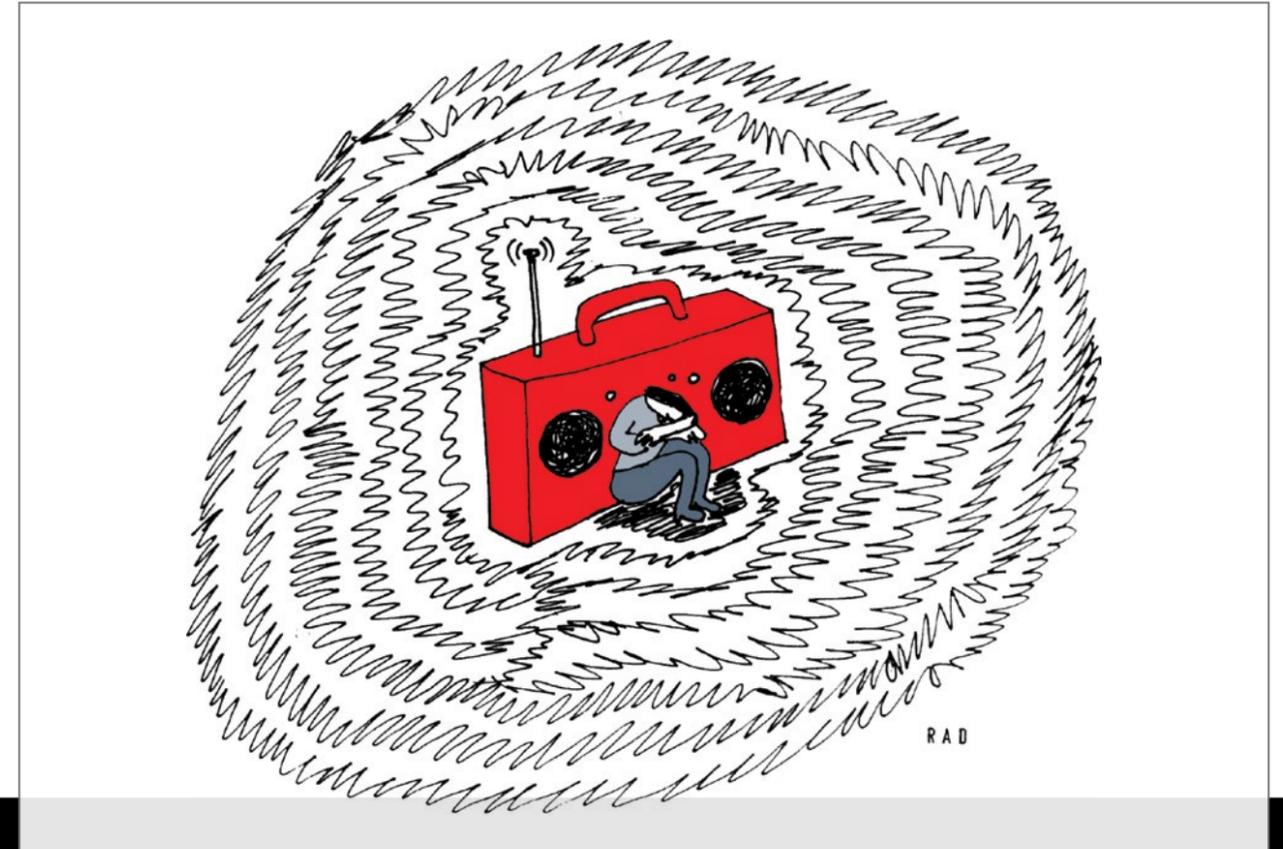
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TERF Wars

Anti-transgender rhetoric under the guise of radical “feminism” has been popping up in Madison, highlighting issues of bigotry and misinformation as well as what constitutes free speech vs. hate speech.

HATE SPEECH TRANSPHOBIA RADIO WORT

ON MARCH 19, community radio station WORT 89.9 FM broadcast its usual Monday night Access Hour, but that night’s content quickly fomented protest and outrage, as the show promoted anti-transgender and anti-sex worker bigotry.

The time is meant to be an open forum to make the airwaves accessible to as wide a range of people and views as possible. That’s a laudable goal. That particular evening’s subject matter, however, has prompted heated accusations that the commitment to free speech ended up giving a platform to hate speech. It was also a painful reminder of the continued presence of an

anti-transgender vein of thought running through even liberal Madison’s queer community.

The host, Thistle Pettersen, used her time to broadcast interviews with noted anti-trans activists Julie Bindel and Meghan Murphy. Both women are prominent figures among the so-called “radical feminist” movement, specifically a segment that focuses much of its energy and ire on sex work, pornography, and transgender people.

Both Bindel and Murphy have made careers of accusing transgender women of actually being predatory men, and arguing that all men are dangerous. They

also don't believe that non-binary and bisexual people exist, and accuse those who argue otherwise of playing into "patriarchal" views of the world.

Pettersen has made past appearances on the Access Hour, and similarly used her time to broadcast anti-transgender rhetoric and misinformation. WORT staff warned her not to

The question before the board and the station's members at the moment, then, is how to determine when that content becomes hate speech, if such speech should be allowed on the air, and how to enable staff to make decisions regarding what applications get approved and if any should ever be rejected.

do so again, and her application for the March spot indicated that she would focus her time on covering feminist music and a recent radical feminist conference. She did neither.

Instead, the interviews and discussion centered largely around removing agency from sex workers (Bindel), and claiming that transgender women are "men who are simply

more comfortable with feminine stereotypes" (Murphy), among other things. Murphy would go on to dismiss the harms of misgendering people, claiming that she, a cis woman, would just find it "funny" and that "it's impossible to misgender someone."

Though people like Bindel, Murphy, and Pettersen claim to be "radical feminists" trying to dismantle patriarchy and make the world safe and equitable for women, their work and rhetoric relies on biological binaries and misunderstandings of gender identity vs. gender expression vs. sexual orientation, ultimately reinforcing the systems they purport to oppose.

Those who recognize the true nature of this line of thinking refer to them as TERFs, or Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists.

FREE SPEECH VS. HATE SPEECH

The issue has also reignited a community conversation about the limits of free speech, and what the purpose of the Access Hour is and should be. A WORT board meeting just days after the broadcast included comments and concerns from both the public and station volunteers about the content of the show, and generated ongoing discussion about providing clearer editorial guidelines and oversight for

Bindel doesn't even view them as women, once saying, "I don't have a problem with men disposing of their genitals, but it does not make them women, in the same way that shoving a bit of vacuum hose down your 501s does not make you a man."

what goes out over WORT's airwaves.

The station is no stranger to controversial Access Hours. Republican state politician Glenn Grothman recently applied to host a show during the open hour, though he proposed only to play classic rock, which is exactly what he did. In 1977, protests erupted when a WORT program host attempted to interview Michael Wilson, then the state co-chair of the National Socialist Party, U.S.A. (the Nazi party).

The thinking goes that the Access Hour is not actually a WORT broadcast, but a free and open forum to make the airwaves accessible to as many community voices as possible, regardless of whether the opinions expressed align with the majority of regular WORT staff, volunteers, or listeners. The question before the board and the station's members at the moment, then, is how to determine when that content becomes hate speech, if such speech should be allowed on the air, and how to enable staff to make decisions regarding what applications get approved and if any should ever be rejected.

The station's mission says, "WORT shall be committed to radio programming with a human perspective—respecting all peoples and their environments." Does programming that dehumanizes and spreads misinformation about a marginalized group adhere to that mission statement? Does intentional misgendering fall under state statutes that prohibit defamation?

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

For more background, Bindel is perhaps one of the most notorious "radical feminists" in the world, and has been banned from speaking on several campuses and elsewhere for her con-

LGBTQ Community Radio:

WORT features a variety of regular, LGBTQ-inclusive programming, too, including locally produced **Queery** (Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.), **Her Turn** (Sundays at 11:00 a.m.), **Her Infinite Variety** (Sundays at 11:30 a.m.), and the nationally syndicated **This Way Out** (Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.).

sistently transphobic, biphobic, and anti-sex worker views. On transgender women, Bindel doesn't even view them as women, once saying, "I don't have a problem with men disposing of their genitals, but it does not make them women, in the same way that shoving a bit of vacuum hose down your 501s does not make you a man."

Murphy is an author for the TERF publication "Feminist Current," where she espouses a version of default womanhood that is largely white and cisgender. During her interview on the Access Hour, she accused transgender people of forcing others to "accept this desire or delusion."

Pettersen has a storied history of lashing out at the transgender community in Madison, including on previous Access Hour stints. She was disinvited from a reoccurring gig at the Crystal Corner Bar after the owners were made aware of her actions. She is the founder of Women's Liberation Radio News, which has ties to a TERF organization called the Women's Liberation Front (WoLF).

WoLF claims to be a radical feminist group focused on lobbying for pro-choice legislation and women's autonomy, though there's little evidence of efforts on either front. Instead, the group is almost exclusively focused on fighting against transgender rights, going so far as to partner with a far-right, anti-LGBTQ hate group called Family Policy Alliance in a countersuit to Gavin Grimm's now-stalled Title IX suit to allow fair access to bathroom facilities



in schools.

WoLF also accepted a \$15,000 grant from religious right group Alliance Defending Freedom, a huge evangelical Christian non-profit law firm which "seeks to recover the robust Christendom theology of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries." The organization was founded by James Dobson, also founder of the wildly anti-LGBTQ Focus on the Family, and Alan Sears, author of *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing The Principal Threat To Religious Freedom Today*.

It's an unholy alliance that doesn't end there. Religious rights organizations and rightwing politicians have begun cribbing language from TERF outfits like WoLF, all with an eye toward banishing transgender people from public life.

If you're curious to learn more, you can read what TERFs themselves claim their aims and goals are at TheTerfs.com, a watchdog site that monitors the anti-trans hate movement representing itself to be radical feminism.

Meanwhile, Madison and WORT continue to grapple with the presence of anti-transgender activists even within its own LGBTQ community. When does free speech become hate speech? And does a community radio station owe its platform to that speech?

It will be up to the community to decide. To host a show on WORT's Access Hour, fill out the online application at wortfm.org/access-hour-application. —Emily Mills



LGBTQ Organizations Update

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

Reported by **Emily Mills**

Stay up-to-date with area LGBTQ+ and allied organizations and non-profits, be informed, and get involved.

NEWS

Important notes about area LGBTQ groups.

COURAGE MKE In February of this year, Courage MKE purchased property in Walker's Point, which will serve as The Courage House, a home for LGBTQ+ youth in need to be provided a home and resources. The Courage House, the first of its kind in the state of Wisconsin, will

be located at 1544 S. 6th Street in Milwaukee.

The vision of Courage MKE started with co-founders Brad and Nick Schlaikowski, who after hearing stories of homeless LGBTQ+ children, felt compelled to do more for their community. "At 16, youth should be focused on applying for college and what they will wear to prom, not where they are going to sleep that night or how they will afford their next meal," said Brad.

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WISCONSIN LGBT CHAMBER'S
**PRIDE
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Join us as we celebrate Pride Month with our first Pride Business Showcase.

This free event is an opportunity to connect with other business owners and professionals that share your pro-fairness values. All are welcome!

Goodman Community Center
149 Waubesa Street
Madison, WI 53704

Save the Date

Mark your calendar for upcoming events in the Madison area

Madison Area Coffee Connection
May 23 - 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Madison Children's Museum
Free to attend. All welcome.

National Coming Out Day Breakfast
October 11 - 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
The Madison Club
Tickets on sale now.

Join the Chamber

Join more than 550 businesses as a member of the LGBT Chamber

Connect with consumers who want to do support LGBT and allied owned businesses



Join online today.
Memberships start at just \$100 a year



DIVERSE & RESILIENT The Colors in Bloom campaign launched in February with billboards across the state, and a song and video by Lex Allen reminding LGBTQ youth that they are beautiful, loved, and worthy just as they are, in hopes of fostering self-love and acceptance. Learn more at roomtobesafe.org.

The organization was also pleased to partner with other LGBTQ organizations in efforts to successfully pass a conversion therapy ban in the City of Milwaukee in March. Further, a sold-out crowd of over 275 LGBTQ and allied activists from throughout Wisconsin attended the 2018 Wisconsin LGBTQ Summit sponsored by Diverse & Resilient and Fair Wisconsin in Milwaukee on February 24. Planning is already underway for next year, date TBD.

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY The team attended the Spring Fever tournament in St. Louis to play their first matches of the season and are happy to report they took third place overall.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER City of Milwaukee Alderperson Chevy Johnson, joined by the center's Transgender Resource Coordinator Shelley Gregory, testified in support of banning conversion therapy in the City of Milwaukee. The ordinance passed the Public Safety and Health Committee on March 8 and headed for a vote in the Common Council.

Madison College will offer major LGBTQ scholarship



THANKS TO A \$20,000 DONATION from OBE North America, Madison College has created an endowed scholarship that will focus exclusively on supporting LGBTQ-identified students who might otherwise face barriers to higher education.

Dr. Julia Haseleu worked with her sister, Tina Haseleu, who works as a Senior IT Auditor for the insurance company to make the connection that led to the creation of the scholarship. OBE sets aside \$30,000 each year to be distributed nationally for LGBTQ issues, and were convinced to use the majority of that amount to support efforts at Madison College to make its programs more accessible.

Tina is part of an internal group called QBE Pride that focuses on supporting LGBTQ employees and outreach efforts. When the group began looking for ways to invest the donation money in the community, as well as for a speaker to talk about LGBTQ issues, Tina reached out to her sister, a psychology instructor who has contributed to major improvements in the way the field approaches and works with LGBTQ people. Julia and connected Tina and QBE's VP of HR, Joy Matthews, with the school's VP of Diversity and Inclusion, Lucia Nuñez, as well as students and foundation members, who helped them better understand the need for such a scholarship.

The American Psychological Association estimates about 6 percent of people identify as LGBTQ, which Haseleu says means that up to 2,200 students at Madison College could themselves be LGBTQ. That number is likely to be smaller, however, due to increased barriers faced by LGBTQ-identified youth who aren't necessarily supported by their families or communities. Haseleu said she has had about 10 to 20 students each year come out to her.

The Rainbow Scholarship will help those students break those barriers, she said. Criteria for how the scholarship will be awarded are yet to be worked out, but Haseleu, the chair of the committee that will oversee it, says that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students as well as LGBTQ allies will be eligible.

Instead of a one-time fund, the money will go into an endowment, which means the \$20,000 will go into an investment account and grow over time, providing a more sustainable, long-term opportunity. Since it takes about three years before money can be pulled from the endowment, however, Madison College is now to raising funds to get the scholarship off the ground right away.

An initial fundraiser for the new Rainbow Scholarship will be held May 19 at Bunky's Cafe on Atwood Avenue in Madison, starting at 5:30 p.m. Guests can participate in a silent auction, donate money directly, and hear speakers from both Madison College and QBE talk about the importance of supporting LGBTQ students through the scholarship. Tickets are \$75 per person, with table sponsorships available.

Visit 6690.thankyou4caring.org/rainbow-scholarship for tickets and more information. ■

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

ARCW At the 32nd Annual Make a Promise Gala & Auction in April, three people were recognized and given awards. One is the 2018 Philanthropy Award given to Broadway CARES/Equity Fights AIDS. Another is the 2018 Courage Award given to Terry Shelton. And lastly the 2018 Vision Award was given to William Reinicker.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT Congratulations to LGBTQ Anti-Violence program manager, **Kathy Flores**, for her inclusion in the statewide "Women Against Hate, United by Love" exhibition showcasing stories told by women leaders in Milwaukee and Appleton impacted by bigotry, intolerance, and racism. Congratulations also to Rachel Raasch on her election to the Appleton City Council. Rachel is a Community Health Promoter for D&R in Appleton.



PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS Kudos to Cabaret coordinator Danny Atwater for a second year of sold-out performances! And a thank you to all who practiced and performed, con-

tributed silent auction items, baked desserts, and otherwise gave of their time and talents.

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Former Executive Director **Karen Gotzler** transitioned out of the Center.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER BOARD RECRUITMENT:

OutReach is looking for passionate, hard-working people to grow our board of directors. LGBTQ people of color, people who are disabled, women, people who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming, people of varying faiths and backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Anyone who is interested should reach out to Steve Starkey at steves@lgbtoutreach.org or by phone at 608-255-8582.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS **Caroline Werner** recently joined the Board of Directors.

Caroline has been a volunteer at concerts for many years, but also brings a breadth of experience in grant writing and from her work as a social worker and former LGBTQ Senior Advocate at Outreach.



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Stories within the Letters

Featuring stories from DJ Sarah Akawa, Ja'Mel Ware, Patrick Farabaugh of Our Lives magazine and more. Hosted by comedian Dina Nina Martinez.



An evening of celebrating Our Lives

A fundraiser for the Madison College Rainbow Scholarship

Friday, June 29 | 6-8 p.m.

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Two Madison health care providers recognized for LGBTQ inclusion efforts by Human Rights Campaign

FOUR AREA HOSPITALS recently received the top designation for LGBTQ inclusion efforts from the Human Rights Campaign, achieving the highest possible score of 100 in a Healthcare Equality Index for which providers opt in to providing responses. Grades are given over four areas: LGBTQ patient-centered care, LGBTQ patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and LGBTQ patient and community engagement.

The American Family Children's Hospital, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, and UW Health at the American Center Madison were the top scorers for UW Health, and William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital also received the top designation. Nationwide, 418 health care providers scored that high. LGBTQ individuals face worse health outcomes than the rest of Americans due to prejudice, economic disparities, and other barriers to accessing quality health care.

"We really take seriously our responsibility to work to eliminate these disparities for our LGBTQ patients," said Shiva Bidar, UW Health's chief diversity officer and a member of Madison's City Council.

The HRC designation shows that an organization has inclusive practices and policies in place. It doesn't mark the end of the job to create an LGBTQ-friendly healthcare environment, but signifies that an organization has acted, and will continue to act, on a serious commitment to improve.

"It's about health care systems making a conscious decision that (LGBTQ health) is critically important," said Gerald Coon, president and CEO of Diverse & Resilient. ■

U.W.-Madison health services move to informed consent for transgender care

TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY STUDENTS attending U.W.-Madison will no longer need to get written consent from a therapist or mental health counselor in order to receive hormone therapy, under new guidelines coming to University Health Services this May.

Instead, says UHS associate counselor **Shannon Juniper Neimeko**, students will be able to work with their own doctors, bypassing the campus' Gender Identity Consultation program if so desired.

Juniper Neimeko began working on the changes last August. It started with a presentation to leadership at UHS before getting approval from both the clinic's medical and mental health departments. She said the change is about eliminating barriers.

"What we're noticing here, and what we're trying to pay attention to and work to resolve, is that trans health care has different requirements for access than care for cis(gender) folks," she said. "You might go to your provider and ask for a prescription for birth control or another medication. They don't send you to a mental health provider."

Katherine Charek Briggs, assistant director of the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (formerly the LGBT Campus Center), has been working with Juniper Neimeko on making this change. Charek Briggs said they consulted with the University of Pennsylvania, which has an informed consent model. Other institutions have been using this model for at least 10 to 15 years, said Charek Briggs.

"You'll find that the centers that have been doing an informed consent practice ... tend to be queer- and trans-led," Charek Briggs said. "Examples are Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago and Callen-Lorde in New York. When a community is serving its own needs, it has fewer barriers; there isn't anything based on fear or bias showing up in the medical practice."

Charek Briggs added that this change should have happened a long time ago.

"We're just normalizing trans care with this move," Charek Briggs said. ■



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.

DEVELOPMENT

New programs, outreach, or changes in mission.

ARCW An HIV & STI leadership fund has been established, with an investment of \$250,000, to help local organizations enhance their prevention and testing efforts. To apply for the fund visit arcw.org/prevention-services/hiv_syphilis_cluster_milwaukee/the_hivsti_leadership_fund.

In light of the recent news about a HIV & STI social network in the Milwaukee area, ARCW is asking for everyone to step up and help protect our youth. While the initial response has been swift, the coming days and weeks are critical to mobilize and protect the health of our youth. Visit arcw.org/support-arcw/help_protect_the_health_of_milwaukee_youth.

CLARBACH HOUSE PROJECT The nomination of the Clarenbach House Project for 123 West Gilman Street may be headed toward a May 14 hearing before the Madison Landmarks Commission for possible historic designation as an early center for LGBT civil rights activism in Madison. Broad community support is requested. For information on how to support the nomination, for other questions or requests for a talk on the topic for groups, contact Leslie Christopherson Schroeder, Chair, Clarenbach House Project: 608-220-2011, clarenbachhouseproject@gmail.com. Follow the project for updates at facebook.com/TheClarenbachHouseProject.

FORGE The group has been greatly expanding its online presence, including a Wisconsin-specific website at forge-wi.org. Their Wisconsin-specific Facebook page is facebook.com/forge.wi. Follow and like to keep up with current news. FORGE also has new transgender-survivor-specific resources, available online at trans-survivors.com/blog, with daily inspirational posts and resources at facebook.com/transurvivors. If you are a transgender survivor actively working on your healing, you may want to join their #TransToo Facebook page for more personal sharing and support.

LGBT BOOKS TO PRISONERS A recent grant of \$5000 from the Arcus Foundation will allow the organization to buy books by trans women of color. These books are incredibly important; as Janet Mock writes, "When I walk into queer and gender studies spaces on campuses across the country, I've witnessed people theorize about these women's lives. But we often know nothing about their lived experiences, about how these women survived and loved and gave and fought this racist, classist, misogynistic and femme-phobic world." We're so glad that this

Wisconsin's first-ever home for homeless LGBTQ youth to open in Milwaukee

A NEW GROUP HOME AND SAFE DROP-IN SPOT for homeless LGBTQ youth will open soon in Milwaukee, after the purchase of two homes in the Walker's Point neighborhood by Courage MKE.

The group was founded in 2015 by local couple, **Brad and Nick Schlaikowski**, after hearing so many stories of homeless LGBTQ+ kids. It's estimated that 40% of the youth homeless population in the country identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer.

"At 16, youth should be focused on applying for college and what they will wear to prom, not where they are going to sleep that night or how they will afford their next meal," Brad notes. They founded the non-profit as a way to help support those youth in need. After two years of operation, the Schlaikowskis say, they've received enough support from the community to buy the houses and get the group home concept up and running. They closed on the property on February 20 and hope to have the doors officially open before next winter.

One of the three-bedroom homes is to be used to house eight teenagers. The other will be used for counseling or just a hangout spot. Both houses serve as a safe haven for young people ages 10 to 17 who have been living on the street. This group home is first of its kind in the state.

Dubbed the Courage House, Brad says they specifically wanted to locate it on the south side of the city due to a lack of shelters in the area. "If they are rejected from their family, literally put out on their stoop, the second they tell their family, with what they have on their back, how do they get from here to wherever the other shelters are?" he told TMJ4 news.

The site will be located at **1544 S. 6th St. in Milwaukee**. Right now, Courage MKE is continuing to raise money to support their mission. They're also taking donations like beds, light bulbs, paintings, and other household needs. Find out about Courage MKE and how you can help at couragemke.org. ■



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grant allows us to support women who have told their stories and to speak for themselves. We're also thrilled to bring these stories to trans women in prison, many of whom are looking for role models and stories that reflect their experiences. Thank you Arcus!

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Seeking participants for a Men's Coming Out Group: If you or someone you know could benefit from a peer-led coming out group for men, please email rogerbadger@msn.com.

OutReach is working with sponsor MGE to coordinate all groups holding Pride Week events this year. New coalition members include OPEN, QPoC Pride, and Madison Gay Volleyball. Continuing members of the coalition include Woofs, OutReach, and Our Lives magazine. Pride Week will be August 13-19.

ACTION: The Census Bureau will not be asking questions pertaining to sexuality and gender identity for the 2020 census. Contact your legislators today to let them know how this will negatively affect the LGBTQ+ community. Use this website, legis.wisconsin.gov, to find out whom to contact.

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY The team continues its efforts to help Madison United Rugby

raise money for a new clubhouse that will be built at the current complex. The goal is to help raise enough money to cover the costs of construction and maintenance. The clubhouse will serve not only as a place to congregate to watch rugby matches, but will also be a community center for both rugby teams and the general public. Anyone interested in contributing can go to the link at mur.kindful.com for either a one-time or monthly donation.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS PHMC had successful participation in Community Shares' Big Share, both in raising funds and in singing in "thank you" videos and providing Common Chords to get up extra early and serenade the first bonus prize winners of the day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in.

ARCW The AIDS Ride Wisconsin-ACT Ride returns to the country roads of southern Wisconsin this **July 27-29**. Registration is open now.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT "Beyond Ramps & Rights: Anti-Ableism Disability Justice" **May 8** from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Appleton Public

Milwaukee bans LGBTQ conversion therapy for minors

THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE in March moved to ban therapies aimed at changing a child's sexual orientation or gender identity. The Common Council voted overwhelmingly to join nine other states and several municipalities that have recognized the harms of the practice.

Mayor Tom Barrett signed the ordinance shortly thereafter. All major medical and mental health organizations have condemned conversion therapy as ineffective and often a form of child abuse.

The council chambers were packed with supporters and opponents of the ban during the hearing and vote, with several people against it frequently shouting to interrupt the proceedings with warnings that it would be against God's will.

Ald. Cavalier Johnson, the measure's lead sponsor, stressed that the ban applies only to fee-based conversion therapy services for minors—not free counseling from faith leaders. The ordinance would not prohibit churches from preaching, ministering, or otherwise speaking about the issue, he added.

The ban passed the full council on a 12-2 vote. Aids. Robert Donovan and Mark Borkowski voted against the measure, and Russell W. Stamper II abstained. "This is a topic that is uncomfortable for me," Borkowski said, after his attempts to send the issue back to committee failed.

The American Psychological Association has concluded conversion practices can pose critical health risks to LGBTQ youths, including depression, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts.

A 2015 federal report found no existing research that such practices can change a person's gender identity or sexual orientation and instead found those practices often are "coercive, can be harmful, and should not be part of behavioral health treatment."

The proposed ban carries a fine between \$500 and \$1,000 for each violation. The Milwaukee Police Department would have the power to enforce the ordinance. ■



Ald. Cavalier Johnson

Local physical therapist achieves dream of working for Olympic and Paralympic athletes



Virag

PHYSICAL THERAPIST TIFFANY VIRAG first dreamed of volunteering to work with Olympic athletes during her time at Ohio State University. She got the call that it would become a reality early this year, after getting approval to volunteer at the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Facility.

The work involved helping other doctors fill in for the Olympic Specialist who left for the 2018 Winter Games. The gig mostly involved working with summer athletes, like wrestlers, as well as a number of paralympic competitors.

"I feel like the paralympic athletes don't quite get the attention they deserve compared to the able-bodied athletes," Virag said. "They are truly an inspiration."

Virag says the techniques used at the facility were "top notch," and that she learned a few new, innovative things while there, too. She's back in Madison now, where she works on humans (Madison Physical Therapy and Consulting) as well as animals, the latter as part of Pawsitive Results PT (which *Our Lives* profiled in the July 2016 issue). She hopes to venture to Lake Placid's Olympic Training Center next. ■

Library is a free event sponsored by D&R. The evening features Sebastian Margaret, a disabled, transgender, queer, first generation immigrant who is passionate about the validity and glory of imperfect body/minds and eroding the exclusion, segregation, and erasure faced by disabled folks in all progressive spaces. Contact Kathy Flores at 414-343-9032 for more information.

FORGE The transgender support organization will have a table as part of the Pridefest Health and Wellness section, **June 7-10**. They'll have their usual Free Hugs stickers, make-your-own-button station, face painting, and much more.

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY The league hosts its first ever tournament at the Wisconsin Rugby Club Sports Complex in Cottage Grove on **May 12**. Six teams will be competing: The Columbus Coyotes, the Columbus Kodiaks, the Madison Minotaurs, the Milwaukee Beer Barons, the Minneapolis Mayhem, and the St. Louis Crusaders. Pool play will be from 9 to Noon, with 3rd and 5th place matches 1:00-2:00 p.m. and the championship match 2:00-3:00 p.m. The post-match celebration will be at FIVE Nightclub at 5:00 p.m., with all-you-can-eat Ian's Pizza and unlimited beer available for all players for free and \$10 for the public.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The Annual Garden Party will be held **June 7** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Rotary Gardens in Janesville.

A non-partisan voter registration event will be held on **June 14** from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at OutReach. The Annual Paths to Healing Conference is coming up **June 22** (wcasea.org/pages/Events-Paths-To-Healing.php). On **June 28** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. the organization hosts a fundraiser for their annual Pride Parade and rally at the home of a donor—check lgbtoutreach.org for details. The LGBT Senior Alliance is hosting their annual Cooksville picnic on **June 3**. For more details visit lgbtseniors.org.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS The chorus has been rehearsing for the spring concert entitled "Take a Stand," to be held **June 1 and 3**. The full chorus will be performing **May 6** in New Glarus as part of Swiss Church's Stained Glass Series, and on **June 16** as part of Madison Public Libraries' Pride Month celebration. The outreach ensemble, Common Chords, will be performing in the library series **June 9**, and at the 2nd annual Mineral Point Pride, **June 23**.

PROUD THEATER Proud Theater Madison presents, "Proud Theater: Queer Pressure," **May 24-26** at the Diane Ballweg Theatre at Edgewood College. Showtimes are **May 24-25** at 7:30 p.m., and **May 26** at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are a suggested donation of \$15 for adults and \$10 for students with ID. Reservations can be made starting **May 2** at reservations@proudtheater.org.

Proud Theater Wausau will be having their next show on **June 1 and 2**. Details to come! ■



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.

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PHOTOGRAPHY QUEER ART COMMUNITY

The Power of Portrait

Photographer **Caitlin (Katie) Barry** set out to build queer community and provide authentic, sensitive portraiture with her LGBTQ Photo Pop-Ups.

I WANTED TO OFFER empowering portrait sessions to LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people. Many of us need headshots and would love portraits of ourselves, our partners, and our families, but professional photography can often result in our being misunderstood, misgendered, and/or misrepresented. I envisioned LGBTQ Photo Pop-Ups as the antidote, so in August 2017 I began holding the events with the help of my partner, KC Councilor, and some friends willing to volunteer their time.

I aimed to create a free event in a queer space where folks could come together around the act of being seen and leave with high-quality images of themselves. I imagined photography as a queer community act.

The radical impact of being seen struck me after my partner and I married in 2016. As I searched for a photographer, I found myself having to ask, "Are you comfortable shooting a queer wedding?" I'll never forget one of the responses from (I'm assuming) a straight, white, cis man. He wrote back curtly, "I'm a professional photographer. I'll photograph anything." We didn't go with him.

As I searched for a photographer, I found myself having to ask, "Are you comfortable shooting a queer wedding?" I'll never forget one of the responses from (I'm assuming) a straight, white, cis man. He wrote back curtly, "I'm a professional photographer. I'll photograph anything." We didn't go with him.

The person we eventually found, Jen Gannigan, was able to make both of us feel understood and valued in front of her lens. This was an especially profound experience for my partner, who had just started using male pronouns and was newly identifying as trans. The act of being truly seen by Jen proved so validating for KC that it prompted him to begin hormonal therapy after years of waiting. I had been shown the power of photography.

Many of us feel uncomfortable in front of a camera. LGBTQ, and especially trans and gender non-conforming folks, can have the hardest time, especially when photographed by straight, cis people with hetero-normative expectations. But photographs are our surest memorabilia. They bring us back to our earlier selves in a way nothing else can: they are powerful, magical items. And they speak to the world about how we see ourselves.

If we are uncomfortable, insecure, or upset while being photographed, we will not like the photos — no matter how flattering they are. I'm dedicated to LGBTQ folks transcending their fear of the



Cooper Talbot



Davey Schlasko



Sawyer Johnson



Sylvia Johnson



Sal Abrams



Tia Clark



camera. I'm here to make them feel seen, whole, and gorgeous, and to provide images that align with their inner selves.

The reality of the pop-ups has far exceeded my initial goal. With massive volunteer help, I've done four since last August, three of them at our shared queer art studio (Everyday Gay Holiday on Atwood Avenue). At our first Madison event, the response was overwhelming. I wound up shooting 36 portrait sessions in five hours. People milled around and got to know each other while they waited for their turn.

As we've held subsequent pop-ups, people have returned to volunteer or just spend time with a community that has sprung up around the events. I've heard from many folks I've photographed that the experience was "actually really fun" (a huge compliment), empowering, and validating. I've watched countless interactions between new friends who met at a pop-up. I've seen queer people's social media photos change from cell phone selfies to proper headshots they are proud of, and it is an amazing, humbling thing. I've even had the chance to collaborate with folks whose visions complement mine: in March, we had Wyatt Barton's Resilience Over Silence project offer free hair and makeup to anyone being photographed. I set out intending to make photography a queer community act and, indeed, it has become one.

Come join us at our next LGBTQ Photo Pop-Up at Everyday Gay Holiday, 2088 Atwood Avenue in Madison: Sunday, May 6 2:00–6:00 p.m. (sign-in starts at 1:00; first come, first served). ■

CAITLIN BARRY is a lifestyle and wedding photographer with a passion for documenting queer life and love. Before embracing photography as a full-time job, she owned and operated Madison-grown pet care business Take Paws. Caitlin and her partner KC will be moving to New Haven, Connecticut this summer, but she will be back in Madison often to visit family and friends and to hold occasional pop-up events. You can find her work and see more portraits from the LGBTQ Photo Pop-Ups at smoketreephotography.com.

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WHEN OUR LIVES approached me and asked if I wanted to contribute something to the publication, I jumped at the chance. But when I sat down to answer the prompt, “How has coming out or being a member of the LGBTQ community impacted your athletic life?” I had difficulty coming up with a concrete narrative. After several days racking my brain for a thoughtful story I could share, I realized why I was struggling.

The history of homophobia on sports teams, and the fact we have been conditioned to view coming out as a huge, life-altering event that will completely define who we are, meant that I was looking for a dark coming-of-age story, on how I was able to “rise to the occasion” in spite of the odds—or something along those lines. I was viewing the prompt through a negative lens, adding negative connotations to the word “impacted.”

I needed to reframe, because the reality is I don’t have one of those stories. I feel very lucky to be able to say that. It would be naïve to think that my positive experience is universal for all athletes across the country. Many sports teams are still dealing with homophobia, racism, and bigotry on a daily basis. I have tremendous respect for the individuals who, in spite of the intolerance or hate around them, have the courage and strength to share who they are.

Partially because of the progressive, inclusive, and loving community of friends, family, and teammates I grew up with, but also because of my involvement in athletics (rowing in particular), I had to rise to the occasion in different areas of my life. A quote from author and athlete Dr. George Sheehan about running (which also applies to sports like rowing and swimming as well) has

Out on Lake Mendota for an early morning practice in April.



always stood out for me:

“The runner is not in a game; he is in a contest... When you race, you are under oath. When you race, you are testifying as to who you are.”

Part of the reason why coming out wasn’t a huge event for me was because it wasn’t the center of my identity. It is an important piece for sure, and one to be proud of, but I was first and foremost more worried about proving myself in the athletic arena. That was what defined who I was.

I didn’t fear being stereotyped—as many in the LGBTQ community are—because rowing gave me the opportunity to prove to myself who I was. It demanded it; especially Wisconsin Rowing. As one of the only competitive teams in the country the doesn’t rely on international recruits (who oftentimes have several more years of experience, which can include World Championship or Olympic races), Badger oarsman must step into a leadership role, push outside their comfort zones, and be fiercer than any of our competitors in order to be successful. Because of that experience, I can testify to my work ethic, my commitment to my team, my stubbornness, my resiliency, and my willingness to give blood until the last stroke of the race.

Athletics is a great equalizer. No matter what sport you are considering, it doesn’t matter your race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, religion, education, politics, sexual orientation, or where you came from. The only thing that matters is whether can you compete. The best coaches and teams want to work with the most dedicated, enthusiastic, relentless, gritty, tough, and physically fit people. As my former coach (and now current boss) has said many times: “If you can pull on an oar, who cares about the rest?”

Diversity of backgrounds, thought, and character strengthen teams. Just as my four years rowing as a Badger or two years working at the State Capitol gave me tools to be a better coach and professional, who I am is also an asset.

I believe that my involvement in athletics gave me the ability to reframe the prompt to ask not how being part of the LGBTQ community impacted my athletic career, but rather the opposite: How did being an athlete and working in athletics impact who I was? Not only did it help shape who I am today, but gave me the confidence to be that person, softened the “impact” of how hard coming out could be, and opened doors for me. Being an out athlete and coach means I have more to bring to the table. ■

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COMEDY COMING OUT LESBIAN

Laughing Out Loud

Local stand-up comic **Shawna Lutzow** found her voice and a comedy cause after coming out.

MY FIRST GIRLFRIEND was a My Size Barbie. She was the complete opposite of my crush at the time, Kit De Luca. Nevertheless, our relationship lasted for over a year, seeing each other on Wednesdays and every other weekend during visits to my dad's house. Our relationship remained a secret. She wasn't ready to come out. And I didn't know I wanted to.

It took just days after I came out in fall of 2011 for my close (straight) friends to ask me questions about lesbian sex. Acquaintances and sometimes even flat-out strangers questioned gender roles in my relationships, with comments like "Who's the dude?" or "Does the sex even count?"

At first, I was open to answering questions and welcomed the conversation. After countless months of the same invasive questions from strangers who seemed to think they deserved answers, however, I started to realize not only the ignorance behind them but also the exotification that was tied in. I was learning more about myself as an out lesbian and found myself straddling my new identity (as well as other women) and the "straight world" I'd left behind.

The first question my mom asked me when I came out to her was, "What, are you just sick of guys or something?" And while, yes, I was, I had to explain that is not how or why I "became" gay, and it was these types of questions and conversations with people that led me to comedy.

It took months for me to make the perfect three-minute set to perform at an open mic night. When I finally worked up the nerve to do it, I chose a random Wednesday night in August 2013, and I nailed it. My material was all based on ridiculous and humorous things people had said to me after coming out. They ranged from "But you don't look like a lesbian" to the difference between using the word "girlfriend" and "partner."

Fellow local woman comic Stevie Leigh Crutcher was a guardian angel that night for coming up to talk to me before the show and helping to ease my nerves. Well, what she actually said was, "Don't feel bad if the other comedians don't laugh at your jokes," as I was getting ready to workshop before the show. So maybe that comment didn't quite ease my nerves but it was cool to meet another woman in comedy, and just her general presence there among a sea of what appeared to be straight, white, young men made me feel like I actually belonged.



PHOTO BY VANESSA TORTOLANO.

My material is still very much centered on my queer identity, and I focus on topics of social and racial justice, dismantling stereotypes, and confronting systems of white supremacy. You know, nothing too heavy. Being on a stage with a captive audience is a perfect way to get people to shut up, listen, and leave with some tidbits they may not have had before. Like yes, you can still be racist if your dog is black, or no, not all femme lesbians are bottoms, you're welcome.

I enjoy performing at shows that are queer- and woman-oriented, like Dina Martinez's Lady Laughs Comedy Festival and The Yes Ma'am Merge with the Vanessa Tortolano of the Monkey Business Institute. I also love and owe a lot to Vickie Lynn of BCity BFunny from my hometown, Beloit, for giving me my first set in a show and offering even more opportunities after that.

One of my favorite shows was when I headlined at the Beloit International Film Festival with an all-lady line-up that included Stevie Crutcher, Vickie Lynn, Andrea Guzzetta, and Rebekah Gibson. It was my first headlining show and I'm pretty sure it was the first time both my mom and dad were in the same room since divorce court in the early nineties.

Currently, I'm working on writing more material that will continue to challenge systems of oppression and to expand my satirical song writing. I want to hone my skills to be the best comic I can be. I'm looking into enrolling in Dina Martinez's stand up classes and would like to push myself way outside my comfort zone and attempt improv comedy. But for now, I'm going to finish this episode of *Gossip Girl*. XOXO ■

My material is still very much centered on my queer identity, and I focus on topics of social and racial justice, dismantling stereotypes, and confronting systems of white supremacy. You know, nothing too heavy.

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System Changer

As the new director of the U.W.'s Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (formerly the LGBT Campus Center), **Warren Scherer** brings to the job a wealth of experience and a dedication to listening and letting youth lead.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF: WHO ARE YOU, WHERE ARE YOU FROM, AND HOW DID YOU LAND IN THIS ROLE?

I'm the new Assistant Dean of Students and Director for Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC), formerly the LGBT Campus Center, at U.W.-Madison. I started in in January 2018. I'm a biracial, second-generation LGBT-identified (i.e. queer child of a lesbian), Wisconsin transplant who claims Richmond, Virginia (RVA) as home.

In Virginia, I attended a LGBT youth organization called ROSMY, now called Side by Side. As an undergrad at Virginia Commonwealth University, I attended student organization meetings held by the Sexual Minority Student Association. In these spaces, I cultivated mentor/mentee relationships as well as friendships with LGBT+ and allied folks.

I moved to Wisconsin in 2004 for job with Project Q, the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center's youth program. While there I met many of my chosen family members, folks I consider siblings, as well as my spouse. After being at Project Q for four years doing program development and crisis case management, I left for the Program Coordinator/Assistant Director role with the LGBT Resource Center at the U.W.-Milwaukee. While there I also served on the board of the international not-for-profit membership organization called the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals, primarily known simply as the Consortium. I have engaged in diversity and social justice educational work for 17 years. I believe my life, work, and educational experiences have prepared me to move into this role.

As an aside, three of the professionals I worked with and learned so much from while at Project Q also live in Madison. Moving to Madison has been like a family reunion for me.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS WORK THAT YOU LOVE, AND WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BOTH YOU AND FOR THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES?

I am not inclined to use the word "love" when I think about the work. I approach it from another, still-familiar direction, and am far more likely to say I am moved or called to do this work. When I think about the volunteers at ROSMY and the professionals who showed up and/or intervened for me, as well as those who encouraged and mentored me; if I can be that person for others, I must.

As a second-generation queer-identified person (again, child of a lesbian), and in the family I have <sharp inhale> I recognize not all queer people grow up in appreciative environments. LGBTQ+ people are still marginalized—granted, not in identical ways—on national, state, and local levels. It's important to address the ways in which being marginalized impacts LGBTQ+ peoples' emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. It's also important to create appreciative environments and/or experiences to foster resilient tendencies so they—we—can thrive.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DAILY CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN THIS LINE OF WORK? HOW DO YOU TRY TO OVERCOME/ADDRESS THEM?

The challenges that come to mind manifest daily and on larger scales. An example of this is that change, even for the right reasons, is slow; bureaucracies do not move quickly. There are daily reminders and this truth impacts larger and/or long-term visioning. Yet another challenge that I encounter is two-fold: ignorance/misinformation and homogenizing TQBLG+ peoples. I believe these challenges are two sides of the same coin. Myths and misconceptions about folks in our communities abound and are perpetuated even when we seek to challenge or change them. There are times I believe I am reinforcing the ignorance as I aim to disrupt it.

Homogenizing is the way in which LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ people either do not recognize and honor the distinctions and cultures within our communities, or insist people should simplify their lives or identities to be "easily digested" by others. In my experience, this is typically hurled at community members that are asexual, bisexual, gender non-conforming, non-binary, polyam/open, queer, and trans.

I think about intervening at multiple levels: What I can do at the policy or cultural level to address these challenges, all the way to having one-on-one conversations with folks and using my personal story as a learning opportunity if applicable. I am tenacious and annoyingly optimistic, and I use these qualities to engage others. I also use humor to alleviate the frustration. I like to laugh a lot.

YOU WORK WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF STUDENTS WITH, ONE CAN ASSUME, AS WIDE A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS. HOW DO YOU TRY TO BALANCE ALL OF THAT? WHAT DO YOU GET/LEARN FROM THE STUDENTS IN RETURN?

Yes, the students with whom I work directly and indirectly are complex beings. Much like the way in which all people are complex. I start there, and I do not lead the conversation with questions, for example. I operate from the position that the person is the expert on their experience and I have much to learn from them. I avoid saying things like, "I know what you're talking about," or "That happened to me, too," so that I am not putting myself in the person's story because that makes the interaction about me.

I get to learn so much about parts of the state, country, and world I have not visited, about identities and relationship configurations I have little to no knowledge of, and so on. The young adults with whom I work facilitate my connection to aspects of pop culture that I would be oblivious to if it were not for them. I especially appreciate them for giving me the synopsis of TV or book series I simply do not have time to read or watch. They share their lives: their joy, their pain, their wellbeing; they are authentically compassionate, angry, hilarious, and patient. I can learn from all the modeling they do.

HOW CAN FOLKS SUPPORT THE WORK THE CENTER DOES? WHAT ARE SOME UPCOMING EVENTS YOU'RE EXCITED ABOUT?

Support: Attend events that are open to the public, promote or amplify programming in the community and via social media, and donate to the Scholarships or Crisis funds we have set up to support students.

Event: We have our annual Rainbow Graduation coming up on Wednesday, May 9 at 5:30 p.m., where we will be celebrating current and past U.W. graduates as well as honoring the campus contributions of a few community members. Find out more at lgbt.wisc.edu. ■

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Lou Sullivan: Daring to Be A Man Among Men

by Brice D. Smith (Transgress Press, 2018)

"THEY SAID I COULDN'T LIVE as a gay man, but it looks like I'm going to die like one."

Lou Sullivan wasn't one to pull rhetorical punches. Throughout his many journal entries, articles, and speeches, he was unfailingly authentic and honest. Even when he didn't have words to describe what he felt deep down was true about himself, Sullivan sought that truth with dogged determination.

Brice D. Smith's new biography of this founding father of the modern transgender movement and chronicler of LGBTQ history in the mid-20th century does that legacy of authenticity justice.

Sullivan was raised as a good Catholic school girl in the 1960s, but ended his life as the gay man he had always known himself to be. Tragically, he would also become the first known case of a transgender man contracting HIV/AIDS, and he died of the disease in 1991. In between, Lou lived an incredible life that had far-reaching implications and impact on the lives of countless of his fellow transgender men, and the LGBTQ community at large.

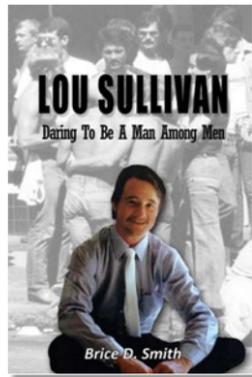
We're entering an age when some of the pioneers of the LGBTQ rights movement are passing away, or passing out of living memory. That's part of what makes Smith's new biography particularly poignant and so important.

The book provides an exhaustive and loving portrayal of the Wisconsin-born activist, including much of Sullivan's own voice as found in the copious journals kept over his lifetime. The accounts of Sullivan's dabbling in the counter culture scene of the late '60s at Avant Garde, and then diving into gay liberation—and then AIDS-era San Francisco, are at turns heartfelt, thoughtful, frank, and refreshingly explicit.

It's clear from the outset that the subject and the material hold special relevance for the author, and it only seems to help Smith provide a compellingly human and honest look into Sullivan's all-too-brief life.

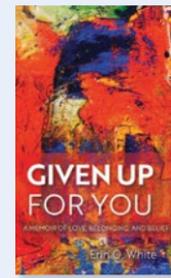
Between Sullivan's own accounts and Smith's extensive research, a picture is painted of many of the earliest organizations, people, and institutions that shaped the burgeoning LGBTQ community. We see the radical inclusiveness of one of Milwaukee's earliest queer organizations, the Gay People's Union. Not only did the gay men and lesbians in the group welcome Lou as he was just beginning to figure out his identity as a gay trans man, they embraced him as a leader and looked to him as a voice to help educate around transgender issues.

This would prove to be in stark contrast to the scene Sullivan encountered when he later moved to the Bay Area, where "the large number of LGBT people in 1970s San Francisco led to the formation of distinctly separate gay, lesbian, and trans communities rather than an all-encompassing, inclusive gay community like in Milwaukee."



LGBTQ Reading List

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



Given Up for You: A Memoir of Love, Belonging, and Belief by Erin O. White. UW Press, 2018.

White writes of the struggle to be gay while Catholic.

The House of Impossible Beauties by Joseph Cassara. Ecco, 2018.

This debut dramatizes the legendary House of Xtravaganza, a drag ball family of Latinx trans women and gay men.

How to Write an Autobiographical Essay by Alexander Chee. Mariner, 2018.

"To write is to sell a ticket to escape, not from the truth, but into it." Popular novelist and queer activist presents a collection of open-hearted essays.

The Immortalists by Chloe Benjamin. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2018.

Madison local Benjamin has hit the bigtime with this family saga.

Rookie On Love by Tavi Gevinson. Razorbill, 2018.

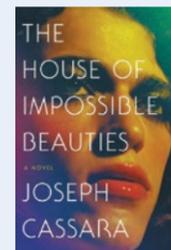
Listen to the young people!

Social Intercourse by Greg Howard. Simon and Schuster, 2018.

A couple's awkward fumbling into a relationship sends their children into a tailspin.

White Houses by Amy Bloom. Random House, 2018.

A fictionalized account of the romance between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Wisconsinite Lorena Hickok.



At the time, though, there was no sense yet of "transgender" as an identity, but rather all Lou had to work with was the idea of transsexuality (a medical institution imposed label that had more to do with physical transition than an internal identity) and transvestism (cross dressing). Lou spent many years of his early life referring to himself as a transvestite, but the label never really fit.

"I wanna look like what I am but I don't know what someone like me looks like," Lou wrote in his journal, showing remarkable sense of self even as a teenager.

Sullivan would go on to write one of the definitive early pieces of literature and guides for his community; a pamphlet, later expanded to a book, called *Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser and Transsexual*. He also wrote on the topic for several queer and even some mainstream publications at the time, and became one of the earliest case studies for those in the medical profession studying transgender people.

In fact, Sullivan helped to push the medical establishment toward a model where trans people were the experts on their own needs and experiences, rather than the top-down model that led to barriers to transition care for Sullivan and many others. Doctors at the time frequently denied transition surgery to transgender people who said they were gay or lesbian, for instance, something Sullivan fought against until the end.

Sullivan, like his biographer, also had a keen sense of the need to preserve the community's history, even as it was happening. He helped to found San Francisco's GLBT Historical Society, and later bequeathed all of his works to its archive.

Thank goodness, too. That wealth of both personal and larger history cannot be overstated, and Smith has done a wonderful job of helping to tell a significant part of that story with this book.

Lou Sullivan: Daring to Be A Man Among Men is a finalist in this year's Lambda Literary Awards, for Transgender Non-Fiction, with final awards given on June 4 in New York City. —Emily Mills

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May & June

We're more than ready to kick off our shoes and don our gay, short-sleeved apparel for some fun in the sun. Festivities abound as the warmer months bring opportunities to mix, mingle, learn, and explore!

For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Events on page 18.

JUNE

2

FRUITFEST *Plan B*

Madison's unofficial Pride month festival returns to the Plan B parking lot with a family friendly day of both local and national live music acts, food, and goods for sale from area vendors, games, contests, and more.

fruitfestmadison.org



MAY

5

PRIDE PROM

Madison Children's Museum
Briarpatch's Teens Like Us presents its annual Pride Prom for LGBTQ+ youth and allies to celebrate this high school "tradition" in an open and affirming environment. Dancing, crafts, exhibits, and light refreshment provided.

Free!

[facebook.com/ysosw](https://www.facebook.com/ysosw)

6

QUEER CLIMBING SOCIAL *Boulders Climbing Gym*

LGBTQ-only climbing night and safe/sober space at Boulders Climbing Gym. Free for members, just \$6 for everyone else, including instruction if needed. Free pizza provided. (Reoccurs June 3.)

[facebook.com/queerclimbingsocial](https://www.facebook.com/queerclimbingsocial)



12

GSAFE'S CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP

Monona Terrace

Hear from youth leaders in the LGBTQ+ community as well as adults committed to supporting LGBTQ+ youth, all while raising funds for GSAFE's critical work.

gsafevi.org

19

MADISON COLLEGE'S RAINBOW SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

Bunky's Cafe

Enjoy good food, live music, a silent auction, and more at this fundraiser to bolster a new LGBTQ+ specific scholarship at Madison College.

madisoncollege.edu

JUNE

18-20

MAD ROLLIN' DOLLS "UDDER CHAOS" ROLLER DERBY INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Hartmeyer Ice Arena

Madison's premier roller derby league hosts its first major invitational tournament in nearly a decade, with top teams from across the Midwest rolling into town for a weekend of competitive play, as well exhibition matches, and men's roller derby. Tailgating, food carts, merch, and more will also be on hand.

madisonrollerderby.com/udderchaos

1 & 3

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS SPRING CONCERT

First United Methodist Church

The local gay men's chorus presents its spring show, "Take A Stand," featuring music with stories of courage, coming out, loss, strength, and hope.

perfectharmonychorus.org



5

PRIDE BUSINESS SHOWCASE *Goodman Community Center*

Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce hosts a free networking event for business owners, professionals, and interested parties to learn about services and products provided by LGBTQ+ and allied businesses.

wislgbtchamber.com

10

MILWAUKEE PRIDE PARADE *South 2nd Street*

Join in or cheer on the annual Milwaukee Pride Parade as it wends its way along South 2nd Street. Step-off is scheduled for 2:00 p.m.

prideparademke.org

16

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S "AS YOU LIKE IT"

American Players Theatre

The Spring Green theater in the woods presents the classic, gender-bending Shakespeare romp with a transcendent heroine at the center of the story. Opens June 16 and runs through October 7.

americanplayers.org

"BLOOD KNOT"

American Players Theatre

The Athol Fugard play set in post-apartheid South Africa, centered around two brothers struggling with issues of racism, social barriers, family, and human relationships. Runs through September 28 in the Touchstone Theater.

americanplayers.org

9

FIRST ANNUAL RIDE WITH PRIDE *Milwaukee*

Pridefest joins with Harley Davidson and the Milwaukee Police Department for a motorcycle ride through the city. The Ride Ride will include, including stops at the lakefront, Estabrook Park Biergarten, the PrideFest Milwaukee front gates, Hamburger Mary's, and more.



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- July 10 OPEN at the Madison Mallards
- July 14-15 Art Fair Off the Square
- July 24 Cream City Foundation Summer Social
- July 27-29 Wisconsin AIDS Ride
- August 18 Second Annual (Trans) Forming Faith Conference
- August 19 OutReach Pride Parade
- October 19 Cream City Foundation Business Equality Luncheon

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Friday, June 1, 2018, 7:30 pm
Sunday, June 3, 2018, 3:00 pm

First United Methodist Church
203 Wisconsin Ave., Madison

Ticket information:
PerfectHarmonyChorus.org

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus



PrideFest announces 2018 headlining acts



Daya

WISCONSIN'S LARGEST AND longest running LGBTQ Pride festival welcomes The B-52s, Jussie Smollett, and Daya to the Miller Lite Main stage this June 8, 9, and 10 on the Summerfest Grounds in Milwaukee.

PrideFest enters its 31st official celebratory year and 22nd year at the Summerfest Grounds. They'll celebrate by launching a groundbreaking Thursday, **June 7 Kick-Off Party**. This special celebration sponsored by ARCW and Energy106.9 will take place in the Dance Pavilion only, and the \$10 admission price includes all entertainment, featuring the internationally known east coast DJ trio Cash Cash, along with a lineup of local entertainment including DJs, drag artists, dancers, and more.

"Not only does this expansion and lineup mean growth for Milwaukee Pride, Inc and PrideFest, it means growth in tourism, national recognition, and activation in our wonderful city," says Milwaukee Pride Board President Wes Shaver. "We are thrilled to be adding an additional day to contribute to our community beneficiary, PLUS ONE partner and further inject resources into our local LGBT community."

Grammy award winner **Daya** opens the festival on **Friday, June 8** as the headliner on the Miller Lite Mainstage. Known for catchy hits like "Sit Still Look Pretty" and "Hideaway," Daya took home a Grammy for her collaboration with The

Chainsmokers on their hit, "Don't Let Me Down."

On **Saturday, June 9**, PrideFest welcomes actor, director, and singer/songwriter, **Jussie Smollett**, one of the stars of the wildly successful television drama, "Empire." Smollett appears fresh on the heels of his new album release, "Sum of My Music," and received a 2016 NAACP image award for Outstanding New Artist.

Finally, good things come to those who wait: After years at the top of the PrideFest "artist wish list," the board and production team are thrilled to announce the **Sunday, June 10** headliners, **The B-52s**. This legendary band has had audiences dancing to hit after hit for decades.

PrideFest Milwaukee 2018 is held at Henry W. Maier Festival Park. Additional guests, and entertainment schedules will be announced soon at pridefest.com. ■



Jussie Smollett



B-52s



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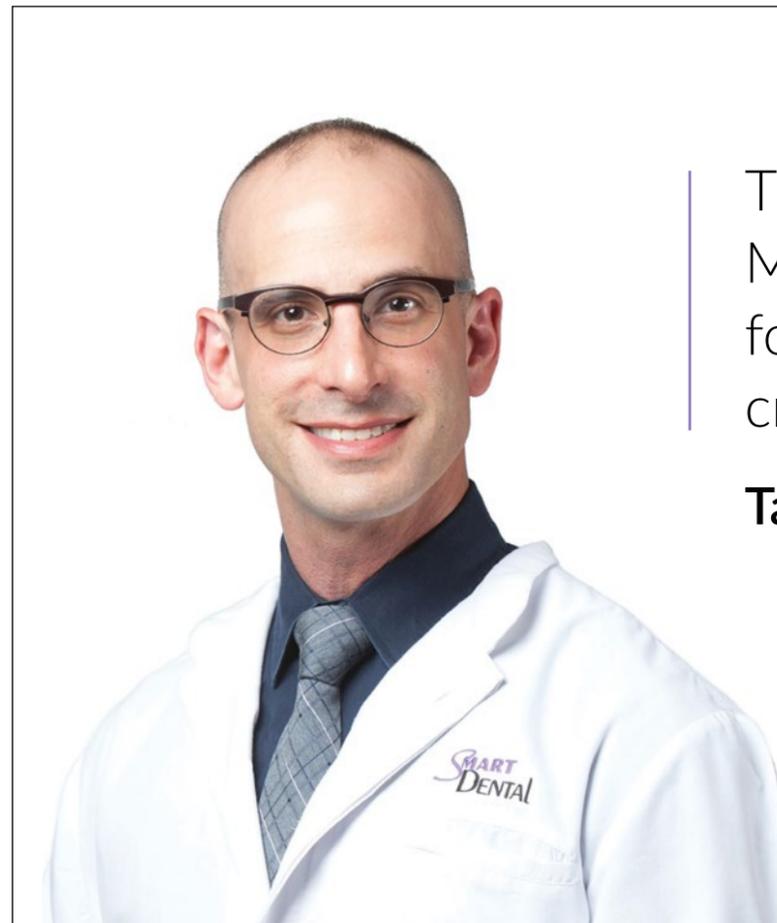
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For Love and Food

Oscar Villarreal and Jordan Wegner of **Fuegos** restaurant talk family, loss, and finding and sharing love through a delicious alliance between innovative and traditional foods.

FOOD & DINING | FARM TO TABLE | PARENTING | GRIEF & LOSS | COMING OUT

WE'VE LIVED TOGETHER IN MADISON since 2013; Oscar is originally from Crystal City, Texas, and Jordan from Horicon, Wisconsin. The journey that brought us together has been winding, with many ups and downs, but we're excited to share this new venture—which is more than just a restaurant to us—with Madison.

We try to give back to the community by donating to charities that support children, animals, and domestic abuse survivors in particular. We also like to create local partnerships with businesses, especially including the farmers who grow our food. Much of that ethic comes from Oscar's own upbringing, where farm-to-table was just the way things were, and using the whole animal—tongue-to-tail, it's called—made both economic and gastronomic sense.

The best part of being partners and working together is seeing each

other so often—a little eye candy to perk up our days. We love being able to take a break to give a smile, a hug, a kiss—some sort of affection at any time of the day.

There are challenges, too, like the need to create boundaries or time limits, and when to save a particular thought or idea for the next day. You have to try to be more aware of when the other person is just exhausted, or when the right time to address something is during a manager's meeting as opposed to our personal time.

We also both have an entrepreneurial drive, which sometimes means we overwork and forget to take care of ourselves, like forgetting to eat, even though we own a restaurant! Having each other to say, "Hey, enough for today, let's take a break and go for a walk at Olbrich gardens, or take our dog to the park. Let's just make some 'us' time."



OSCAR

THE LONG ROAD

My love of growing my own vegetables and raising my own meats was instilled within me from a very young age. Duties of weeding the large fields to supervising and overseeing the shipping, grading, and sizing of our beautiful potatoes all fell to me.

I remember watching my grandmother and mother preparing food for family and friends as we came in from working in the fields to have our lunch and dinner breaks. I enjoyed watching them making fresh, homemade tortillas, the smell from the griddle, and fresh vegetables directly from the fields to our plates/mouths.

I started cooking at a young age, too, helping with the family gatherings (40+ guests were typical) and all major Catholic holidays. When the farm went bankrupt in the 1980s, though, everyone went their separate ways. Fortunately, my parents and my uncles were able to keep their houses. I had to leave the farm and go to work for US Gypsum making ceiling tile. After a couple years there, I realized I had reached

In January 2013, my world shattered when the Walworth Sheriff and Coroner told me that my son, Emilio, had been shot and killed. When I asked who shot him, they told me it had been a sheriff's deputy.

a ceiling of my own after becoming a lead supervisor. The only way to get further was to wait for somebody to retire or die. I decided to dig deep within to see which other career might better suit me.

I realized the most pleasurable times were when the family was together cooking, laughing, and enjoying each other's company. This was a true calling for my spirit, and I pursued as much experience and education in cooking and the restaurant industry as I could.

COMING TO TERMS

I was married right out of high school, thinking that marriage would help me deny and then "fix" my true, gay identity. I thought it would help make me not want to come out and be open with myself and my family and God.

I grew up in a large, Roman Catholic family and struggled while growing up. When I moved to Wisconsin from Texas at the age of six, I found out quickly how large my family really was: the entire school bus minus a few kids were all related to me. Our family owned Turtle Lake Valley (a 2,300 acre vegetable farm with beautiful black dirt).

I remember other cousins being picked on by cousins and uncles because of the way they talked or suspicions of being gay. This made me very uncomfortable, knowing that I would not be accepted. Since

The more the merrier



NESSALLA KOMBUCHA
VANESSA TORTOLANO, CO-OWNER

The world of Kombucha is always a bit weird. That's why we like it. Not only has the industry grown but it has affected how other goods are sold. Bottle companies now have specific "kombucha" bottles. Equipment manufacturers now have "kombucha tanks." Flavor companies flock to try and get their flavors in our bottles (no thanks, we're still all-natural). With that said, there are so many new players to the game, and the more the merrier! With a growth in producers, we get more exposure. Much like beer, there are many different flavor profiles, styles, and brewing methods. Some kombucha is more traditional, like ours, and some are more mainstream, offering a sweeter, more soda-like profile. Kombucha is no longer just a trend, but a staple of your family's healthy diet.

Stronger together



GAIL AMBROSIUS CHOCOLATIER
GAIL AMBROSIUS, OWNER/CHOCOLATIER

In the past year I have seen and experienced a trend toward more collaboration between businesses. This year we partnered with a new woman-owned business in Ecuador that is doing direct trade with cocoa farmers, and then producing small batch chocolate in the country's capital, Quito. Another female-owned business in Michigan asked us if we would like to help bring in a container of a new, award-winning chocolate into the U.S.

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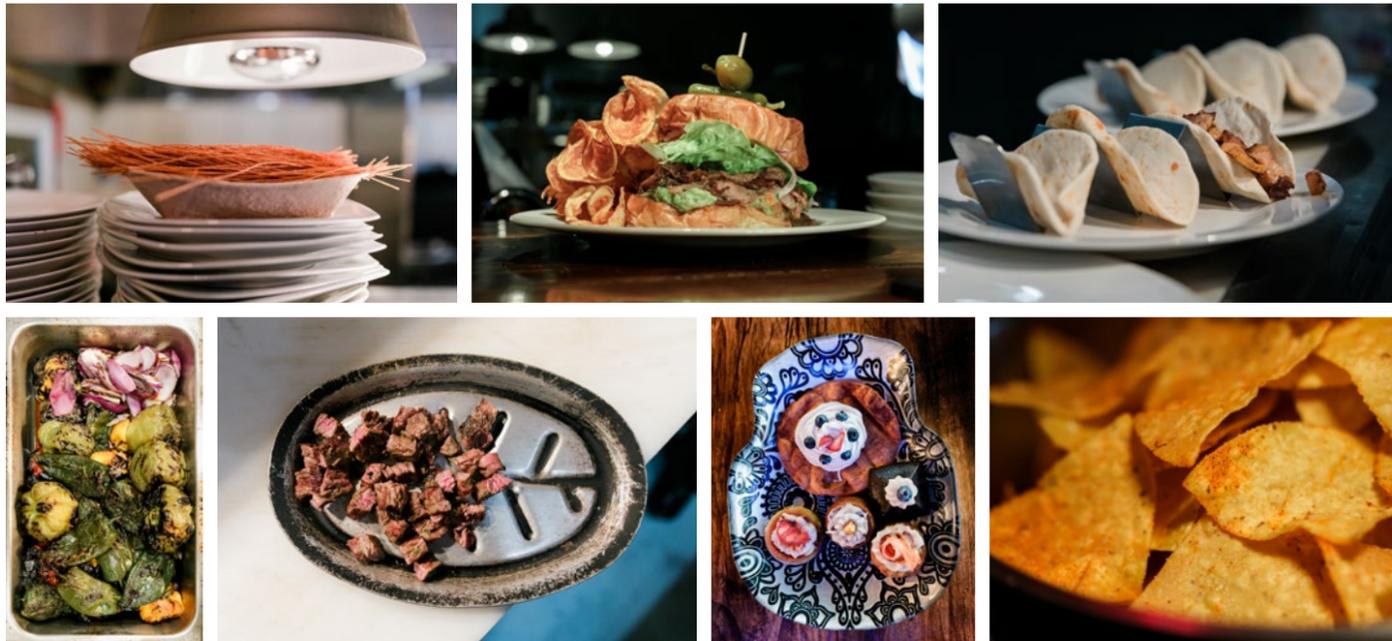
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my best friends were cousins, it was a little hard to get out of the family circle. It wasn't until my second relationship with a woman that I finally came out, unknown to her, as I promised her she would be the last woman I would be with if it didn't work out with her.

My children's mother cheated on me and, after 10 years of being in relationships with women but not being true to myself, I decided to use the opportunity to just end all relationships with women. By this point I had fathered five children (two girls, three boys). I was divorced, unhappy, and could not get along with my inner demons. I turned to alcohol and other substances to suppress my true feelings.

We needed something to help us heal, and, with God's help, this restaurant has helped provide us with that space. My boys are with me at the restaurant always, as their spirits provide me with strength, focus, and drive for each new day.

Through all my accomplishments and education in my professional life, I was simultaneously fighting a battle against alcoholism. I came to the realization that I needed to make changes in my life in order for real dreams to come true. It took three years to even gather the strength and courage to enter my first gay bar.

I had almost given up hope that I would ever find a real soul mate. In the least-expected place (for me), though, there he was. As I listened in during a self-help meeting, I could hear my story being told to me, but I wasn't the one telling it. It felt like God was speaking my story, my truth through him.

When I met Jordan, it felt like God opened my heart. We talked and talked and became best friends. Searching for answers to things that provided common ground between us, it was more of an intellectual and spiritual discovery of our true selves. We had deep discussions of our past hurts all while experiencing the cleansing of our spirits.

We have been inseparable since that day, and he is the true reason why I have not picked up a drink, even when I was faced with indescribable tragedy.

SHOCK TO THE HEART

Though it took me a while to get to where I am, I still would never want to change anything, especially when it came to being a father. I love my children and always will. I always wanted to be a father.

There have been many joys, but also much pain, in parenthood. In January 2013, my world shattered when the Walworth Sheriff and Coroner told me that my son, Emilio, had been shot and killed. They said it was because he had been trying to escape from where he was being held in the hospital. When I asked who shot him, they told me it had been a sheriff's deputy. I asked why was he at the hospital when he was suppose to be at the jail on a probation hold, but they had no answers.

It wasn't until later that I found out—by seeing and holding his body—that he also had a broken nose. He had marks and bruising around his neck, wrists, legs, arms, body, and deep laceration to the back of his head. There were also five bullet wounds including a hole in my baby's hand—not just the single shot the coroner had first claimed to me.

The Sheriff's Department made my son out to be a criminal and gang member to the media. My son was not a gang member. He had tried to stop other cousins and friends from joining gangs. He was a lover and a family protector. He dressed in dress shirts, dress pants, and shined his shoes. This is what he wore to school, not because he had to but because he wanted to.

On January 21 of 2013, my 18-year-old son Emilio's dream of going to college to become an architect was ended, along with his life. There is a good, painful reason for the phrase, "Parents are not meant to bury their children." I struggle with what happened every day, the violent way my son was taken from this Earth. It makes me angry and frustrated, and was another reason why I moved to Dane County. I wanted to get away from Walworth and what had happened there. Questions still haunt me: Why did the officer that killed my son receive an award at the end of the year? Why was my son shot five times in a hospital? Why weren't the protocols for calming down or sedating a patient ever attempted? And on and on....

Purple was Emilio's favorite color, and because of this we have painted and dedicated an area at the restaurant that we call Emilio's Lounge. It's a place to celebrate love and special occasions.



LEAVING A LEGACY

In March of 2014 I was called and told my son, Pablo, had been in a car accident. When I asked where he was, they told me they were still investigating and couldn't release any information. I had to go to Rock County to actually find out that my son's vehicle had rolled on slippery roads, hit a tree, and he and a friend had both died instantly.

Just three days before that, Pablo's son, Emilio (named in memory of his younger brother), had been born. He'd gotten a promotion at his job. His friend had accepted a new position in Madison as a head chef, and they were out celebrating. This tragedy, while incredibly painful, is more acceptable to me as it was God's will. Their lives were taken by his hands not by the will or actions of another human. I feel in my heart that Pablo left this Earth with a smile on his face. He will always be remembered to me as my sous chef.

I always felt like I had this little secret Madison didn't know about in Oscar's cooking, and it was a shame for his talents to be locked away. I'm beyond grateful he has been given this opportunity to create his edible plates of art for the rest of the world.

Pablo loved his tequila, so we have devoted and named the bar area for him: Pablo's Cantina.

There's a blue and purple cloud hanging in the middle of the restaurant, a beautiful piece of art, meant to signify that both of my boys are in heaven and watching over us every day.

My work and my family are what get me up in the morning. Emilio may have left this earth abruptly but, unbeknownst to him, God left behind his two beautiful daughters, too. Pablo's three beautiful children are each a gift. We are trying to make the restaurant a success so that all of the children have something of a legacy from their fathers.

We needed something to help us heal, and, with God's help, this restaurant has helped provide us with that space. My boys are with me at the restaurant always, as their spirits provide me with strength, focus, and drive for each new day.

TIPS & TRENDS

Being a woman-owned business, and believing in a fair price for the farmers, this was an easy YES! After a trip to meet with the organic farmer cooperatives, the three businesses teamed up to bring this chocolate into the country. On a local scale, we are happy to do tastings with beer and wine businesses, and my friend from Madison Chocolate Company and I are brainstorming another event together.

Happier cows, healthier meat



SIMPLY SERVED PERSONAL CHEF SERVICES
JEANNE BENINK, CHEF/OWNER

Grass-fed beef is back in vogue. Not only is it a better-tasting, healthier option because of its higher levels of Omega 3s, but pasture-raised beef is typically raised more humanely, with less antibiotics, and is less taxing on the environment. That does not mean you should have a steady diet of hamburgers and steaks, but when you do enjoy beef, grass-fed is the way to go.

Sudsy saturation



CARGO COFFEE
LYNN LEE, OWNER

The Willy Street area continues to be one of the most desirable areas in Madison for entrepreneurial new restaurants and breweries to open. State Line Distillery and Working Draft Beer Company are two new exciting additions to the neighborhood roster, for instance. In the works is a bar arcade and a new Italian deli from the owners of Pig in a Fur Coat. As Willy Street

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JORDAN

A PLANT-BASED DIET

Oscar and I are pretty different in terms of our diets, but we find common ground in our love of and commitment to fresh, organic, local ingredients. At heart I'm a yogi but also a millennial who prefers a plant-based diet, which stems from my mother's holistic approach to eating. Growing up, I never liked the taste of pork or steak. Believing in compassion for sentient beings, I feel it's wrong to take another life. I can survive without eating animals.

My inspiration also comes from my grandmother, Shelby Raschein, who still goes to the farmers' market at age 81. She has lived in Madison since the 1980s, and my late grandfather, Roy, was a farmer and a bus driver for Madison Metro. They also had their own farm, so she has seen food evolve since the Great Depression and often says they have genetically modified so many things that her baking recipes don't turn out like they used to. She appreciates Oscar's cooking because she knows it's safe to eat, the quality will be of the highest caliber possible, and the flavors are just unreal.

Having the need to cater to both diets/lifestyle at one location is the main driving factor behind our concept. I personally get annoyed having to decipher menus with the commonly found v/vg/plant image attached (instead, we have complete, entirely vegan menus for lunch, dinner, and brunch! No Egyptology degree required here). To fulfill Oscar's desire for eating steak, we used to go to a steakhouse where I would typically be left eating from their iceberg salad bar. Our go-to compromise for eating out is Thai food: no tofu, extra veggies please!

In addition to our need, the couple for whom Oscar worked as a personal chef also said they'd run into similar challenges when dining with clients from different countries and cultures. There was no one location that fulfilled all dietary needs.

We believe we are that location. With Oscar's talents and experience, we can and do offer the community an alternative. You can explore his background and skills by moving throughout all of the menus, where his "tail-to-tongue" ethic is on display as well.

Fuegos' one-year anniversary is May 17. Throughout the past year, we have met many couples and even families with various dietary and lifestyle food needs. They love that they finally have one place where everyone can enjoy their meals and drinks. It's humbling knowing that we have provided the community with a viable solution and a healthy alternative, especially for those who are transitioning into a more plant-based diet.

THE SECRET IS OUT

Being environmentally aware is also one of my passions. I'm all for harm reduction and saving the Earth. One of my favorite movies is "The Butterfly Effect." It reflects the phenomenon that one small

change can have a major impact miles or even continents away. Having the restaurant as a platform to make that difference is just a hidden gift/blessing, and also a responsibility. When making changes with the restaurant, we do our best to think about and see how that change might impact our guests, our community, and the environment.

Having Oscar as my partner is absolutely a saving grace. If I didn't have him and his exquisite cooking abilities, I would likely be left eating raw plants, fruits, and vegetables. Prior to having Oscar in my life, my experiences with "real/gourmet food" were practically non-existent. He has opened up a whole new realm for me to experience flavors and knowledge previously inaccessible. It's inspiring and fascinating when he talks and shares his knowledge with others. It's one of the reasons I love the trivia nights at the restaurant, where Oscar quizzes you on the food he prepared and shares his expertise and passion with guests.

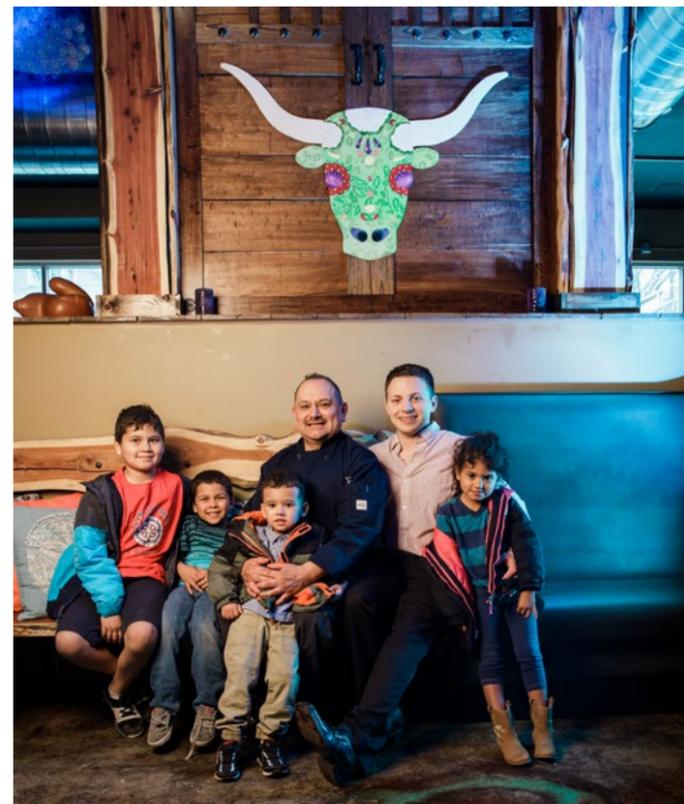
I always felt like I had this little secret Madison didn't know about in Oscar's cooking, and it was a shame for his talents to be locked away. I'm beyond grateful he has been given this opportunity to create his edible plates of art for the rest of the world.

THANK YOU

Thank you Denise & Denise. Thank you to mother and father, Juanita and Alfredo Villarreal, for giving this world the gift of Oscar. He finds joy in what he does when he is able to express himself through food. It is truly an honor to be his life partner to share this journey.

Our end goal is to have our own farmette with goats, chickens, and other animals with beautiful vegetable fields and a bee farm—a literal farm-to-table experience in our own home.

No matter the struggles life presents, we worked together to overcome them, especially the tragedy of the death of Oscar's sons. It's a testament to our commitment to one another that we can cope with the ongoing stress of a new business, and everything else, together. ■



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The Sustainer

Cow & Quince and **Lucky Dog Farm** owner **Lori Stern** looks back on a winding-but-thoughtful path that took her from teaching young mothers to building sustainable and safe community centered around healthy food.

FOOD FARMING EDUCATION ADVOCACY

TWENTY YEARS AGO, in an introductory class for my master’s program, my professor asked us to write a paper on our careers to that point. Fully recognizing that I had done many things in the ten years between undergraduate and graduate studies, I laid it all out.

I was dismayed that the professor’s feedback was simply, “You call this a career?” Apparently my ‘point A to point B’ was less obvious to her than it was to me. And as I reflected on what to write for this narrative, one thing that struck me was a lesson I learned in working with young people in an alternative program I started in a rural community in Washington State. For the career development core course, I would have them do a values clarification exercise. Always wanting to be authentic, I did the exercise with them: “Moral Consistency”—living your truth in work and life—that was what that professor didn’t understand about what defined my career, and is what has created my path.

TEACHING ADVOCACY

I started my professional life as an English teacher in Los Angeles. I taught high school, then middle school, and eventually adults. My students were diverse; many of them newly arrived in the United States. I loved teaching. And being a new, very young teacher in such a large school district, I had a lot to learn about school systems, political systems, and how my students were not always served well by them. I advocated as best I could as I struggled myself to keep my classroom safe and address the needs that presented, often being mistaken by school counselors and front office staff as a student rather than a teacher. It was also at this time that I was pregnant with my first child.

Fast forward five years, and I found myself teaching childbirth classes to teens. I had gotten certified to teach Lamaze after attending a friend’s birth, supporting her through such a profound experience,

watching life come into the world, but not doing the work of birthing myself. I was hooked!

Then when I had the opportunity to teach in an alternative school just outside of Olympia, I felt like I had maybe found my calling. Although not a teen mom, I had been treated like one. I understood how it felt. In this small community, these young women were not only judged, but the medical treatment they were receiving was not the standard of care for the time. Many of them were left physically and emotionally scarred.

When I interviewed for a full-time teen parent educator in a rural community south of Olympia, I was offered the job in the time it took to get back home. After the first year, getting to know these young women and their stories, I found out that most of them had dropped out of high school just a few credits short of graduating. Most of them wanted to finish high school. Because I had been a high school teacher, it seemed obvious that I should start an alternative school housed at the community college where I was employed.

Five years later, we averaged 120 students a year and had seen young people not only graduate, but enroll in college. I got to watch their babies grow and thrive through our high-quality childcare setting and the parenting classes that met the unique needs of teens. But it was hugely political. That was the most difficult part of the job. I had to learn collaboration, coalition building, ‘sucking up to those that have the power’ for the greater good. I wrote grants and got them. I won a state-level award via a nomination by my students. They were my heroes. It was

The more time I spent learning about access to healthy food and applied a social justice lens to who tends to grow food on our behalf, I got more interested in knowing where my own food comes from.

the time of welfare reform and attacks on young parents and adolescent sexual health (a time not too different than now). We had a tradition in the program that when someone turned 18, I would help her register to vote. I taught my students to advocate for their children and themselves.

FEELING, AND TAKING ACTION

During this time I added to my areas of passion teaching sexual health. Washington State in the ‘90s was the epicenter of sexuality educators. These nationally known experts created the Northwest Institute for Community Health Educators (NICHE) to provide professional development to those teaching about sexual health in their communities. I attended first as a participant, and then as a core staff member.

It was during my second weeklong NICHE that I came out to myself. I had married my high school sweetheart and had three kids; just like my parents had done. At the time, it felt like an expectation to do so as the oldest daughter. My mother always teased me about being aloof, but during that week in the mountains of Western Washington, something broke open and I had access to my feelings for possibly the first time in my life. And as this new awareness settled in, I began to put together pieces of my identity that were beyond expectations of family, friends, and society. There were crushes on girls that were ignored, colleagues and peers in my women’s studies courses who assumed I was “straight,” and closed-off conversations that I might be otherwise.

However, because I was a sexuality educator, I always told my students, “Just because you feel a thing, doesn’t mean you have to act on it.” I had a young family and a commitment. I came out to my spouse with no intention beyond that. But over the next two years, dealing with other people’s assumptions about my identity along with my intense

continues to grow, some are asking when this neighborhood will be saturated and have enough alcohol-related businesses. In a rapidly growing city, many neighborhoods, like ours, will be having this conversation. When are there enough drinking establishments in one neighborhood? The people who live there will have to figure this out as they sit on an outdoor patio drinking a house-made beer.

Asparagus + Wine?



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ANDREA HILLSEY, OWNER

The organic nature of asparagus makes just about all wines come across as metallic, which is pretty gross. There is, however, one wine that can stand up to asparagus. Its name is grüner veltliner. This great Austrian white works well with everything. The wine can be crisp and fresh showcasing white pepper notes, or can be rich and full-bodied showcasing more peach flavors. Either way, grüner is a no-brainer this spring, and I know a place you can find some!

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longing to be part of my community, as well as a deep desire to be in love—to live my truth—became too painful. I left my marriage, came out, and in 1999 met my wife LeAnn.

My two oldest were just starting middle school and LeAnn took us all on despite this (as someone who had worked with adolescents, I might have run screaming or at least suggested I call when the youngest turned 18). We settled into parenting as a team, with LeAnn taking the role as my support. I learned in that period of time that not only did I come out, but my children were now part of the LGBTQ community as well. I feel lucky that they took this in stride, acting as advocates in their own ways.

As my career moved from managing an alternative high school to state level and national advocacy for adolescent sexual health, I took this experience with me in my work with schools. Many teachers and administrators have told me that they really don't have any gay students, so issues of bullying and suicide related to bias are not their issues. But students have parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and friends. Somehow that message resonated because it de-sexualized the conversation; despite the fact that sexual identity is about "being" and not "doing."

FOOD FOR FAMILY, FOOD FOR JUSTICE

My career came to be defined by social justice via my own experiences and the jobs I held. And when funding went from sexual health to childhood obesity, I shifted with it, but continued to look more broadly at issues of inequity in health. The more time I spent learning about access to healthy food and applied a social justice lens to who tends to grow food on our behalf, I got more interested in knowing where my own food comes from.

I had the amazing opportunity to work for an initiative in the Clinton Foundation and was able to meet President Clinton and hear him speak. He talked about population health, equity, and environmental health in sweeping and connected ways. I started considering food miles, pesticide use, and the environmental impact of my own food choices. LeAnn and I read *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver, which chronicles her family's experience of eating local for a year, and LeAnn and I were motivated to try it for ourselves. And to buy a farm. And to move back to the Midwest to be closer to family.

In 2010, when our youngest daughter Hallie graduated from high school, we packed up our lives in the Pacific Northwest and moved to Wisconsin. I was born in Milwaukee; LeAnn in Missouri. Madison was the progressive community we were looking for after living out west. We started looking for a small farm and fell in love with the rolling hills of the Driftless region and found a place in New Glarus.

Before we arrived, we were referred to as "the girls." Our first trip to the small town grocery store and help with our purchases resulted in an exclamation of "You're a sister, too!" after seeing the rainbow sticker on our yellow Ford Escape. Where had we landed?

LAYING DOWN ROOTS

We spent the first year settling in, caring for LeAnn's mother who had advanced dementia, and fixing up the farm. When we purchased, it had been inhabited by the farmer's son and his two best friends. The boys came with the farm. One is my son-in-law, another one is pretty close.

We opened a farmstay in 2012 and relied heavily on the expertise of a group of women farmers in our county that were farming small and raising food for community supported agriculture and farmers markets. We got goats, then layers, then pigs, and eventually meat chickens. Although eight years have passed, we still do not have the garden and orchard we had in Olympia, Washington. Hopefully this year...as we have said for the past six.

We enjoyed serving people breakfast and connecting them with their food. Many of our guests wanted local food, just like we did, but as it is in many rural communities, growing or raising food, most of it ends up in the bigger cities where there is greater demand. We decided then to open a restaurant, to bring all the great local food we knew of from our women farming friends to the table of our neighbors and visitors that come to New Glarus for the beer.

Never mind that I had never worked in a restaurant (unless you count

scooping ice cream in college). My youngest daughter had restaurant experience. My soon-to-be son-in-law Jared was a chef. And they were both "in." Hallie took over the management and front-of-house, getting us set up on social media, and with a point-of-sale system, and setting the standard for giving our customers a unique experience and education about where their food comes from. I gave Jared control of the kitchen, and he proved himself to be incredibly talented, pushing the envelope of what people expect in a small, rural community restaurant.

As we watched the election results in November 2016, I was sure that was the end of Cow & Quince. But when we opened as usual on Thursday morning, tables filled. I realized then that we were a safe place for our community.

Four years later, what was meant to be a market and small eatery has been named a "destination restaurant" by *Madison Magazine* two years running. In Cow & Quince, we have received recognition for our local sourcing with 94% of our food dollars being spent within 50 miles of New Glarus. I have applied my values of moral consistency and social justice to my business and our place in the community.

A TRUE COMMUNITY SPACE

I know rural communities can feel scary for many people of color and those of us in the LGBTQ community. As we watched the election results in November 2016, I was sure that was the end of Cow & Quince. I felt that fear and thought our regular customers would as

well. But when we opened as usual on Thursday morning, tables filled. I realized then that we were a safe place for our community. We did a fundraiser for our high school Gay-Straight Alliance on behalf of all students, and have gotten some amazing teenage dishwashers to work for us because we are a safe and accepting place to work. The next step just might be a New Glarus, family-focused Pride event!

I spent over 20 years of my career working in health and education policy, advocating for big issues that truly impact the lives of young people and women every day (reproductive health, sexuality education, transgender student rights, access to health care, mental health care, etc). When I opened Cow & Quince, I was acutely aware of the fatigue that happens when you try to push these big-issue boulders uphill. There were legislative sessions and governmental budgets where successful advocacy was not progress, it was simply ensuring that they "did no harm."

In 2014, when we opened Cow & Quince, I had also been practicing yoga with great seriousness and intensity for six years. The Hindu notion of "being in the world the way you want the world to be" felt doable. Cow & Quince represents this for me. It is the ultimate collision of all of my passions and values.

I work on food systems, economic development, inclusivity, and health from a place of "being." Sometimes I feel guilty that I am not working on the big picture, but we are really too busy for wallowing for very long. I have amazing customers both at the farmstay and at the restaurant, who at minimum appreciate the food and the space we have created.

Every once in a while one of them articulates and validates the larger ripple that we have in living our truth and being morally consistent for both New Glarus and its visitors. Those are the days when all this crazy, never-ending hard work really pays off. ■



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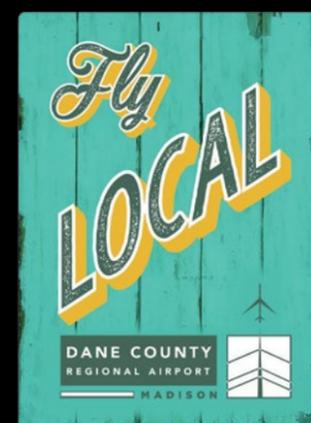
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Walk This Way

Brewer **Tim "Pio" Piotrowski** reflects on the path less taken, hiking the Appalachian Trail, and his journey toward opening his own brewery in Madison.

TRAVEL ADVENTURE BEER

ON APRIL 27, 2017, I SAID GOODBYE TO MY PARENTS. I left them with a sealed envelope that read, "Only open in the event of coma or death of Timothy Piotrowski."

The emotion that surrounded leaving those instructions—about life support, exactly how to celebrate my life in the event it ended, to whom to give my money (and whom not to give my money to), and who gets to decide all the details—was surreal. I boarded an airplane for a journey that could end in a variety of spectacular ways, including the slight but real possibility that I wouldn't make it back at all.

I was flying to Georgia to begin walking on the Appalachian Trail (AT), a journey that would take the next four-to-six months of my life.

I would walk nearly every day, and almost every night I would sleep on the ground. I would climb up (and down) mountains. I would likely have no sturdy shelter from storms—and there would be storms. I would encounter a variety of people, bears, snakes, parasites, ticks, mosquitoes, flies, and moose. Everything necessary to keep me alive and moving I would carry on my back. I was going to walk 2,189.8 miles, through 14 states, to Maine!

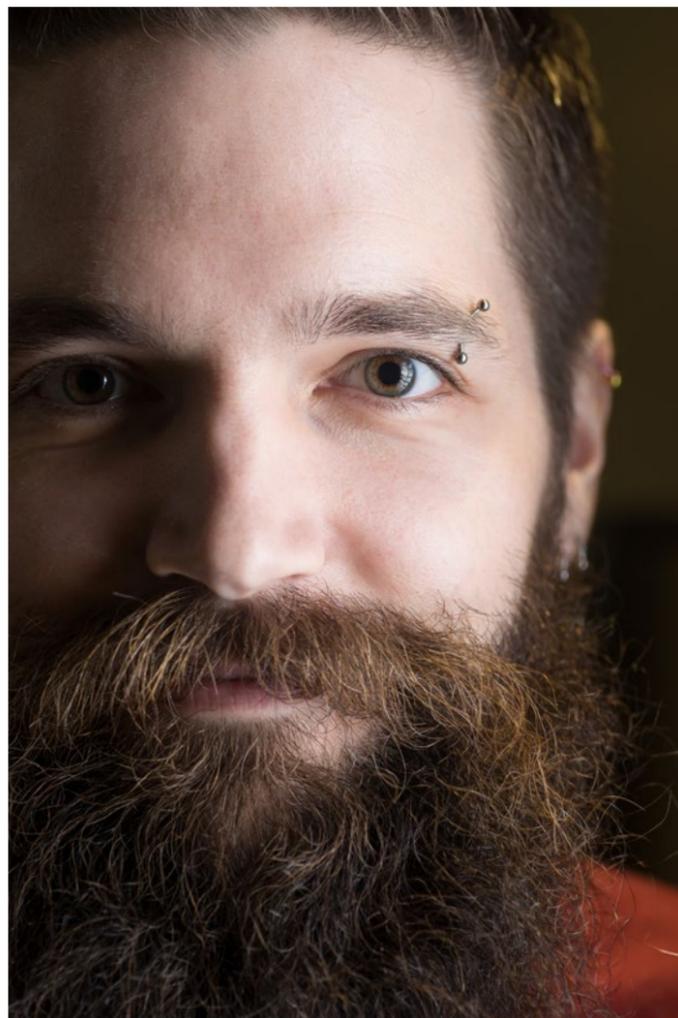
I set this personal goal a decade ago. At the time, I read many of the books out on the subject: *A Walk In The Woods* (of course), *A Season On The Appalachian Trail*, and a few others. The timing just wasn't right until last year. After college, I thought that I needed to get a full-time job so I could have health insurance (turns out there were other ways). I didn't have enough money (that point was true). There were relationships and career goals that kept me from the Trail, too.

BREWING SUCCESS

Let's back up to the last job that gave me a paycheck. I'm a professional brewer. I worked my way up in the industry from education through the American Brewers Guild to packaging cans at Oskar Blues, Assistant Brewer at Rock Bottom in Colorado, to a Head Brewer in Minnesota. Finally, I was hired to build and operate the brewery for the brewpub-in-concept, the Freehouse, in Minneapolis.

We opened the Freehouse in December 2013 and I operated the Brewery for more than three years. We grew, added distribution, hired more brewers, and (by our third year) had the largest production of any brewpub in Minnesota. I believe this was a testament to the strength of our network of restaurants and the quality and variety of beers we offered. My focus was always on the guest experience and protecting beer quality—and, subsequently, reputation—at all cost.

My Freehouse experience was ultimately validated in October



Delta Beer Lab is a laboratory for excellence in beer, relationships, and society. My next journey is about creating a better way of living, touching lives, and changing our communities—and the world—in whatever large and small ways we can.

when we were awarded two silver medals at The Great American Beer Festival. Of the 2,217 breweries that entered the competition, 296 medals were awarded, and we were one of only 38 winners that were awarded more than one medal. I am still humbled and honored by the appreciation for the hard work of our team.

I decided to leave the Freehouse after I accomplished what I set out to achieve, passing the reins to two of my talented brewers who would bring fresh ideas and energy while leading the brewery into its next stage. I'm so proud of what they have accomplished already and how they will shape the future.

THE LONG WALK

My last day at the Freehouse was April 15, 2017, and I took my first steps on the Appalachian Trail (AT) just 14 days later.

AT by the numbers: 14 states, 2,189.8 miles, 464,500 feet of elevation gain/loss (equivalent to climbing Mt. Everest 16 times), total duration



of 146 days with 129 hiking days. Average overall hiking day mileage of 16.98 miles, 18.25 miles average full-day mileage (less "neros," >8.9mi), 30.3 max miles in one day. Eighty nights spent in a tent, 24 in a trail shelter, and one spent under the stars—plus 32 spent in hostels or motels.

QUESTIONS I HAVE FREQUENTLY BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE:

Are you hiking alone? Yes. Well, I saw people nearly every day. The AT is a very social trail. More than 4,000 people attempt a thru-hike each year (approximately 25% complete it), and then there are section hikers, day hikers, trail angels, park visitors, and townsfolk. I actually walked with another person three times, for a total of 13 days, and one was my friend, Marisa, who I planned a week with in New York. "The Bubble" encompasses the large majority of thru hikers who start their hikes in Georgia between March 1 and April 1. I went to the trail for solitude and challenge, so I avoided the bubble by beginning on April 29th. They had quite the head start!

Did you bring a gun? No. No! Do you know how much a handgun weighs? About 2.6 pounds (I had to Google that). But really, I was honestly more afraid of meth addicts in the southern Appalachians than of black bears, and I wasn't even really afraid of the people I would run into. So, no! I even downsized my pocket knife—saving weight—to a blade less than 11/16" long.

You're hiking the whole way? Yes.

How far is that? 2,189.8 miles. It took nearly five months (146 days).

Did you ever want to quit? No. Absolutely not! I injured my left knee in North Carolina 137 miles in, at "Jump Up," climbing down nearly 5,000 vertical feet in just 4 miles. I spent two nights at the nearby Nantahala Outdoor Center to see if the pain would pass, and then got a ride to my cousins' house in Atlanta. The next few days were excruciating, contemplating that, while I hiked nearly three times farther than any previous trip, my decade's-long goal might be over at just 6% complete. After about a week of rest, recovery, and visits to local breweries, my knee was beginning to feel better and I began planning my return to the Trail, which would wrap up 11 long days off. No, not once did I want to quit, and the thought of the first or a potential future injury ending my journey weighed heavy on my heart.

"How much food did you carry?" I averaged leaving a town with four days of food. I resupplied 37 times: half buying food from grocery stores or markets near the Trail and the other half was shipped by my parents from Stevens Point. Through this method I was able to utilize bulk purchases from Costco and the allocation of vitamins and vacuum-sealed meals my mom prepared.

What did you eat? After about 500 miles, I had my menu under control. I would wake up and eat a Clif Bar and drink Carnation Instant

TIPS & TRENDS

The science is still new, but that hasn't stopped folks from wanting to experience it for themselves. You can find it at Willy Street Co-op and a few other spots around town encapsulated and in tinctures; as well as a few body care products to be used topically. Check in with your doctor before exploring!

Store expansion and a facelift



CAPITOL CENTRE MARKET
MITCH EVELAND, STORE OWNER

The market is getting a facelift! After serving our neighborhood for over 35 years, Capitol Centre Market is adding 3,000 square feet. You'll love our new features, including a full-service deli, expanded produce, bakery, dairy, and beer. The totally new look should be finished by the end of September this year. Stop by and try out our all-new self-checkouts, too!

Local goes to the next level



FROMAGINATION
KEN MONTELEONE, OWNER

Restaurant/specialty stores are taking the local trend to the next level by adopting a farm and a cheese maker. The goal is to work closely with the producer, and everything on their menu comes directly from that source. The staff also works on the farm and gets to know how the product is planted and raised and what goes into bringing it to the restaurant/shop. It takes farm-to-table even further, and helps farms find economic sustainability. Working with them directly enhances the whole food system.



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Breakfast. After an hour of hiking, I would stop for a burrito of flour tortilla, peanut butter and Nutella. An hour and a half later, I would eat a granola bar. Two hours later, I'd eat some fruit snacks. Then another PB & Nutella burrito. More snacks. And about five miles before the end of my hiking day I would stop to cook dinner—a freeze-dried Mountain House meal packet or home-prepared “Mountain Momma.” Later, when I was writing my daily blog post on my phone, I would usually eat Peanut Butter M&Ms for dessert, just two-at-a-time, so I wouldn't eat the four-day bag in one night. On average, I consumed 4,000-5,000 calories per day (and lost more than 15 pounds).

How heavy was your backpack? When I started the Trail, my pack with four days of food and a half-day's water was 49.5 pounds! This definitely added to the cause of my knee injury. I've backpacked with

a heavier pack many times before, but one thing I learned was that I was not backpacking [for a week]; I was long-distance hiking, and the only way to survive was to carry absolutely only what you needed, plus a comfort item or two. In Franklin, NC, I bought a new sleeping bag, water bottles, and water filter, and mailed the old equipment home. At the Quarter Way Inn hostel, I traded out my tent (4lbs-4oz for 1lb-3oz) and sleeping pad. As for food, rarely would I ever carry an item that had less than 100 calories per ounce of weight, and if I did I would eat it the first day out. Excess packaging never made it onto the trail. I cut my pack down to 35 pounds, and that was in no way “ultra-light.” A friend I met from Australia carried just 18 pounds and I met a couple of brothers that lashed their own pack frames from bamboo, carrying hardly anything warm, just the food for themselves and their dogs and very primitive shelters.

What was the funniest moment on the Trail? Just north of Damascus, VA, the AT shares the Virginia Creeper Trail, an old railroad bed converted to bike trail. The AT came out of the woods to join the Creeper, and I saw this large group of ladies ahead of me preparing for a group photo. As I approached they continued to not notice me. As I got close to the group I made a snap decision to “creep” up on them and photobomb their shot. I was right behind the group when the photographer saw me and motioned for me to step aside. At that point, one woman turned, thinking that I was a bear. She screamed. Most of them screamed! I wasn't a bear...just a smelly AT thru-hiker. We all laughed and then took some selfies. Many of these brave women continued to follow my blog through the rest of my journey!

WHAT THE TRAIL GAVE ME

I don't want to be cliché, but the Trail was life-changing. I hiked for the mammoth challenge and I succeeded. I went for solitude in nature, and I received that, but I also met some incredible people from across the world. Nugget, Chilliwack, Special K, Just Dan, Pappy 12 & Best Wife, Mantis, Lakes, Pearl, Just Jim, Bartender, Disciple, JAX Dad, Screech, and Double T were just a few of the amazing people that touched my life. These are their Trail Names, to protect the innocent or offer a fresh start or to allow a hiker to write their own destiny...and that's how it is. My “Trail Name” was Pio, and that's the name I've gone by for the past 21 years, since my early days on camp staff.

I did not hike the Trail to meet people, and those that came into my life affected me, changed me, are a piece of my journey, and a part of my life going forward. When you step out of your comfort zone and accept everything that life has to offer, you are forever changed and you are infinitely better for the experience.

Nearly five months on the Trail also gave me plenty of time to think. I did pass the time (and miles) with music, audiobooks, and podcasts, but I still had a lot of time for reflection. I generated ideas for my forthcoming brewery. I thought about life, and death, and what it means to be a member of the human race. I thought about history, about Alexander Hamilton, about Franklin D. Roosevelt, about Barack Obama, about Bernie Sanders, Martin Luther King Jr., about the Women's March, and about the morally reprehensible president (and Wisconsin governor) that currently hold office. How did we get here? Why is there a population so misinformed that the justice of humanity (and its responsibility to future generations) could be so sidetracked? I came to terms with my thoughts about our life and times, and to understand more you'll probably have to buy the book I haven't yet written!

Delta Beer Lab will not accept tips in its taproom. Employees (front-of-house and in the brewery) will be paid a living wage and all employees will be eligible for a revenue-sharing program.

The last stage of my journey was my favorite part! When I was in the glory of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, I deliberately slowed down. Hikers generally need to finish at Mount Katahdin by October 15 due to early winter weather. After my injury in the South I was worried about getting there by that date. But when I arrived in New England, I realized that I had plenty of time; my pace was incredible. I wanted to enjoy every last day I had on the AT. I took my time, I swam in ponds, I bathed in the glorious Maine sun. I hiked, and I lived every day to its fullest.

TIPS & TRENDS

A return to the classics



THE OLD FASHIONED
JENNIFER DE BOLT, GENERAL MANAGER

We've seen customers moving back to the old standbys. Schlitz and PBR have moved up to be two of the best-selling beers we have. People are ordering less labor-intensive cocktails and more classics. We have hit more than 800,000 Korbel Old Fashioneds sold. We are hoping to hit 900,000 by the end of the year. Wisconsin artisan cheese plates have been on the rise, and of course, our cheese curds still lead the pack. Look for exciting dairy specials in June for Dairy Month (Bourbon Peach Sundae and more) plus special food weeks coming for the rest of the year.

Word (and taste) on the street



THE WISE AT HOTELRED
MIKE MAGEE, EXECUTIVE CHEF

Street food is rising—specifically dishes that are fast and casual. Street food is particularly appealing because of its bold flavors, convenience, and the diverse options available. People tend to lean toward food that is comfortable, familiar, and satisfying. We've noticed that guests coming in are looking for shareable food that can be easily paired with adult beverages. It is particularly interesting to see this comfort food in a sophisticated restaurant context. We are integrating more street food-style items like tacos, ramen, and potstickers. Our Wednesday night event, Tunes, Taps & Tacos, features five specialty tacos, tap beer, and live music.

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I made it to the final summit, having hiked almost every day for half a year. I walked in 10 (of 14) states I hadn't previously visited. I walked more than 5,000,000 steps—take that, Fitbit!

And when I climbed my last steps to the top of Katahdin, I was not going back. After savoring this mountaintop experience with other hikers, I chose a descent called "The Knife Edge." The weather was good and I wasn't done hiking. If I didn't have a brewery to start back home, I would have headed back toward Georgia, hiking the sections I wanted and skipping the ones didn't. The Knife Edge, the photo I'm looking at as I write this, was the most dangerous part of my journey—and it wasn't even on "The Trail." The views from this ridge literally drop off on both sides. There were a dozen times where a gust of wind could have ended my story, but the weather was great and the trail was destined to be part of my challenge, part of my story.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL TO TRANSITION

The AT journey is often at a transition point in life for hikers. For some it's between college and career. For some it's between career and retirement. For some it's the escape to deal with the terminal cancer of a partner. The Trail is different for every individual, yet we were all together in that experience.

My journey now brings me to Madison, where I'm developing a craft brewery of my own. Delta Beer Lab is a laboratory for excellence in beer, relationships, and society. My next journey is about creating a better way of living, touching lives, and changing our communities—and the world—in whatever large and small ways we can. We will expand access to the craft beer community through well-crafted products without barriers to gender, race, or sexual orientation. This is directly quoted from my business plan, available to bankers and investors alike. This is my journey. This is the change I wish to see in the world.



The process of developing a new business has not been easy, but I have always been an individual who sets high goals and works tirelessly to achieve them. Yes, it would have been easier if the State of Wisconsin would have offered \$500,000 grants to 6,000 small businesses to create 90,000 jobs (instead of \$3 Billion for a potential 13,000 jobs at Foxconn). However, I'm not in business for macro economics. I want to make real change.

The AT journey is often at a transition point in life for hikers. For some it's between college and career. For some it's the escape to deal with the terminal cancer of a partner. The Trail is different for every individual, yet we were all together in that experience.

Delta Beer Lab will not accept tips in its taproom. Employees (front-of-house and in the brewery) will be paid a living wage and all employees will be eligible for a revenue-sharing program. When I managed the Freehouse Brewery, five of the seven brewers were able to, and chose to, purchase a house. This is the change I wish to see in the world. People matter. Employees matter. Delta is the chemical and mathematical symbol for change, and Delta Beer Lab will tirelessly work toward forward change in our communities. It's in my DNA; it's in every fiber of this company.

Stepping out into the unknown opens a person to new experiences, the beauty one can only see by being present, the people we meet, and how they change who we are if we just let them in. These stories are just a part of my journey.

Read Pio's blog at Pio2017AT.wordpress.com ■



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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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FEATURE → OUR HISTORY

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HISTORY POETS QPOC LATINX

Lesbian, Latina, Poet

Historian **Dick Wagner** offers a glimpse of the life and works of Milwaukee-based poet, **Carmen Murguia**.

A MILWAUKEE NATIVE, born in 1966, who frequented the Forest Home Library as a child, Carmen Alicia Murguia grew up in a traditional Mexican-American family. Her father, born in Mexico, crossed the Rio Grande at age 18 and began working on cotton farms, eventually making his way to foundries. He attended U.W.-Milwaukee and served for 33 years as executive director of Centro Hispano in Milwaukee and also served on the city's housing authority. Her mother, Carmen M. Valdes, was born in Milwaukee and Carmen dedicated one of her chapbooks of poems to her.

"I was raised in a civil rights family," the younger Carmen later noted. Carmen Murguia went to Head Start at the Guadalupe Center, one of the first bilingual centers in the city. She recalls that poetry started changing her life as a little girl at St. Anthony's grade school. It was also there and then that Carmen realized she liked girls. Carmen came out to her parents in her senior year of high school.

MINNEAPOLIS AWAKENING

Her real awakening came when she went to Minneapolis in 1988 and joined a coming out support group at a women's center. She discovered Amazon Bookstore, one of the mainstays of feminist bookstores nationwide, which also had a Chicana section that brought influential and relevant writings into her life.

MILWAUKEE HOMECOMING

Her poetry reflects on her eventual homecoming to Milwaukee, which had called out to her. One of her romantic views was that the immigration of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans to Milwaukee was when "poetry arrived to this city by the lake." She would go on to write for LGBTQ publications like *In Step*, *Quest*, and the *Wisconsin Gazette*. PrideFest gave her a Stonewall Award for her decade-long commitment to the Milwaukee LGBTQ community.



LATINX POETRY

Murguia frequently recites—or rather, proclaims—her own poetry. Murguia was included in the anthology *Between the Heart & The Land: Latina Poets in the Midwest* published in 2001. She also was recognized as among *Milwaukee Magazine's* "30 Most

Influential People You Should Know." The Latina/o Midwest Reader included her and notes about how "her parents' social justice work informed her own later development as an LGBT activist." Murguia is credited with "creating space for current and future queer generations to succeed." She is one of very few LGBTQ references in the reader on Midwest Latinxs.

While most of her published chapbooks are set in the 21st century, they reach back to childhood experiences with finding poetry on the greeting cards at Woolworths. Aware of the tragic Bizet opera "Carmen," one of her poems is on the New Carmen who,

"Is no victim, Of a tragedy,
But like any good opera she's got her drama."

The poem cites warnings given to a kid of 15 about getting married and men not wanting "a girl with so much books in her." The New Carmen helps other women change.

MARIACHI ASPIRATIONS

Murguia proclaims a desire to be a mariachi because they get to serenade women. She recalls in the poem, "When I grow Up I Want to be a Mariachi," that "Seven-year-olds shouldn't look at 'other' little classmates the way I look at you!" Another poem is entitled, "I am a Marimacha and Proud of It" which she sees as "a unique blend of a lady and a gentleman."



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

She dedicates an ode to Las Mujeres (women) of the NCAA basketball teams. She envisions herself as a woman playing basketball in the male dominated space of the Klotsche Center on the U.W.-Milwaukee campus. In this, the writer views adjectives as three-point shots and equates a haiku with a one-handed hook shot.

Her Mexican heritage is remembered in the poem, "You Bring Out the Mexican in Me!" It includes the strongly proclaimed line, "The Cesar Chavez Visionary and Dolores Huerta FUERZA in me!" Another poem on "Loving A Manic Mujer" cites Mexican volcanic imagery in "El Popocatepetl wakes up." Her poems comment on everything from tragic anti-Hispanic injustices in Milwaukee, to the city's Mexican fiesta on the lakefront.

REACHING BACK, REACHING AHEAD

In a comment jointly celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and LGBTQ History Month she claims the power of minorities coming together to cause a revolution. In the poem "I Come from Greatness!" Murguia reaches back to the "Greek Goddess Lesbos and the Aztec God Xopilli—the Flower Prince." She also claims Sylvia Rivera and other drag queens from the Stonewall Riots as lineage.

She concludes about her heritage, her past, and Wisconsin roots, "I come from places where my Lover and I can see a future together." ■

Madison LGBTQ Archives

Scott Seyforth shines light on the Archives' 602 Club Photo Exhibit.

During the 1950s and '60s there were few public places LGBTQ folk could gather in Madison. The community existed largely in a series of private social networks and house parties.

One of the few places in Madison that welcomed gay men was a smoky watering hole at University Avenue and Frances Street called the 602 Club. The unpublicized arrangement at the time was that the back half of the bar was for straight patrons, while the front half, along the bar, was for gay patrons.

John Riggs was an undergraduate student in the '60s who bartended at "The Six." From 1964–66, while he was bartending, he took hundreds of photos inside the bar—including a few precious images of the gay men gathered at the bar in the small hours of a Sunday morning prior to bar time. These images provide a rare glimpse into a Midwestern gay male gathering place in the mid-60s, prior to the Stonewall Rebellion. They are included in a larger exhibit of Riggs' beautiful images, "The 602 in the Sixties—Hotbed of Cultural Evolution," on display at the Class of 1925 Gallery, Memorial Union from June 14 through July 27. Go to madisonreunion.com for information on an opening reception.

U.W.-Madison Archives is helping preserve stories from Madison's vast queer past. You can contribute your materials to the Archive. Contact us at uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu or 608-262-5629.

Funding for the Madison LGBTQ Archives has been provided by the New Harvest Foundation, Inc., William Wartmann, and the George L. Mosse Program in History. Our fiscal sponsor is Outreach LGBT Community Center.



Gay men gathered in the 602 at the front of the bar on a Saturday night, c.1965



602 Club Owner Dudley Howe reads the paper at opening, c.1965

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TRANSGENDER RIGHTS LAW

Allies in Law

Meet the independent group of attorneys behind **Trans Law Help Wisconsin**, and how they're helping transgender and non-binary people navigate the rapids of a complex legal system.

TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY individuals routinely experience discrimination due to their gender identity and expression, including employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and significantly higher rates of violence. Having state and federal identity documents that reflect an individual's authentic name and gender can go a long way toward breaking down some of these barriers. Trans Law Help Wisconsin was organized by Abby Churchill and peers to help ensure that individuals who are transgender or non-binary and who live in Wisconsin have access to information about this process.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK

It is critical that every individual have their



authentic name and gender recognized on state and federal identity documents. However, for the transgender and non-binary communities, this is no easy feat.

According to the National Center for Transgender Equality's 2016 Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, more than two-thirds (68%) of survey participants reported that none of their identity documents reflect their authentic name and gender. Nearly one-third (32%) of those survey participants were verbally harassed, asked to leave, denied services, or assaulted after showing their ID.

Individuals who are transgender and non-binary experience significant financial disparities compared to the U.S. population at large. Although only 12% of the U.S. population identifies as transgender or non-binary, nearly one-third (29%) of survey participants reported living in poverty. More than one-third (35%) of those surveyed identified cost as the main barrier to changing identity documents.

Employment discrimination causes further financial hardships. Thirty percent of participants who were employed reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing some other form of mistreatment in the workplace due to their gender identity or expression. This discrimination renders an already vulnerable community unable to afford legal assistance.

Given this data and knowing all of the hardships our friends and family members have faced, we want to do our part in addressing these serious concerns.

HOW THIS PROJECT BEGAN

Abby's internship with the Transgender Law Center in California sparked her interest in working with the unique legal needs of the transgender and non-binary communities. Once she returned to Wisconsin to finish her law degree, she helped with a few name changes (including that of her now-spouse) and gave a handful of presentations on legal issues impacting the transgender and non-binary communities.

Things really picked up when, shortly after the most recent presidential election, Abby posted a brief note on her Facebook profile stating she would be happy to provide pro bono legal assistance or answer any questions regarding name and gender changes on identity documents. That post was shared 230 times (which is huge for an infrequent Facebook user) and created a flood of comments, messages, emails, and phone calls from folks all over the country wanting information and assistance. As a result, Abby got together with a few fellow professionals in Madison to host the first name and gender change clinic. Since then, the project has continued to grow under Abby's direction and the group's ongoing efforts.

WHAT WE DO NOW

Trans Law Help Wisconsin is under the wing of Community Justice, Inc., which provides legal assistance to low-income individuals in many different areas of law. We focus specifically on name and gender change proceedings in Wisconsin to help individuals in the transgender and non-binary communities obtain corrected identity documents (birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, etc.).

At our free quarterly clinics in or near Madison, we provide information on the process for obtaining a legal name and/or gender change. We walk attendees through the whole process, from filing the petition to publication of the name change and acquiring an amended or new birth certificate. We also provide limited representation to individuals who would like more assistance with completing forms or who want us to review their completed forms.

In addition to our clinics, we are developing a program that will offer volunteers to support people during their name and gender change proceedings. We are also creating a referral network of trans-friendly attorneys in many different areas of law.

Trans Law Help Wisconsin is also working on a Wisconsin name and gender change guide in partnership with Out-Reach and finishing up our website.

WHERE WE HOPE TO GO

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that folks who live in Wisconsin and identify as transgender and non-binary have access to legal resources for their unique legal needs. To that end, we would like to have name- and gender-change clinics in various locations around the state. We will work on providing clinics dedicated to more specific topics, e.g. name/gender change for youth and name/gender change on immigration documents. We will continue to develop our volunteer program to ensure that folks have support when attending their name and gender change hearings. We will also continue to advance our information request methods, and hope to add a helpline at some point in the future.

The attorneys who are part of Trans Law Help Wisconsin are passionate about and dedicated to providing legal services to the transgender and non-binary communities in Madison and throughout the state. The more people who know about us, the more people we can help. Please share our information with anyone you know who might be interested. We can be contacted at translawhelp@gmail.com.



MEET THE ATTORNEYS

ABBY CHURCHILL is a Madison attorney and practices in the areas of LGBT family planning, estate planning, probate, and guardianship. Her LGBT family planning practice encompasses assisted reproduction and surrogacy. Abby is a co-author for the gender transitioning chapter in a forthcoming State Bar of Wisconsin PINNACLE® publication, and has authored articles for *Our Lives*. She received both her J.D. and her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin.

LYNN LODAHL is an associate attorney at Hawks Quindel, S.C. in Madison. Her practice focuses on family law and employee benefits cases. She also represents clients in harassment and domestic abuse injunction or restrain-

ing order hearings. She is experienced in LGBT family law and legal matters involving non-traditional families and domestic partnerships.

ELIZABETH MCINERNEY is an attorney at Lawton & Cates, S.C in Madison. She focuses her practice on family law and personal injury/civil litigation, but also has experience in wrongful death, landlord/tenant law, probate, and estate planning. Elizabeth received her B.A. in English Literature from Marquette and her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

JENNIFER NIEMEIER has a general practice in Dodgeville and focuses on family, criminal, civil, and bankruptcy law. Jennifer is a 2015 graduate of the U.W.-Madison where she graduated magna cum laude, Order of the Coif. Jennifer is an avid animal lover, hobby farmer, and mom of a spirited two-year-old.

POLLY SHOEMAKER is a staff attorney at ABC for Health, Inc. in Madison, where she provides legal assistance with health insurance issues to families with children with special health care needs and low-income individuals. She received her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School and her undergraduate degree from Lawrence University. ■



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AGING LGBTQ ELDERS GRIEF SUPPORT

A Unique Grief

OutReach's **Michal Osier** looks into ways traditional grief support groups for bereaved spouses may fall far short of serving LGBTQ widows and widowers by examining our unique challenges and needs.

SOME TIME AGO, Agrace HospiceCare asked OutReach to collaborate on making their existing partner/spouse grief support group curriculum specific to LGBTQ needs. What words, for instance, might need to be changed to make things more inclusive?

There were a few that needed work, but as I read through the group's curriculum, I came to understand that what most needed to be addressed wasn't the material that was already there. For LGBTQ participants, it was a question of what was not there and needed to be.

What was lacking was the recognition that LGBTQ people's intimate relationships are at the epicenter of the fault lines where the pressures and stresses of sexism, homophobia, and transphobia build up in our lives.

Discrimination is rife in America, but it's unique to the LGBTQ community that the discrimination we experience focuses on our closest relationships. When people speak disparagingly of our "lifestyle," they mean that LGBTQ people have our intimate, loving relationships with people of the wrong sex (and, in the case of transgender individuals, are also wrong about our own gender identity). Implicit in this message is that if we'd only get involved with the right person of the "right" sex, we'd be "normal."

Our love relationships have been made invisible, misrepresented, and attacked. We have often had to hide them as the price of safety and inclusion in our families, workplaces, and neighborhoods. No matter how loving, com-



The bereaved LGBTQ person will have to deal with outside reactions to their loss, which may range from the clueless and uncomfortable to the outright denial of the relationship's meaning and value.

mitted, and long-lasting, our relationships still fight for legitimacy. This additional layer of anger and heartache compounds the grief, and is unknown to our heterosexual counterparts.

An LGBTQ partner/spouse loss support group needs to make visible our invisible hurts, and support the strengths that have enabled us to survive them all.

Relationship legitimacy: LGBTQ individuals' primary relationships have been invalidated, seen as inferior to "real" relationships/marriages—even viewed as corrupting and perverse. We've all gotten this message on social/cultural and religious levels; many, if not most, have gotten it from family members as well.

The bereaved LGBTQ person will have to deal with outside reactions to their loss, which may range from the clueless and uncomfortable to the outright denial of the relationship's meaning and value. This may be less likely to happen when the couple was legally married, since marriage confers legitimacy in our society, but LGBTQ people have been excluded from the option of marriage until very recently and our right to marry remains under attack.

Family of origin issues: A spouse's death throws the surviving spouse into a pit of anguish; it's then that people need the secure love of their families. Tragically, it is somewhat rare

for LGBTQ people to have maintained positive relationships with family throughout our lives. Being rejected by some, or all, family members is a loss most know well.

The resulting schisms may never heal. They may have dwindled in their hurtfulness over time, as the now-adult child moves on with her/his/their life, only to take on new and awful power when the beloved's death leaves the bereaved person in need of comfort and consolation that they cannot get from the family that repudiated them. It's not unusual for families to treat the death of a life partner as if it were the death of a friend—sad, certainly, but not life-changing. An LGBTQ grief group member might get messages along the lines of, "Guess you have to find a new roommate now."

Legal and financial concerns: Love and financial security should not be tied together, but they are. The marriage contract confers over 1,000 rights to spouses. Bereaved spouses—solely heterosexual until very recently—get Social Security survivors' benefits, immediate, uncomplicated access to the deceased spouse's pension, retirement, IRAs, investment income, marital property, veteran's benefits, and more. In the absence of marriage, none of these income sources and legal protections for the bereaved partner exist. More LGBTQ elders live in poverty than do our heterosexual peers, and that's one big reason why.

Caregiving-related issues: Around 85% of caregiving for heterosexual individuals is provided by immediate and extended family members. For LGBTQ people without biological family to call on, caregiving often becomes the task of the frailer individual's partner (if partnered; more LGBTQ elders are single than their age-equivalent heterosexual counterparts), with, perhaps, help from family of choice (a non-biological family of friends and exes mutually committed to aiding one another).

According to "Caregiving in the LGBT Community" (Daniel B. Stewart and Alex Kent, published by SAGE, 2017), "LGBT older adults are more likely to be caring for one another in isolation... About two-thirds of caregivers provide sole care (43%) or are the primary caregiver (25%)." The stress of unrelieved caregiving leads to exhaustion, isolation, and feelings of guilt for not having done enough.

These are the issues an LGBTQ partner/spouse grief group must be prepared to name, support, and honor. We deserve no less. ■



MICHAL OSIER, MA, LPC, is the LGBT Senior Advocate for OutReach. She's a newly retired psychotherapist and a lifelong writer who lives with her beloved wife, Nancy Hutson, and their excellent dog, Rosie.

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TOBACCO MINORITY STRESS ADDICTION

The Family Habit

Tobacco companies specifically target communities that suffer higher levels of minority stress, leading to higher rates of smoking among LGBTQ people.

I HAVE LOVED SMOKERS my entire life, while hating that they smoked.

I grew up surrounded by smokers. This has led to a weird juxtaposition of scent, taste, and sight memories for me. Butane from a Zippo lighter reminds me of fond summer days playing cribbage with my grandfather. Leather and stale cigarettes remind me of the scent that greeted me every time I snuck into my mother's purse for a piece of candy.

At the same time, I can also clearly remember the disgusting taste of sipping on an old soda someone had ashed in earlier without me knowing. I will always remember seeing my aunts and uncles sitting around a kitchen table at night playing cards and loving how the hazy cloud of smoke hung above and around them like they were giants in a cloud. I also remember seeing my mother and my grandfather with tubes and air tanks to help them breathe, and how different my aunt looked once she had her breasts removed.

These memories, good and bad, stick with me, and unfortunately, for some of the people mentioned above, memories are all I have of them now.

I consider myself lucky, though. I never started smoking. As a kid, my siblings and cousins would join me in giving all our family members grief about smoking. As we got older, one by one, I lost my allies in the fight against tobacco to the substance itself. One by one, my siblings and cousins also took up the family habit. The people in my family who smoked all said they wanted to quit, that we kids should not start, and that it is hard to quit. This was part of my childhood, and something I had hoped would be different as I got older.

I started to come out of the closet when I was 17, and I quickly made close friends with other LGBT teens. I saw that the family habit I grew up with was also part of my new LGBTQ family, as most of my new friends also smoked. I had learned from many previous years of trying that telling people I did not like them smoking and that I thought they should stop was not effective. Instead, I wanted to learn as much about tobacco as I could.



Just this last year, Newport was offering an "exhibit" at Pridefest in Milwaukee to encourage smokers to stay addicted. Although it is no longer legal to hand out free samples of cigarettes, Newport found a loophole and handed out packs for \$1.

Flashing forward 20 years, I now know more about tobacco and how it affects the LGBTQ community in particular. Like most folks, I previously knew that smoking tobacco increased rates of cancer, cardiovascular, and respiratory diseases, but now I know that it also produces impotence and accelerates the aging of the skin.

Nicotine as a drug is incredibly addictive, which can make it hard for folks to stop. On average, it takes a person seven to eight quit attempts before stopping for good. Additionally, while quitting smoking cold turkey is popular, using nicotine replacement therapy, like the patch or nicotine gum, can greatly increase someone's chances of being successful.

I also know how smoking tobacco affects the LGBTQ community. Around 40% of LGBTQ people living in Wisconsin identify themselves as smokers. In general, we see that people who report high levels of stress also tend to report higher levels of smoking. We see this pattern to be consistent in the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ people tend to report more stress in their lives due to the stigma and discrimination related to their sexual orientation. This is known as Minority Stress and is one of the leading risk factors for smoking among LGBTQ people.

Aside from Minority Stress impacting the

lives of LGBTQ people, the tobacco industry specifically targets them. For example, tobacco products often are one of the top five advertisers in queer magazines and newspapers. The tobacco industry also targets their advertising around events that LGBTQ people are likely to participate in, such as the arts, gay festivals, and bars.

In 1999, Philip Morris gave \$60 million to groups important to LGBTQ people, such as AIDS service organizations, and then spent \$100 million advertising their "generous" contributions. Just this last year, Newport, a cigarette company, was offering an "exhibit" at Pridefest in Milwaukee to encourage smokers to stay addicted and to draw in new lifelong customers. Although it is no longer legal to hand out free samples of cigarettes, Newport found a loophole and handed out packs for \$1.

Exhibits like these are troubling for so many reasons. Both the LGBTQ community and the African American community have been targeted through advertising and deliberate marketing of tobacco products. Menthol cigarettes in particular have been marketed to the African American community, and these are proven to be the hardest to quit.

A piece of good news is that reports show young people are becoming less likely to start smoking cigarettes, but we are not out of hot water just yet. While cigarette use has been dropping, E-cigarette use has spiked. We do not know as much about E-cigarettes as we do tobacco cigarettes, but the little we do know is that it is not good for you and some of the flavor additives that manufacturers add can cause respiratory issues, as these chemicals have been FDA approved to ingest like food but have not been for inhalation. The often-sweet flavors themselves also entice young people to start up.

On average, it takes a person seven to eight quit attempts before stopping for good.

Throughout my life, I have learned that I can and do absolutely love people who smoke, and I will support them in their efforts to quit, if that is something they want. My biological family has grown in the past 20 years of my learning, and now many cousins, siblings, aunts, and uncles have quit smoking. My biological family has been working hard to quit. Now I just need to help my LGBTQ family see the issue at hand and, once and for all, quit the family habit. ■



ANTHONY HARRIS is the Statewide Program Manager for Diverse & Resilient. He has a Bachelor of Science in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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QPOC CODE SWITCHING RACISM

The Chameleon

Cedric Johnson explores experiences of being the 'token Black kid,' fighting his own internalized bias and the assumptions made by those around him about who he ought to be.

'WHY DON'T YOU GO OUTSIDE and play with the other kids?' 'He has that good hair!' 'Why do you talk like a white person?' 'Where are you from originally?'

From the time I was a little boy to today, I grew accustomed to people saying these things to me. Since I didn't fit neatly into one box, people wanted to 'figure me out.' As a young Black boy who always knew he was gay, it was hard enough to figure myself out much less trying to live up to the expectations of those around me. So I learned to adjust my behavior and speech based on who I was around. I did it to cope; I did it to survive. The motivation was simple: I wanted to fit in. We now call this 'code switching.'

When I was 12 years old my grandparents decided to send me to a private, majority-White prep school. As a six-foot tall, effeminate, bespectacled Black boy with a penchant for cardigans and neckties, I stood out even more. There was racism and rampant elitism. I got a taste on the very first day of seventh grade when a classmate said, 'You live on the other side of the river? Did your house cost a dollar?' It was hurtful, because again, in spite of my keen sense of self and surroundings, I was being pigeonholed. I felt like my identity was

Shortly after moving to Madison a guy said to me, 'I'd never get into a relationship with a Black man, but I'd have sex with him,' it cracked my confidence, because I was being commoditized.

being determined for me because who I was wasn't good enough.

At first I worked hard to fit in, but thanks to coming out and having access to a support network of friends and family I began to step fully into myself. We had a large art studio where my drawing and painting abilities flourished; we had a very active theater department where I built my confidence in front of crowds and developed my sense of style; my love of the written word was nurtured while studying Chaucer and learning French; my interests were reflected in the steadfast friendships I made; and my ambition stoked through elective leadership roles within and outside of school. However, the code switching was so embedded that it morphed from a desire to assimilate to an effective way of keeping people out.

At its best, this heightened sense of awareness gave me empathy, sensitivity, and a charisma that attracted a lot of attention. At its worst, this chameleon-like ability allowed

me to overpower my feelings, to build a fortress around my own vulnerabilities for fear that I'd somehow lose ground in the confidence boost of high school and college. I'd reclaimed my identity through sheer will and determination.

That confidence got me my first good job out of college. It made me bold in the pursuit of whatever I wanted, whether that was a job or romantic partner (of course I never wanted anything serious because that involved being vulnerable). It was still exhausting, and I'd become aloof from my own family. It had gotten out of control. I'd used the switch so much it had broken.

I decided to move to Madison in 2010 for a fresh start. To go someplace where I knew no one, where I had nothing to distract me from achieving more and feeding the monster I created. In fact, this 'experiment' was only meant to last for five years, then it was on to a larger city. In truth I was trying to run away, but you can only do that for so long.

Sure, I was still bold and ambitious when I arrived in town, but it didn't take long before I was placed neatly in a box. There aren't many out, gay, thirty-something, professional Black men in Madison and navigating the fraught racial environment compelled me to retry the switch, but I'd left

it broken. I could comfortably move through all sorts of spaces in town, but it didn't feel the same. It felt like I couldn't keep my eye on the ball anymore and it made me uncomfortable; I felt vulnerable. When, on a first date shortly after moving to town a guy said to me, 'I'd never get into a relationship with a Black man, but I'd have sex with him,' it cracked my confidence, because I was being commoditized.

There was a young Black middle school boy who actually said, 'White people don't have mental illness, but Black people do because there's something wrong with us.' I'll never forget it.

I still pursued leadership roles because it's something I always found fulfilling, but I started to question why I was invited into certain decision-making spaces. Was it because I was young, Black, gay, or some token combination thereof? Anxiety became a frequent problem before a close friend suggested I go to see someone. I had no qualms or embarrassment about going to a therapist, because I knew that I'd bartered my true self for the comfort of code switching.

It was in the world of human services

where I saw the disparity for people of color in Madison. I heard directly from young people that they felt they didn't matter. There was a young Black middle school boy who actually said, 'White people don't have mental illness, but Black people do because there's something wrong with us.' I'll never forget it.

It sounds cheesy, but that young man forced me to reflect and allow myself to feel the frustration and fatigue of a Black man who'd spent so much time compromising for the sake of false security and fitting in. True to form, I decided to live in a style that's true and authentic, no matter where I am or with whom I'm interacting. That was three years ago and it still isn't easy, but if you know me you know that my will is strong. It's what I need for myself and my relationships; it's what young, queer people of color need to see; and—if I have anything to do with it—it's what a city like Madison should invest in.



CEDRIC JOHNSON is the Community Services Manager at Madison Gas & Electric, where he works specifically with communities of color and faith communities to ensure inclusive and fair access to services.

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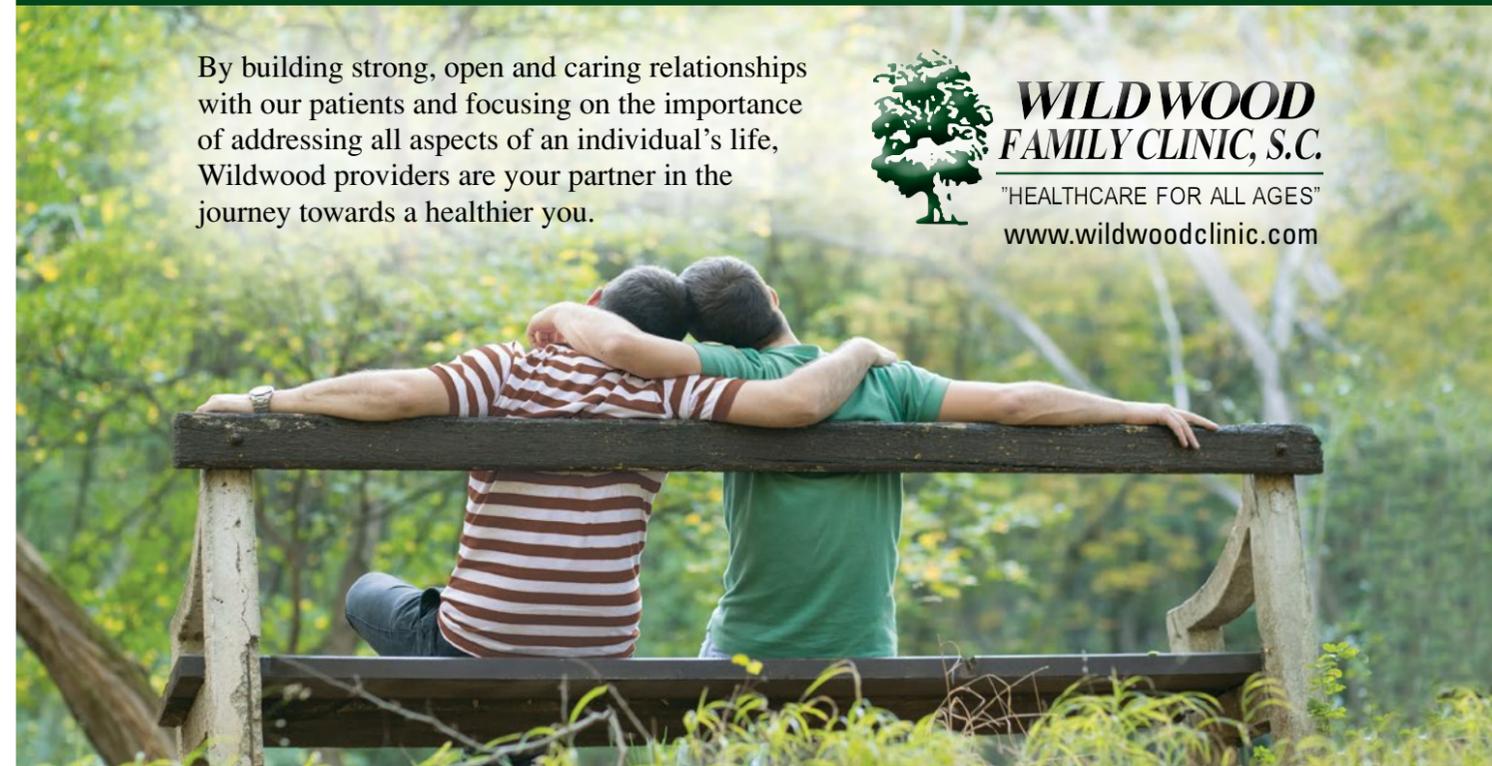
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FOOD COMMUNITY LGBTQ BUSINESSES

The Tempering Fire

Beloved east-side dessert shop **Chocolaterian Cafe** suffered a major fire in February and is relying on the goodwill of friends and supporters to help them survive.

"LITTLE GOOD COMES FROM PHONE CALLS BEFORE 6 A.M."

The GoFundMe set up to support employees and owners of beloved neighborhood dessert shop, **Chocolaterian Cafe**, opens with that line. For anyone who's experienced a sudden loss, the words ring all too true.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, February 25, the Schenk-Atwood institution suffered a major fire. Later deemed the result of an electrical failure in the historic building's basement, the fire caused \$750,000 total in damage and forced the closure of both the **Chocolaterian** and the showroom of **Vault Interiors & Design** on the first floor. Business offices on the second floor were also closed.

The fire worked its way up through walls and into the attic, where firefighters cut holes into the roof to allow access to fight the flames. Thankfully, no injuries were reported.

Leanne Cordisco, the founder of the cafe, and her new business partner **Alex Aulisi**, are faced with hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage and employees who suddenly lack work, among other headaches and heartbreaks.

Friend **Meredith Westover** sprang into action, setting up the GoFundMe to raise money to support the independent business during the recovery, but first and foremost to pay employees and help them get back on their feet. As of the time this issue went to print, the fundraiser had met just under half of its \$50,000 goal (the fund is now closed), with the first payout going directly to cover payroll for the first month after the fire.

"We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all the support you've shown us," Leanne and Alex wrote in response to the support. "Knowing that our customers are so loyal and caring has really helped to keep our spirits up during this incredibly trying time."

With the flagship Atwood location closed, the business has lost more than half of its retail income as well as the ability to generate wholesale and online income. The shop was the home to the kitchen where a variety of desserts and candies were made and packaged, including the **Christine's Gourmet Toffee** line that helped make the operation famous.



Cordisco

The decision was made not to reopen the space on Atwood even after renovations are complete. The fundraiser allowed the business to stay afloat at all in the immediate aftermath of the fire, and the focus will now turn to the Middleton location, as well as restarting the wholesale operation.

According to the owners, the income from the Atwood location was helping cover the start-up costs of the Middleton cafe, too, which has only been open for 8 months but now has to carry the lion's share in terms of keeping the business afloat. Happily, business at the second location has been brisk since the fire, with customers making the trek west to support the cafe. They've since added weekend brunch, as well as live music offerings every Saturday night at 7:00 p.m.

Leanne and Alex report some silver linings: They were able to keep five of the Atwood employees on board by bringing them to the Middleton shop. Further, they "found jobs or job opportunities for all of our other Atwood employees thanks to the generosity of so many local businesses. The Madison restaurant community is magical."

There are other plans in the works, in addition to the fundraiser, to help increase revenue and allow the business to survive. "Some of you may have seen Alex's note about finding places in the neighborhood to carry our products until we're back up and running," the owners note. "We're also looking at implementing a subscription program, streamlining online ordering to increase internet sales, increasing our catering operation, and pursuing a couple of interesting leads for regional sales."

Unfortunately, the decision was made not to reopen the space on Atwood even after renovations are complete. The fundraiser allowed the business to stay afloat at all in the immediate aftermath of the fire, and the focus will now turn to the Middleton location, as well as restarting the wholesale operation.

"At this point, we honestly don't know whether or not we'll be able to find and open a new east-side location," a post to the cafe's Facebook page notes, "but in order to ensure that our east side customers aren't left high and dry, we are working with a number of east side businesses to carry some of our treats."

You can read more about Leanne's story and the **Chocolaterian** in our May 2015 issue, at ourlivesmadison.com. In the meantime, make the trip to Middleton to enjoy the food and sweets of the second shop location. The friendly atmosphere, and yummy menu items we loved at the Atwood location are on offer there, with the addition of weekend brunch.

"We'd like to express our gratitude again for every single friend of **Chocolaterian Cafe**," Leanne and Alex close in their message. "We are so overwhelmed by the outpouring of love. Thanks for all your support, good vibes, visits to Middleton, and hugs. We love you back." ■

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YOUTH | COMING OUT | PHOTOGRAPHY | TRANSGENDER

Finding My Voice

Our Lives contributor **Charles Wetzel** talks coming out as a home-schooled kid in an Evangelical church, and finding a passion for both photography and politics.

MY LIFE IS PRETTY WEIRD—I’ve been home-schooled all my life, I’ve been professionally taking portrait photos since I was 14 (including for this magazine) and, instead of having the normal hobbies of a 17-year-old, I spend most of my free time learning everything I can about civics and participating in political activism.

ACT 10 AT NINE

When I was nine or so, my dad took me to the Act 10 protests at the Capitol in downtown Madison. We had a basket full of muffins to give out to our fellow demonstrators and a sign that said “homemade treats and productive dialog.” During my early childhood, my parents made sure that I knew I had a voice, and that I can and should use it. They made it clear that expressing my views and speaking my mind was the right thing to do. My family was constantly talking about politics and the importance of civic engagement.

Because my parents are both cis and straight, they didn’t talk much about their feelings toward the LGBTQ+ community—even though their feelings were and are that of love and support. My parents never gave me the impression that they thought being queer was a negative thing, they just didn’t talk much about the fact that it was a positive one. My family went to, and still goes to, a politically diverse Evangelical church that’s not too enthusiastic about LGBTQ+ inclusion. In the homeschool groups I was part of in grade school anti-queer attitudes were the norm, and those with affirming attitudes had no platform to speak up.

HARD TO EXPLAIN

When I was a pre-teen and discovering my identity, it was hard to know what I was and wasn’t allowed to say because I didn’t have a clear idea about what my parents and family thought about the queer community. On one hand, I knew that I should make my voice heard, but on the other, what I wanted to



At the ripe old age of 14, I decided to come out. I told my parents that I was trans and mostly interested in dating guys.

Nick Loveland and I organized **The Equality March For Unity And Pride On Madison**, an event meant to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Pulse massacre.

say was, “I really like boys, and makeup, and dresses!” Because I grew up in a household that didn’t talk much about the LGBTQ+ community or the issues it faced, I was unsure as to how proclamations like that would be received. I didn’t know how to explain what I was feeling. (Quick footnote: Both my parents come from education backgrounds. They made the decision to home-school me through grade school because it presented unique and valuable learning opportunities, not because they felt animosity towards the public school system. I made the choice to remain home-schooled through high school for the same reasons.)

ALLY

I decided that the safest and most comfortable way to express myself was through becoming the most outspoken and active “ally” I could. Whenever I was having a conversation with friends or family where queer rights came up, I would argue fervently for them.

But after a few years of knowing who I was and expressing myself vicariously through my opinions and political beliefs, I became frustrated by the lack of clarity my friends and family had when it came to my identity. So, on April 11, 2015, at the ripe old age of 14, I decided to come out. I told my parents that I was trans and mostly interested in dating guys. After coming out, I had the clarity I needed to begin to express myself authentically and honestly.

ACTIVISM

After a couple years of practicing honesty and authenticity, as well as witnessing my country and my state elect a demagogue president, I was ready to dive headfirst into activism. I started photographing every political protest and rally I could, I started going to every Dane Dems meeting there was, and I tried even harder to make a difference in my community. In 2016, my amazing friend Nick Loveland and I organized The Equality March For Unity And Pride On Madison, an event meant to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Pulse massacre as well as bring light to the issues that face the LGBTQ+ community. We had speakers from local activists and visionaries to state and federal representatives, such as Melissa Sargent and Mark Pocan. I’m currently interning as a campaign photographer for Kriss Marion, an amazing woman running for state senate in District 17, as well as looking at colleges on the east coast and in central Wisconsin. I’m hoping to study for a BA in art or a degree in political science. I’m so unbelievably excited for what the future has in store. ■

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UW Health surgeons Adam Brinkman, MD and Scott Chaiet, MD met during their residencies at UW Health. Now married, they appreciate the diverse and inclusive environment at UW Health for employees and patients.



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