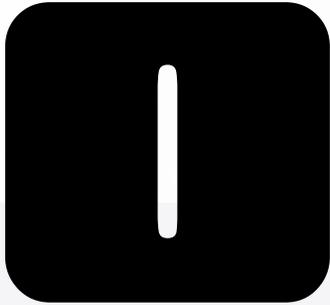


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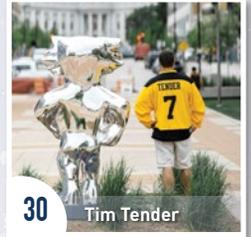
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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

EXCLUSIVE INSERT: 2018 OutReach Pride Parade Guide

July/August 2018



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“We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference, and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity.”

-George Takei



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- Alliant Energy
- Covance
- CUNA Mutual
- Boulders Climbing Gym
(month-long GSAFE fundraiser & Queer Climbing Social)

Cover photographed by Ian DeGraff.



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Patrick Farabaugh
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

Emily Mills
Editor

Virginia Harrison
Copy Editor

Contributing Writers

- Sarah Akawa
- Dereck Barr-Pulliam
- Kathy Flores
- Randi Hagen
- Tamara Packard
- Sami Schalk
- Tim Tender
- Amber Walker
- Charles Wetzel
- Mario White
- Karin Wolf

Contributing Artists

- Ian DeGraff
- Samantha Dutcher
- Spencer Micka
- Duke Virginia
- Charles Wetzel
- Thomas Yonash

Business Manager
Matt Jelinek

Webmaster
Genesis Keefer

National Advertising Sales
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EDITOR'S NOTE EMILY MILLS

THE FIGHT GOES ON

WE'VE HAD A HARROWING few months here at *Our Lives*. In May, someone threw a rock into our office's front door, shattering it. The outpouring of support from the community that came in response was frankly overwhelming and amazing, and went a long way toward overcoming the hurt and anger we felt at the hateful act.

Also in May, we published an article in the magazine called "TERF Wars,"* where I delved into a subsection of radical feminism that specifically targets and demonizes transgender women. I looked at where subscribers to that ideology have a toehold right here in Madison and had gained access to the airwaves via WORT's public Access Hour.

Most all of the response from within the community was very positive, from folks who were unaware of the existence of trans-exclusionary radical feminism all the way to those who had been targeted by it and were thankful for the support. We also received a small deluge of angry emails and social media posts denouncing us for running the article, most of them the result of a form letter campaign launched by one of the subjects of the piece.

While the vile, misinformed, hateful rhetoric espoused in many of the letters was disheartening, I took comfort in the fact that they were sent by what amounted to a tiny (if very vocal) minority, most of whom weren't even in Wisconsin. Still, it's troubling that this strain of anti-transgender fear mongering and ignorance exists within the very community that has the most reason to embrace transgender women as sisters and allies in the fight against patriarchy and heterosexism.

I count myself fortunate and privileged to have a platform in which to talk about these issues, and offer what support I can to the cause of truly intersectional feminism. My job is not under threat, at least not because of angry letter writers. My boss/only coworker and the Publisher of this magazine, Patrick Farabaugh, was and remains 100% supportive of the piece I wrote and the larger work of advocating for and lifting up the voices and experiences of trans and non-binary members of our community.

There are many people who've spoken up about these issues and been viciously attacked online and harassed in person, some who've lost jobs or other opportunities because of it. Many more still have to think twice about speaking up in the first place, because their positions at work or in life are more precarious. I've heard directly and often in private from several folks who've told me as much, too, and it makes me all the more committed to speak out.

In this summer of Pride, I hope you'll join me in either newly dedicating or reinvigorating yourself to fight on behalf of all members of the LGBTQ community. We should embrace our differences, intersections, and commonalities, not spit on or bury them.

The first Pride was a riot kicked off by transgender women of color, butch lesbians, and homeless gay youth who were fed up with the oppression they endured. They knew what we must all hold on to, tighter than ever: Our strength lies in our unity—not in spite of, but in full recognition and celebration of our diversity.

*"TERF WARS" UPDATE AND CORRECTIONS:

Since first publishing the article in our May/June 2018 issue, I was able to do further follow-up on the issue of how Thistle Pettersen gained access to WORT's airwaves to broadcast the interviews with Julie Bindel and Meghan Murphy, two well-known trans-exclusionary radical feminists, despite past protest at the station over her broadcasting similar content.

First, a correction: I wrote that Murphy is an author for *Feminist Current*. She's also the founder. Second, a clarification: Pettersen did apply with the intent to use the time to cover "feminist music and a recent radical feminist conference" but then changed course and aired the interviews instead. Several WORT staff members expressed to me that they were under the impression Pettersen had been told she couldn't broadcast anything that touched on the subject of transgender identity, and were unaware that she had changed the subject of her program prior to going on air.

News and Public Affairs Director Molly Stentz clarified that, "Thistle → Continued on Next Page



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applied to broadcast an interview with a musician, Nedra Johnson. She sent the file to [Access Hour producer] Ken. He sent it to me. It was laced with profanities, among other things. I told her she would have to cut them or bleep them in order to be legally broadcast. She then changed her mind several times over the course of months. She told me she wanted to discuss a 'Women in Media' conference she was organizing in Chicago that was going to focus on women in journalism, [Bindel and Murphy] included."

However, I was told that information was not shared with staff or board members who had been involved in previous discussions about restricting what Pettersen would be allowed to talk about on air.

Since then, on June 3, WORT Board President and co-founder David Devereaux-Weber published a letter condemning Pettersen's Access Hour program, though it was written as a personal statement and not to represent the station in an official capacity. The WORT Board of Directors met on June 20 to discuss making a formal statement, though none was available by press time. The station has also added clarifying language before all Access Hour promos and programs to make clear that it is public access and not official WORT content. Debate continues among staff and volunteers about the purpose and use of the Access Hour, and possible policy changes in the future about how guests and content are vetted. ■



Originally from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, **THOMAS YONASH** has lived in and photographed around the Madison community since 2012. With backgrounds in journalism and environmental studies, Thomas explored photography as a staff photographer and later photo editor at the student newspaper, *The Daily Cardinal*. More recently, and since graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, his portrait work makes a connection between the body and the environment, often utilizing a subject's home, backyard, office, or a familiar place as a critical piece of the photo rather than just as a background. You can see his work at thomasyonash.com

DUKE VIRGINIA is a photographer, intersectional feminist, Womanist, and vegan originally from Detroit's west side. Her passion lies in capturing candid portraits, telling stories from the lens of a black, queer womyn in which she often shares a common identity with the people she photographs. You can see her work at dukevirginia.com

RANDI HAGEN is proud trans woman, storyteller, geek, programmer, athlete, sister, mother, wife. She's a developer for Epic by day, notably on healthcare interoperability, better support for queer patients in the medical record, and customer cooperation. She plays hockey with the Madison Gay Hockey Association (she served on the board for two years) and the Dread Pirates. Randi recently ran her first half marathon and is training for her first full marathon in the fall. She's married to the amazing, talented, beautiful, intelligent, incomparable Erica Hagen. The two of them are coping with the recent loss of their son, Einar, and the not-so-recent loss of their daughter Sackie.



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Jess Anderson

In the absence of really good gay bars [in the 50s and 60s] most of us, including me, were street walkers. We would go up and down State Street. If you were looking for a trick, you'd find one. You just had to be the first one to look back, after you'd passed someone you might be interested in. If they looked back at you, too, then something might happen.

The 602 Club [formerly on University Ave.] was really the first bar in Madison to welcome gay customers, before even the Back Door opened—which was really the first gay-specific bar. The 602 changed the nature of the scene. There were other bars, but they were less genteel, and more hard-drinking establishments. At the 602, the front bar was given over to gay patrons, and the booths in the back were for straight couples. The men's john was up in the front by the bar, though, so the straight men had to walk this gauntlet to get there. And of course, because we wanted to be considerate, we would all *stare right at them* and check them out on their way. It was too much for some guys! ■



JOHN RIGGS

GAY BARS LGBTQ HISTORY LGBT ARCHIVES

A Rare Glimpse Back in Time

"The 602 Club in the Sixties," an exhibit of B&W photographs by John Riggs, runs through July 27 in the Class of 1925 Gallery at the Memorial Union.

JOHN RIGGS WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE at the U.W. when he worked as a bartender at the iconic 602 Club. Between 1964 and 1968, he shot hundreds of candid photos of the patrons, eventually turning it into a book for the owner, Dudley Howe, on the occasion of the bar's fifteenth anniversary. Decades later, some of those photos reappeared on a website celebrating the long-since-closed destination for gay men, counter-culture revolutionaries, U.W. art department meetings, and canoodling straight couples.

Inspired, Riggs has since saved and restored many of his negatives, and the results can be seen on exhibit at the Memorial Union through July 27, and then as part of the Madison LGBTQ Archives.

Scott Seyforth, co-founder of the archive, points out one lesser-known aspect of the photographs that will be displayed as part of the collection: the presence of gay men.

"It is highly unusual to have interior photos of an LGBTQ gathering place from the 1950s and 1960s, especially this many images of this quality. A photographer needed a professional camera, high-speed film, and had to know what they were doing," Seyforth told *Isthmus*. "We do not have a similar photographic record of any other Madison LGBTQ gathering place: The Three Bells, The Kollege Klub, The Belmont Hotel Bar, or The Velvet Swing. The Riggs collection lets us peer back through time and see what it was like." ■



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Here to Stay

Our Lives Publisher **Patrick Farabaugh** speaks with **Human Rights Campaign President Chad Griffin** about their plans in Wisconsin over the next couple of years.

IN JUNE, HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN (HRC) President Chad Griffin held a community conversation at WOOFs to discuss their efforts to mobilize LGBTQ and allied voters across the state. Before the event, I had a chance to sit down for a one-on-one with him to ask about those efforts, and to give him an opportunity to hear some of the apprehension our community has had in the past toward the organization. We addressed the HRC's goals in Wisconsin, their recent work in other states, and the progress they've made in centering marginalized LGBTQ identities both in their staff and in their priorities as an organization.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CURRENT PRIORITIES FOR THE HRC?

Something that we have prioritized is organizing and mobilizing the LGBTQ voter block, and our allies. And it's important to put some definition around what the LGBTQ voting block is, what we look like and how we turn out.

To do that, let's go back to the 2016 election: Five percent of the electorate identified as LGBTQ. That means five percent of the electorate walked out of the polling station in a swing state and told a stranger that they were LGBTQ. So, worst case is that we're five percent of the electorate. We're at least 10 million eligible voters in the country today. That's larger than the margin of victory of every presidential election since 1984.

And then you look at states like the state of Wisconsin, which is a priority for a host of reasons. When you look at the margins with which the last presidential election was decided here, our community, when organized and mobilized, can decide the outcome.

WHAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF HRC'S RECENT TRACK RECORD FOR MOBILIZING THE LGBTQ VOTE?

In 2016 we prioritized North Carolina, where Pat McCrory had attacked our communities, thinking it would ensure his own re-election. In the nine months we had from the



Of the 60 new hires that we've made over the last 12 months or so, 45% of those have been people of color. Twelve percent are transgender and gender non-conforming. Today, people of color are reflected at every level throughout the organization. Also, 50% of our organization is female; all of my direct reports are women.

time he signed the bill until election day, we organized and mobilized not just the LGBTQ voter in that state, which is about a quarter of a million, but also the allied voter there, too.

We organized and invested in that state, and on election day when Donald Trump unfortunately won North Carolina by nearly four points, for the first time in the state's history, the Republican incumbent governor lost his race. Fifty-seven percent of North Carolinian voters in that election said that the anti-transgender HB2 was the single voting issue for them.

SO WHAT ARE THE HRC'S 2018 ELECTION GOALS?

In midterm elections, historically there is tremendous drop-off, whether its LGBTQ voters, or voters of color or single women

voters. And this is the year that we have got to ensure that we have tremendous turnout. Both from our priorities in state legislative races, statewide races, and then protecting Tammy Baldwin, the single-most targeted Democrat in the United States Senate.

That is the reason that I'm here today; it's the reason that we have full-time staff on the ground here, and across the state.

LOOKING AT THE 2016 ELECTION BREAKDOWN, ARE YOU ABLE TO SPECIFICALLY TELL WHO LGBTQ VOTERS VOTED FOR?

It's interesting. For some comparison: Two-and-a-half percent of the electorate identified as Jewish. LGBTQ were at five percent, and then Latino and African American were 11 and 14 percent respectively.

The LGBTQ voting bloc was one of the only voting blocs that did not decrease our turnout, we slightly increased. But we also showed tremendous change from the Obama/Romney election to the Hillary/Trump election in terms of shift in vote for the pro-equality candidate over the anti-equality candidate.

IS THE PRESENCE HERE JUST AN ELECTION PUSH?

Obviously, most political organizations and political campaigns only have the resources historically to go in a few weeks into cam-

paigns and spend resources.

We intentionally made the decision, post the 2016 elections, that this is one of six states that we were going to be investing in and going deep, that this was an investment with an eye towards state legislative battles, statewide races, and federal races in particular, but also with an eye toward and organizing for 2020.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF NOT JUST FLIPPING, BUT INSTALLING PRO-EQUALITY, OR EVEN OUT CANDIDATES?

In my time in politics, I have never been more optimistic about where we're headed. That's cautious optimism. I'm optimistic because I have never seen the kind of energy that we see today, and whether it's our work in North Carolina or several months ago in the Alabama Senate race. We prioritized organizing in Alabama and have had offices there for five years now.

Years ago, we put full-time organizers on the ground in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama, knowing two things: one, we had opportunities to pass protections. Perhaps not at the state level initially, but in cities and municipalities across the state. For instance, we just passed protections in Birmingham, Alabama, and Magnolia, Mississippi.

But we also made that investment knowing

that the south is changing. And that in a place like Alabama, if we've gone back a few years, folks would have never said that we would have a pro-equality United States Senator from there. In fact during that election some folks said yeah, but when Doug Jones gets to the Senate, is he actually going to stand up? Three months after taking the oath of office, Doug Jones became the 245th cosponsor of the equality act.

WHAT DOES THE HRC'S OUTREACH PLAN LOOK LIKE IN WISCONSIN? TYPICALLY WHEN PEOPLE SEE THE HRC, IT'S ONLY AT EVENTS LIKE PRIDE.

We will still be at several hundred prides across the country. Signing up members, registering voters, signing up volunteers. Separate from that, we have full-time political and grassroots organizers on the ground in Wisconsin that are focused on organizing and winning elections. We have an incredible base to start this work on. We have 150,000 estimated LGBTQ people in this state, and I always give the caveat that that is a very low estimate. In addition to the estimated LGBTQ voters, there are also more than 500,000 equality voters (which are included as allies), people that we're able to target and mobilize in support of our endorsed candidates and issues.



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PUBLISHER'S SPOTLIGHT

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I WANT TO ASK ABOUT SOME PERCEPTIONS THAT OUR READERS HAVE REGARDING THE HRC. THE MOST COMMON IS THAT THE ORGANIZATION PRIORITIZES RICH, OLDER, WHITE MEN. HOW IS THE HRC CENTERING INTERSECTIONALITY, OR OTHER MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES WITHIN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY?

It's a critically important question. I appreciate you asking. It's also a critique that I've heard before, and that I take seriously. We've made tremendous progress. No organization can fully represent a community unless the staff and volunteer structure adequately reflect the broad diversity that is our community.

The LGBTQ community is as diverse as the fabric of this nation. And we have to ensure that our staff reflect that. We've made a tremendous commitment, both on the ground and at the leadership level. I think it's especially important as a white leader that I not just state big, lofty goals with good intentions, but that I'm held accountable—that I actually show measurable progress on this, so I'll share some of the progress we've made while also acknowledging that we have a long way to go, both as an organization and as a community as a whole.

Of the 60 new hires that we've made over the last 12 months or so, 45% of those have been people of color. Twelve percent are transgender and gender non-conforming. Today, people of color are reflected at every level throughout the organization. We have continued to also look at our programs to ensure that all HRC programs, both on the political and foundation sides, are representing the most marginalized among us, and that we are reaching into the communities that need this work the most. Also, 50% of our organization is female; all of my direct reports are women.

HERE'S A QUESTION A READER SHARED: "I USED TO RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP, BUT I HAVEN'T BECAUSE THE MISSION BECAME SO LASER-FOCUSED ON MARRIAGE THAT IT SEEMED TO HAVE LEFT MAJOR CONCERNS LIKE HIV INFECTIONS, HOMELESSNESS, ETC., BY THE WAYSIDE. DO THEY PLAN TO PRIORITIZE THESE IN A MORE VISIBLE CAMPAIGN?"

There are a few things I would say to that. During the marriage battle we were also often criticized for doing too many things other than marriage. There was actually a lot more balance in the organization.

For instance, about a year or so after I started, I pulled together all of the leaders of the national HIV and AIDS advocacy groups and service providers. I asked them, "What

are you not doing that we should be doing?" Shortly after that, we launched a partnership with the Elton John AIDS foundation, and today we have an HIV and AIDS program that has a particular focus on gay, bisexual, and transgender African Americans in the south.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT SOME OF HRC'S OTHER COALITION WORK, PERHAPS CIRCLING BACK TO THE 2016 ELECTION?

We're in locked arms with groups across a very broad coalition. And we had been doing that pre-election, but just to give you a quick story: On election night, I was in our North Carolina war room. I don't remember what time it was; it was a fog for all of us. There was a point at which it was pretty clear where the national election was headed, but it hadn't been called yet.

I snuck out of our war room, went up to my hotel room by myself. Cecile Richards (President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America) was the first person I called. The second person was Dr. Cornell Brooks, who at the time was the president of the NAACP.

I snuck out of our war room, went up to my hotel room by myself. For five minutes or so I think I was in a completely depressed state of mind. And then I pulled myself off the chair I was seated on while staring at the TV, and I picked up my phone. Cecile Richards (President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America) was the first person I called at whatever time that was, 11, Mid-night, whatever it was on the east coast.

We had a conversation about 1) We're all about to be under attack, 2) We all have to stand together like we've never stood together before and 3) Can you meet tomorrow? I was on a 6AM flight headed back to DC the next morning, meeting with coalition partners.

The second person I called that night was Dr. Cornell Brooks, who at the time was the president of the NAACP. We had a very similar conversation. Within 24 hours, we were all in the same room with broader coalition partners. We made a commitment on that night that we all have to stand together across social justice movements. One, because if they're coming for one of us, they're coming for all of us. And LGBTQ people, we are Muslims. We are people with disabilities. We

are DACA recipients and immigrants.

Any one of these groups on our own have a hard time winning. We won the senate race in Alabama because of turnout, because of LGBTQ turnout, because of turnout from African-American women, especially. But our partnership in the state of Alabama was with the NAACP of Alabama. We were focused on voter turnout within our specific demographics and specific regions of the state. That's how we win.

The last thing I'll say about that generally but then, more connected to our broader conversation: If you look at those who are attacking voting rights today, if you look at those who are going after transgender students, if you look at those who are trying to undermine healthcare and a woman's right to safe and legal abortions. Nine times out of 10, with exceptions here and there, it's the same elected official. At the local level, at the state level, at the federal level, and obviously at the White House—and I don't just mean who's living on the third floor there, I also mean Mike Pence. We all have enemies in common. And that's why in political campaigns, social justice organizations that take political positions and endorse candidates, by working together in these states and in these districts, it's how we can oust the person that's standing in the way of equality or a host of other social justice issues.

ANYTHING ELSE BEFORE WE WRAP UP?

I think maybe the last thing I want to say is while we are building the momentum for federal protections with the equality act—and that's why these races are so important, so that we can win the votes in the House and Senate and ultimately have a President that will sign it into law—it means that it's important to have protections at the local level and at the state level.

And as you well know, this state was the first in the country, in 1983, to pass protections on the basis of sexual orientation. But Wisconsin still does not have a gender identity protection statewide. And so that is also part of the goal in winning these state legislative races, so that we can support, and in coalition with those who have been on the ground for decades working on these issues, to be able to collectively do the work it takes to pass and have statewide protections here. And then, someday soon, have federal protections and a president who will sign them into law.



PATRICK FARABAUGH founded Our Lives in 2007 and has published it since. He also founded the Madison Gay Hockey Association in 2006. Before moving to Wisconsin, he was a Senior Creative at Condé Nast Traveler, and an Art Director for OUT.



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Charlie Craig & Dave Mullins



Let Them Eat Cake

Attorney [Tamara Packard](#) explains what the recent Supreme Court ruling in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case does—and doesn't—mean for LGBTQ rights in the U.S.

CIVIL RIGHTS | LEGAL | SUPREME COURT

IN 2012, CHARLIE CRAIG and Dave Mullins asked Jack Phillips, owner of Colorado's Masterpiece Cakeshop, to bake them a wedding cake. Marriage for same-sex couples wasn't available in Colorado and marriage equality had not yet been recognized as a constitutional right.

Phillips said no. He felt that, by making the cake, he would be participating in a celebration that was contrary to his religious beliefs. The couple filed a claim with the Colorado agency that enforces the state law prohibiting discrimination in public accommodation (selling goods and services) on the basis of sexual orientation.

The agency found that Phillips violated the law.

By the time the case got to the U.S. Supreme Court, it was teed up for an epic battle between the baker's constitutional right to exercise fundamental freedoms (speech, religion) and Colorado's authority to protect the rights and dignity of gay people. The Court, in the June 4 decision *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, did not explicitly resolve that battle because, in finding Phillips in the wrong, the Colorado agency expressed hostility to Phillips' religious beliefs.

The Court therefore decided *Masterpiece* on narrow grounds unique to this dispute. It found that by not considering the case with "religious neutrality," the agency

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did not give the baker fair consideration, thus violating his free exercise rights. That is good news, given fears that the Court could have endorsed discrimination when cloaked in religion.

LOSE THE BATTLE, WIN THE WAR

Even better, seven of the nine justices, including newly appointed Justice Gorsuch and Chief Justice Stevens, explained that prior cases “make clear that the baker...might have his right to the free exercise of religion limited by generally applicable laws,” and that “while... religious and philosophical objections are protected, it is a general rule that such objections do not allow business owners and other actors in the economy and in society to deny protected persons equal access to goods and services under a neutral and generally applicable public accommodations law.”

Not one Justice, not even the most conservative, endorsed discrimination. (What about the other two justices, you ask? Justice Ginsberg wrote a strongly worded dissent, joined by Justice Sotomayor, arguing that the gay couple should not lose the case given the Court's clear recognition that the Colorado law appropriately protected them from discrimination.)

Thus, as the ACLU put it, we may have lost this battle but we won the war. The Court affirmed the legality of laws protecting us from discrimination, even when discriminators claim their motivations are religious. *Masterpiece* does NOT give businesses a license to refuse goods and services to LGBT people. Where government forbids such discrimination (so far, 19 states and numerous municipalities), those laws are valid.

THE RULING ALREADY IN ACTION

An excellent demonstration of this point is an Arizona state appeals court decision issued three days after *Masterpiece*. In *Brush & Nib Studio v. City of Phoenix*, the Arizona Court of Appeals held that despite the calligraphy business owners' religious beliefs, they cannot refuse to sell merchandise for same-sex weddings because Phoenix law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services.

In ruling that the Phoenix nondiscrimination ordinance did not violate Brush & Nib's First Amendment religious and speech rights, the Arizona court extensively quoted *Masterpiece*. It explained that if Brush & Nib wants to operate a for-profit business as a public accommodation, it cannot discriminate against potential patrons based on sexual orientation.

The Arizona court then explained that the

Phoenix nondiscrimination law (like similar laws throughout the country) regulates the conduct of selling or refusing to sell merchandise, and while such conduct “may incidentally impact speech, it is not speech.” The court concluded, “An incidental burden on speech... is permissible” when a law promotes a substantial governmental interest that would be achieved less effectively absent the law*. The Phoenix ordinance satisfied that requirement.

Masterpiece does NOT give businesses a license to refuse goods and services to LGBT people. Where government forbids such discrimination (so far, 19 states and numerous municipalities), those laws are valid.

(*The Arizona court found a 2006 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Rumsfeld v. FAIR*, to be controlling. In that case, several law schools had argued that a law forcing them to allow on campus military recruiters, like other employers, when the armed forces banned gays from serving, effectively forced the colleges to endorse the ban and violated their free speech rights. In *Rumsfeld*, the Court found that providing the military equal recruitment access was merely an incidental burden on the colleges' free speech rights, and therefore the colleges had to allow it.)

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Early reactions to the release of *Masterpiece* suggested that the end of equality as we know it had arrived. One highly respected LGBT rights group sent out an email falsely saying the Court had ruled against our civil rights, and urged readers to send money immediately to “fund the fight.” Headlines in mainstream media said the baker won—technically true, but incomplete—inspiring readers to buy the



TAMARA PACKARD has been practicing law for more than 20 years, primarily in civil litigation and appeals, emphasizing employee rights and civil rights law. She is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. Tamara was named the Best Lawyers® 2017 “Lawyer of the Year” for Madison, for “Appellate Practice,” Best Lawyers® 2016 “Lawyer of the Year” for Madison for “Employment Law-Individuals,” and a 2017 Leader in the Law by the *Wisconsin Law Journal*. She was recently named by Super Lawyers to be in the top 25 female lawyers in the state, and in the top 25 Madison lawyers.

paper or click through for the full story.

To be sure, we should not be surprised if bigoted business owners buy the misleading headlines and claim a right to discriminate against LGBT people. And there should be no doubt that the Alliance Defending Freedom and its ilk will continue to push its discriminatory

agenda cloaked in religious belief and search for courts willing to endorse that agenda.

It is equally sure, however, that faced with such claims, most courts will follow longstanding precedent like that discussed in *Masterpiece*, as well as *Brush & Nib*, to protect our equal access to goods and services. ■



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.

FORGE

In the space of four months the organization will present 12 workshops at five conferences in New York, Pennsylvania, California, and Florida; a keynote in Utah; two full-day trainings in Maryland; and four trainings in Hawaii (including one for military officials). FORGE is also pleased to be training locally. In August they are bringing Coast Guard officials to Milwaukee for 2-1/2 days of training. Local victim services providers are welcome at the September 13 “Improving Long-Term Services to Transgender and Non-Binary Victims of Crime” full-day training, and a similar-but-half-day training on September 14. Contact FORGE if you'd like to sign up for one of these free Milwaukee trainings: LoreeCD@aol.com.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT

The Rubber Rover is traveling throughout Milwaukee dispensing condoms and safer sex advice. The Rubber Rover is a Jeep fully wrapped in safer sex images to help encourage condom use and STI testing. The Rover was at the Lakefront, PrideFest, the Milwaukee Pride Parade, Juneteenth, and will be at other summer events. Keep an eye out for the Rubber Rover!

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY CLUB

The team had a very successful spring season, which included placing third in the Spring Fever Tournament in St. Louis, placing second in the Madtown Scrumdown, and merging with the Minneapolis Mayhem to form the Midwest Rampage for Bingham Cup 2018 in Amsterdam.

The Madtown Scrumdown in particular was an achievement that was largely the work of

team member Drew Briski, and was the club's first-ever tournament. They were able to host representatives from six different teams and hold a fun day of rugby. The Minotaurs plan on holding this tournament again in the future.

NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION

A total of \$18,500 was granted during NHF's first grant cycle of 2018. Grantees included Operation Welcome Home, Transforming Faith Conference that will bring together 200 transgender and gen-



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der non-conforming youth, parents and faith leaders for an intersectional dialogue, support, and empowerment conference. Another grant was provided to Outreach as they partner with Safe Communities to develop training programs under the LGBTQ Opioid Coalition. A grant was also provided to Forward Theater's production of *FUN HOME* which will hold a special performance in partnership with GSAFE for

LGBTQ youth in Dane County.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS PHMC (and its outreach ensemble, Common Chords) had a very busy June after its spring concerts, with at least one public performance every week, including at Madison Public Library branches, Make Music Madison, and at the Second Annual Mineral Point Pride.

Satya Rhodes-Conway first to declare for Madison mayoral race



FORMER MADISON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER Satya Rhodes-Conway in late May announced her mayoral candidacy for the election next spring. Rhodes-Conway, who represented District 12 on the North and East sides from 2007 to 2013, works at the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) think tank at U.W.-Madison. She is the first candidate to publicly announce intentions to run in the April 2, 2019 election.

"Madison has a proud tradition of electing LGBTQ leaders. If elected, I will be the first lesbian—and only the second woman—mayor of Madison," Rhodes-Conway told Our Lives. "Representation matters, especially in leadership. It's important, given what's happening at the state and federal level, for local leaders to protect and support vulnerable communities, including the LGBTQ community. And of course, issues like housing, transportation, and racial equity impact the LGBTQ community just like everyone else. Those issues will be central to my campaign, because it's important to me that everyone in our community have the chance to succeed." ■

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN ARCW would like to thank all their donors/supporters for helping them break several fundraising records at this year's Make a Promise Gala. For their special fund to support its PrEP Clinics they raised \$76,000, compared to raising \$63,000 last year. Overall the organization was able to raise \$315,000, breaking the previous record made in 2015 by two percent.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT Congratulations to D&R board chair, **Tanya Atkinson**, on her receipt of the LGBTQ Progress in Health and HIV Awareness award from the Shepherd Express 2018 LGBTQ Progress Awards.

Congratulations to D&R board member **Everett Marshburn** on his receipt of the 2018 Journalist of Distinction Award from the National Association of Black Journalists.

GSAFE Co-Director **Ali Muldrow** was honored to receive the Omega Leadership Award from the Omega School in Madison.
Wisconsin Education Association Council

(WEAC) recently named GSAFE as their 2018 Friend of Education. GSAFE was presented with the award at WEAC's annual Representative Assembly in La Crosse. In his introductory comments WEAC President Ron Martin said, "GSAFE knows we educators are on the ground, day-to-day, doing the work to make things better for all students. GSAFE knows it's important for us to be empowered. Youth are looking to us to create those safe spaces, and our union is committed to fostering leaders to make that happen. We are proud to stand with GSAFE and to honor you with the 2018 Friend of Education Award."

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY CLUB Minotaurs player and Director of Communications **Andy Best** accepted a marriage proposal from his boyfriend/now fiancé, **Jake Kindwall**, during the team-hosted Madtown Scrumdown tournament in May. Congratulations to the happy couple!

MILWAUKEE PRIDE The 2018 Pride Awards were presented at the opening ceremonies of PrideFest in June, and included:

- **INDIVIDUAL:** **Cormac Kehoe**, local motorcycle enthusiast and grassroots founder of the First Annual Ride with Pride;
- **ALLY:** **Alderman Cavalier Johnson** of the Milwaukee Common Council, who sponsored a critical ordinance to ban LGBTQ conversion therapy;
- **ORGANIZATION:** **Queer Zine Archive Project**, for preserving unique uncommon and diverse voices of the queer underground for 15 years;
- **VALOR:** **Nikko Nelson** of Mequon, a trans woman recently elected prom queen by her high school classmates;
- **LEGACY:** **Jamie Taylor** of Milwaukee, photographer for *InStep* magazine from the 1980s-2000s and now administrator of the History of Gay Milwaukee Facebook group, which celebrates our shared heritage.

TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION The group wishes to thank everyone who participated in their 2018 Spring Show! The turn out was amazing, regardless of the terrible weather that night, and it was such a beautiful evening to share with everyone.

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN ARCW hired their first PrEP Program Coordinator, **Imani Sloan**. Imani will be responsible for furthering the reach in communities that could benefit most from using PrEP.

GSAFE A recently announced change in organizational structure aims to better align the mission and values of justice and equity. **Ali Muldrow** and **Brian Juchems** will share leadership as GSAFE Co-Directors. **Sawyer Johnson** will also continue in their role under the new title of Youth Justice Program Coordinator.

Ashley Schmeucker, **Keith Borden**, **Jackie Hind**, **CV Vitolo-Haddad**, and **Pamela Pease** recently joined GSAFE's board of directors. GSAFE thanks outgoing members **Amanda Postal** and **Ellen Hebron**.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The center welcomes new board members: George Schneider (This Is It, Inc.), Kevin Flaherty (PNC Bank), Lisa Moy (Moy Creative), Ned Witte (Godfrey & Kahn), and Nick Morgan (Ox Optimal, Inc.).

NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION The board sincerely thanks the long-time commitment and leadership of board members **Sande Janagold** and **Jason Vangalis** as their terms expire. New board members are **Holly Anderson** - Chair, **Melissa Hunt** - Vice-Chair, **Mark McCraw** - Treasurer, and **Sarah Best** - Secretary. Our other dedicated members are **Jennifer Campbell**, **Tim Lom**, **Nikole Pucci**, **Travis Rickert**, and **Donna Schmitt**.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The organization would like to give the warmest welcome to new board member, Frederick Harris. Frederick has over 13 years of experience in the field of behavioral health. His journey began by working in the criminal justice system, where he served a diverse population with substance abuse, mental health, homelessness, transitions, family dynamics, and criminal behavior. Frederick brings a deep understanding of multicultural, sexuality, and other identity issues.

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Dr. David Allen, DDS, MS
Dr. Stephen Schasker, DDS, MS

ENDODONTIST

Dr. Nicholas Anders, DDS, MS

PERIODONTISTS (left to right)

Dr. Matthew Lorson, DDS
Dr. Amjad Nazzal, DDS, MDS



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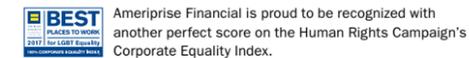
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DEVELOPMENT

New programs, outreach, or changes in mission.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

In collaboration with Safe Communities, a Falls Prevention Class for older LGBTQ adults starts August 1. Build your balance with Stepping On, including strength exercises based on curriculum by Stanford University. Each class is taught by a medically trained leader, and will feature guest speakers who provide information about fall hazards, your fall risk, up-to-date falls prevention information, and how vision and medication affect falls. For more information and/or to register contact Michal Osier at michalo@lgbtoutreach.org or call 608-255-8582.

TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION

The group is actively recruiting new board members and volunteers to staff upcoming project initiatives and shows. If interested, contact Kaci at

team@transliberationartcoalition.com.

Fundraising is on now to help support the 2018 Fall Show. Donate at transliberationartcoalition.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

AIDS Ride Wisconsin is taking place July 27-29. Participants can sign up to ride 25, 50 or 100 miles, as well as ride all three days. Sign up at arcw.org. AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run is Saturday, October 6. The 2018 Honorary Chair is Director and Award-Winning Actor Matt Bomer.

A retrospective art exhibit and fundraiser to benefit the group will be held Saturday, August 11 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Commonwealth Gallery (100 S. Baldwin St. in Madison), featuring the art of Jimi Reinke. His family and friends invite you to celebrate the

Two area schools receive prestigious HRC Welcoming Schools Seal of Excellence

NUESTRO MUNDO COMMUNITY SCHOOL and **HERBERT SCHENK ELEMENTARY** were recently awarded the Human Rights Campaign's Welcoming Schools Seal of Excellence, in recognition for their work to create a safe and inclusive school environment for all students.

HRC offers the Welcoming Schools program to any interested grade school in the country, but only 13 had so far received the distinction of the Seal of Excellence. Nuestro Mundo, a Spanish-language immersion school in Monona, and Schenk in Madison, become number 14 and 15.

The Seal of Excellence is awarded to select schools across the country that meet HRC's benchmarks demonstrating a supportive school community in which LGBTQ students and families feel included, respected, and valued.

Johanna Eager, Director of HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools, presented the awards to the principal and staff members at each school, complete with a school-wide assembly, songs, and other end-of-school-year celebrations.

Nuestro Mundo Principal Josh Forehand noted that over 70% of their students, when surveyed, indicated that they felt welcome, safe, and supported at school. "We won't stop this work until that number hits 100%," he added.

According to HRC, "These standout schools not only demonstrated outstanding dedication to creating and sustaining welcoming and inclusive school environments through meeting the benchmarks, but also showed innovation and creativity through special projects—including Herbert Schenk's Ally Superhero event and Nuestro Mundo's Ally Week. The Ally Superhero event has since been adapted as an official Welcoming Schools lesson." ■



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.

life of Jimi, a man who dedicated his life to art, advocated for LGBTQ issues, and worked collaboratively with ARCW to improve people's lives. Jimi passed away peacefully in 2017 and left behind a large collection of prints, paintings, drawings, textiles, and sculptures. The family is offering his original art for purchase, priced to sell, in a public one-day event to benefit the ARCW. Light refreshments will be served, VISA/MC accepted. To view some of the art for sale, visit: blueflesh.com/index.php.

CREAM CITY FOUNDATION

Join the foundation for their annual summer fundraiser, the 2018 Summer Social, held at the South Shore Terrace and Beer Garden in Bay View (Milwaukee) on

Tuesday, July 24. The event raises critical funds to fuel the Foundation's programs, including grant making, the LGBTQ+ scholarship, and convening. More at creamcityfoundation.org/summersocial.

GSAFE

The Nineteenth Annual Leadership Training Institute will be held at the end of July on the U.W.-Whitewater campus. LTI is a four-day community building and leadership development event for incoming high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. GSAFE is also excited to partner with Edgewood College to present the upcoming two-day Consent Culture Conference, August 9 and 10 on the Edgewood College campus. The conference is open

One-day art sale to benefit ARCW in honor of artist and activist Jimi Reinke

A **ONE-DAY ART SALE** will be held at Common Wealth Gallery in Madison on Saturday, August 11 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m., featuring a variety of artworks by Jimi Reinke, who passed away in 2017.

Jimi worked for AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) from 1999 until 2017. He also worked part-time for Woodman's West starting in 2006



until June 2017. Jimi was a prolific artist and earned a degree in art from U.W.-Madison. He was primarily a printmaker, but he also painted on canvas and textiles, drew on paper, and sculpted clay and plaster. The subject matter for the majority of his artworks were male nudes and homoerotic art. He also produced female nudes, lesbian-themed figures, landscapes, and self-portraits.

He continued to make art and write poetry until he passed from cancer. He donated his art to many organizations over the years, including ARCW, as well as local and national LGBTQ organizations. His art is in private collections across the U.S., Australia, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

As a gay man he felt it was important to teach about the threat of AIDS and Hepatitis C, and most importantly to educate on prevention. He was an activist for gay rights and to end racism and sexism. In the early 1990s Jimi wrote, "Initially I started in art for the freedom of self-expression. It helped me define myself as a creative, intelligent, rational being. I found that I was drawn to content with intent, seeing the role of artist as teacher. I feel an artist is responsible to the Earth. This is not a time for decorative luxury. We need a greater understanding of our human condition to heal the trouble in our society."

Starting in 2000, Jimi was editor of a total of 23 community zines titled "One Shot"—a newsletter about injection drug abuse. The Wisconsin Historical Society requested them back in 2004, and he continued to create them until 2013. The newsletter/zine was a way to reach out to drug injectors in the community and to educate people on the health risks involved.

Jimi drove many miles around Dane and Rock County meeting users in different communities. He was very passionate about helping them when called. Jimi did many interviews over the years in Madison, Janesville, and Milwaukee. He did trainings on the U.W. campus, at the state level, and with inmates at the Dane County jail.

At a Public Health Award Ceremony in April 2013, Jimi received a Prevention Award for his work with LifePoint (a needle exchange program) from Mayor Paul Soglin and Dane County Executive, Joe Parisi.

Jimi left behind a large collections of prints, paintings, drawings, textiles, and sculptures that will be for sale at the August 11 event. —**Mary Graham**, (Jimi's sister)



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

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

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to all educators and professionals who want to understand consent as the basis for human interactions.

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY CLUB The team will be hosting their fall Rugby 101 clinic on July 28 and will also resume practices around that time at Nannyberry Park in Fitchburg. Watch their Facebook page for more updates.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER "Break the Disparity: A Community Conversation about the LGBT Community and Cancer" will be held July 18 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Center. Join in for a healthy food demonstration and to learn about cancer disparities in the LGBT community, as well as how prevention

and screening can help to break them. Hosted by the Medical College of Wisconsin.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The LGBT Senior Alliance is hosting their Summer Picnic at Brittingham Park on July 19 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., with a suggested donation of \$10. The Pride King and Queen Contest at FIVE Nightclub is on Saturday July 21 starting at 9:00 p.m. Woof's Bar is holding a meat raffle fundraiser for OutReach's Pride Parade and Rally on July 29 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. The OutReach Pride Parade and Rally itself will be held on Sunday, August 19; Parade kick-off at 1:00 p.m. For more up-to-date event information go to lgbtoutreach.org.

Milwaukee's PrideFest 2018 saw a record-breaking 45,400 attendees, despite weather

DESPITE GRAY SKIES, unseasonable cold, and intermittent rain, PrideFest Milwaukee conquered the weekend weather with a record-breaking 45,400 visitors to the Henry Maier Festival Grounds.

Organizers say the number reflects a 21% increase over the previous record of 37,682 set in 2017. It's the single largest year-over-year increase in the 31-year history of PrideFest Milwaukee.

"Attending an event of this size, complexity, and quality, it may be hard to believe that we are an all-volunteer organization" said **Michail Takach**, vice president of Milwaukee Pride, Inc. "But here's the honest truth: PrideFest Milwaukee would not be possible without hundreds of devoted, passionate, unpaid volunteers who come together every year to make this event happen for the community."

In a press release, PrideFest Milwaukee noted another series of firsts for 2018, including the first-ever four-day weekend with the addition of a Thursday evening launch party, the first-ever Ride with Pride motorcycle ride, and a VIP Tea Dance. This was also the first year that PrideFest Milwaukee rejected tobacco sponsorship dollars, refocusing on local LGBTQ well-being through expanded programming around health and wellness, sports, and fitness.

Through the PrideFest Plus One Campaign, the festival also raised \$6,079 for this year's beneficiary, Diverse & Resilient. This is the largest sum ever raised at the festival for a Plus One cause.

"We are humbled by your support," said Gerry Coon, executive director of Diverse & Resilient. "We are on the front lines teaching young people about sexual health, safe dating, STI testing and prevention, and the risks of substance misuse. By saying Plus One at the box office, you said yes to a healthier LGBTQ community."

PrideFest Milwaukee 2018 welcomed headliners **The B-52s**, **Jessie Smollett**, **Daya**, **JoJo**, **Cash Cash** and more than 300 additional acts at 10 performance spaces, including up-and-coming Milwaukee local **Lex Allen**.

Virginia Delegate **Danica Roem** served as keynote speaker at Opening Ceremonies, where the 2018 Pride Awards were delivered to five local heroes. This year's Opening Ceremonies were dedicated to **Josie Carter**, a gender non-conforming woman of color whose involvement in the Black Nite Brawl of 1961 marked Wisconsin's first documented LGBTQ uprising. Carter was also celebrated at this year's PrideFest History Exhibit.

"As those who strive to preserve history, it only makes sense that we continue to make history," said **Wes Shaver**, president of Milwaukee Pride, Inc. "Who would ever have dreamed in 1988 that a modest picnic in Mitchell Park would become a world-class celebration recognized worldwide?"

"When you walked through our gates, you put your name in our history book. You left your mark. You told the world that you support and advocate for Milwaukee's incredible LGBTQ community. We can't thank you enough."

Dates for PrideFest Milwaukee 2019 will be announced in July.
Visit 6690.thankyou4caring.org/rainbow-scholarship for tickets and more information. ■

Plan B hit with anti-LGBTQ vandalism

LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER *Our Lives* own office was targeted, Plan B nightclub at 924 Williamson suffered an incident of their own.

Around the close of business on June 23, someone threw a cinder block through the club's front window. Co-owner Corey Gresen told WKOW, "All our patrons were still trying to leave, my staff was still here, my security staff, my bar manager—all had to deal with this."

"They're not going to defeat us and we're still going to celebrate and we're still going to celebrate our community and our pride," he said. ■



OPEN Join the group for an excursion to the Duck Blind at the Madison Mallards game on Tuesday, July 10. Gates open at 5:30 p.m. (game time 7:05 p.m.) so come early to score a table. Ticket price includes unlimited ballpark food, soda, and alcoholic drinks through the seventh inning. Registration closes July 2.

On July 19 join OPEN for a Mix & Mingle at Old National Bank. Enjoy the new office

and covered outdoor patio at Old National's Wisconsin Headquarters. Light appetizers, wine, and beer will be provided. Collecting donations for the River Food Pantry.

TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION The 2018 Fall Show will be held from Noon to 9:00 p.m. at the Badger Rock Community Center (501 E. Badger Rd. in Madison) on September 29. ■



ROBIN BERGDOLL

Operations Manager at UW Health, songstress, storyteller and coffee drinker

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TRANSFORMING FAITH CONFERENCE | TRANSGENDER | COMING OUT | ACTIVISM | HEALTH CARE

Fighting for a Different Tomorrow

Randi Hagen caught up with Sarah McBride, National Press Secretary for the Human Rights Campaign, to discuss her new book, equity in healthcare for transgender people, and the upcoming Transforming Faith Conference in Madison.

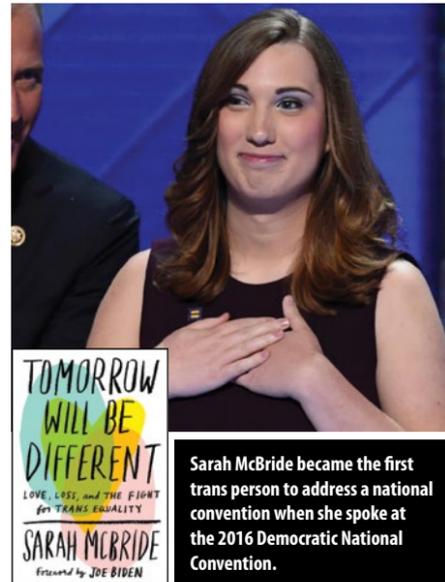
EDITOR'S NOTE: The interview has been edited for length and clarity. Read the full-length interview online at ourlivesmadison.com.

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I WANT TO TALK ABOUT IS THE TRANS EQUALITY NOW AWARD [RECEIVED IN MAY].

It was incredibly moving for me to accept that award. Obviously, the award's named after Andy Cray, a Wisconsin native and my late spouse. To be able to get that award and to have it be given to me by Andy's mom and step-father was a really special experience. I ask myself every day, "What would Andy do?" whenever I'm confronted with a question or a dilemma. Hopefully I make him proud more days than I don't.

I WAS EXCITED WHEN I SAW THAT YOU WERE GETTING THE AWARD. I HAD JUST FINISHED READING YOUR BOOK TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT: LOVE, LOSS, AND THE FIGHT FOR TRANS EQUALITY. I'D ONLY BRIEFLY HEARD OF ANDY BEFORE THE BOOK CAME OUT.

Thank you. It was really special. I don't know if you've ever had a chance to meet Mara Keisling, founder and executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, but she is a dear friend of mine. She was the first out trans person I ever had an extended conversation with. She was there in the beginning, she was in Andy's hospital room when he passed away. She's really been there at every major part of my life. NCTE holds a special place in my heart, and Mara in particular.



Sarah McBride became the first trans person to address a national convention when she spoke at the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

THAT'S VERY SWEET. CAN YOU EXPLAIN BRIEFLY WHAT THE AWARD IS FOR AND WHAT NCTE IS FOR?

The award was named after Andy the year after he passed. It recognizes advocacy around expanding access to inclusive healthcare to transgender people. It's awarded by the National Center for Transgender Equality.

THE OTHER BIG TOPIC WE NEED TO COVER IS THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE, TRANSFORMING FAITH ON AUGUST 18 IN MADISON.

I'm incredibly excited for the conference, for a number of reasons. One, my own faith community has been important in my own family's journey since I came out as transgender. In fact, the first people that my parents called after I came out were our family pastors.

I'm excited for the second reason because Wisconsin is near and dear to my heart, given the fact that it's the birthplace and home state of my late spouse, Andy. Third, because voices of faith and communities of faith are incredibly important in moving equality forward, both on the ground level and legally.

HAVE YOU HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH THE EVENT'S ORGANIZER, JOANNE LEE?

I know Joanne personally. She is a member of the Human Rights Campaign, Parents for Transgender Equality Council. She is a fierce fighter for justice, and she is a loving and caring person.

JOANNE'S CHILD, SKYLAR, A TRANS YOUTH FROM MADISON, COMMITTED SUICIDE IN 2015.

I've heard Joanne speak a few times about her family and Skylar, and about her journey. Every single time I see Joanne speak and tell her story, I can see just how impactful she is and how much her remarks are expanding people's understanding and empathy when it comes to transgender equality.

THAT'S INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE A LOT OF DISCRIMINATION IS FEAR-BASED, AND ONCE YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS TRANS, IT GETS SO MUCH EASIER TO SUPPORT TRANSGENDER RIGHTS.

Absolutely. Knowing someone who is transgender changes the way you think about transgender identities and about the challenges and issues facing transgender people. Over the last several years, the percentage of Americans who say they know someone in their own lives who's transgender has gone from single digits to 30-40%. There's really no better correlation between support for transgender equality than personal relationships with transgender people.

I INITIALLY BECAME AWARE OF YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR SPEECH TO THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION IN 2016. READING YOUR BOOK HELPED ME REALIZE HOW MUCH YOU HAVE DONE TO HELP.

Thank you. As I talk about in my book, coming out and my journey as a transgender person was the hardest thing that I had ever done up until that point, but it was still relatively easy compared to the experience of many. I feel that those of us with the kind of privilege that I have, have a responsibility to

make sure that the privileges we have been granted are no longer a privilege, but rather a right guaranteed to everyone.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF YOUR BOOK IS YOUR COMING OUT STORY. HEARING YOUR STORY IS, I THINK, HELPFUL FOR OTHER TRANSGENDER PEOPLE TO SEE DIFFERENT WAYS THAT THIS CAN HAPPEN.

I think that while one trans person's story is just one trans person's story, I do believe that it can be through personal stories that people can enter into this conversation in a way that changes the way they think about it.

THE OTHER PART OF YOUR COMING OUT STORY THAT I REALLY APPRECIATED HEARING WAS THE STRUGGLES YOU WENT THROUGH OF TRYING NOT TO BE TRANSGENDER. THAT'S SOMETHING I STRUGGLED WITH QUITE A BIT. I KNEW THAT MY GENDER AND MY OUTWARD PRESENTATION DIDN'T MATCH UP, BUT I DIDN'T EVER FEEL LIKE I WAS TRANS ENOUGH.

One of the things I always try to tell young people when I meet them, and they say, "What advice do you have for someone that's coming out?" I say, "Well, first off, you are the best expert on who you are and what you need. The second is that there's no wrong way to be yourself. There's no one way to be trans."

THAT'S A GREAT MESSAGE TO SHARE. I APPRECIATED YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT HOW YOU FELT LIKE YOU

WERE BEING FORCED INTO A FEMININE ROLE. I STRUGGLED WITH THAT AS WELL.

I think as trans folk, particularly as trans women, we're caught in between this rock and a hard place where, if we're not feminine enough, we're told that we're not real women. If we're too feminine, we're told that we're caricatures. I consider myself to be a feminine person in my gender expression, but not universally. There's policing of everyone's gender expression in a way that we are constantly having to juggle almost mutually-exclusive demands in terms of safety, in terms of being seen as who we are, in terms of the politics of it, and what trans exclusive radical feminists will say, and what anti-equality conservatives will say.

The greatest outcome this book, for me, has been the people who say, "Thank you for introducing us to Andy." It provides me a lot of comfort to know that people are meeting a person, who for me is the best person I've ever known. Thank you to everyone who has read this and has taken the opportunity to meet Andy and to go on that journey with me. ■



RANDI HAGEN is proud trans woman, storyteller, geek, programmer, athlete, sister, mother, and wife. She's a developer for Epic by day, notably on healthcare interoperability, providing better support for queer patients in the medical record.

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VANDALISM ANTI-LGBTQ VIOLENCE SUPPORT ACTIVISM

Why Pride Still Matters

Vandalism at our own office, violence and harassment against the community, and increased antagonism from the highest levels of power are stark reminders of the continuing importance of LGBTQ Pride and visibility.

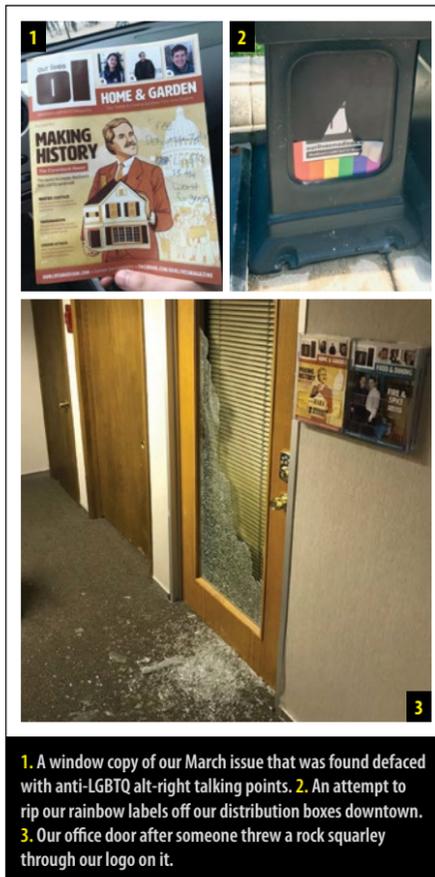
IN THE SWELL OF CELEBRATION following marriage equality in 2015, it seemed like more and more people claimed we had entered a “post-gay” era. Even some folks within the LGBTQ+ community seemed to be resting on their laurels, content that things were fine now, there was no more fight to be had, or what remained wrong would just right itself.

Things were and are definitely getting better by several measures. We have come such a long way in very little time, but the hard truth is that the LGBTQ+ community continues to face violence and harassment, even right here in liberal Madison, and the work is far from over.

In fact, since Trump’s election in 2016, the rates of violence against LGBTQ+ people have increased at an alarming rate. According to a report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2017 saw 52 recorded cases of hate violence related homicides of LGBTQ people, the highest number ever recorded by the organization in its 20 years. This number represents an 86% increase in single incident reports from 2016. That’s the equivalent of one homicide of an LGBTQ person in the U.S. each week.

Transgender women of color face the most disproportionate levels of violence, followed by gay/bi/queer cisgender men (a high percentage of whom are also people of color).

Right here in Madison, *Our Lives*’ office was the target of vandalism in May, when an unknown person threw a rock through the glass front door. Since our office is in the



1. A window copy of our March issue that was found defaced with anti-LGBTQ alt-right talking points. 2. An attempt to rip our rainbow labels off our distribution boxes downtown. 3. Our office door after someone threw a rock squarely through our logo on it.

basement of a building with several other offices in it, it’s almost certain this was a targeted act of hate. The sidewalk boxes we use to distribute issues of the magazine in downtown Madison are frequently vandalized,

too: labels torn off, magazines defaced or removed, issues replaced by garbage, and even the whole box dragged away or stolen.

We’ve heard several reports in the last few months alone, particularly from transgender, non-binary, and/or gender non-conforming people, of verbal and physical harassment while out in public, simply trying to go about their day. One of our own contributors was downtown when a young man leaned out his

Since Trump’s election in 2016, the rates of violence against LGBTQ+ people have increased at an alarming rate. According to a report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2017 saw 52 recorded cases of hate violence related homicides of LGBTQ people, the highest number ever recorded by the organization in its 20 years. This number represents an 86% increase in single incident reports from 2016.

car window and shouted, “Transgender f*cks get off the street!” at them.

A Republican candidate (now defeated) for state office in California was so confident in her hate that she filmed herself harassing a transgender woman out of a public restroom at a Denny’s. Back in May, a gay couple in Denver was stabbed simply for being outside holding hands.

At the national level, it feels like nearly every week a new attack comes out of the Trump Administration: the proposed transgender military ban, elimination of state or federal funding for transition-related health care, installing solidly anti-LGBTQ officials into prominent cabinet and administration roles, reversing the Obama-era order that applied Title IX’s anti-discrimination rules for schools to sexual orientation and gender identity, and the list goes on.

From the everyday slights to the attacks on our very personhood and rights, LGBTQ+ people know, first-hand, how important it is to show up for one another, to be visible when we can (for those who cannot), and to celebrate our resilience, creativity, and pride.

Our Lives received an outpouring of support and well wishes in the wake of the attack on the office that provided further illustration of just how many good-hearted people there are in our community. You all recognize the importance of the work we, you, and countless others do to lift up and celebrate our

diverse LGBTQ+ family.

The first Pride was a riot in reaction to years of oppressive government and social interference in the lives of some of our most marginalized community members. Let us never forget our roots, those who’ve fought and died to get us where we are today, and the work yet remaining to insure that every person is able to live a life of freedom, honesty, and dignity.

A COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO HATE

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for all the support you’ve shown and continue to show for the magazine, in the wake of the vandalism at our office. We couldn’t do this work without you all. —Patrick & Emily



REP. MELISSA SARGENT WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

“*Our Lives* is a free, independent organization entirely funded by advertising that has only two full-time staff who do the tremendous, important work of ensuring our LGBTQ friends and neighbors have resources, representation, and a voice in our community. If you can, please take a minute to lend a helping hand, share words of support, encouragement,

and gratitude with *Our Lives*, and to show our LGBTQ friends and neighbors that hate has no home in the 48th Assembly District. #NoHateinthe48”



DIVERSE & RESILIENT

“We stand with our friends and partners at *Our Lives* magazine.

They have faced an uptick in property damage of their magazine stands and magazines since November, 2016. They tell us one way you can help is to consider advertising in one of their upcoming publications.”



SHANNON BARRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES

“I plan to continue to go out of my way to support the businesses who support *Our Lives* magazine. I encourage you to do so, too. Also, DAIS has partnered a lot with *Our Lives* over the years. They are a stellar publication doing amazing work in our community. I am truly grateful to Patrick and Emily for all they do. Let’s show them the love they deserve.”

“I was really disgusted to learn about what was an apparently intentional, hateful act against *Our Lives* magazine, an LGBTQ-run and LGBTQ-centered publication based in

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our Northside. Unfortunately, this is not the first time Our Lives has experienced targeted anti-LGBTQ harassment: they've repeatedly had newspaper boxes vandalized, their magazines frequently defaced with anti-LGBTQ vitriol, and various other acts intended to intimidate and cause harm.



PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF WI

"We are sad to see attacks like this on our community partners. We stand with *Our Lives* and are committed to supporting their important work."



DESIGNCRAFT ADVERTISING

"*Our Lives* magazine is our local conduit for stories of love for our LGBTQ community. But last week, a vandal went out of their way to throw a rock through the magazine's front door. This is not our Madison. Please send your support today and throughout Pride month."



AMY JOHNSON, EDITOR-IN CHIEF
MADISON ESSENTIALS MAGAZINE

"The *Our Lives* magazine office was vandalized last night/today. This after I had a long conversation with the publisher yesterday about the distress [caused by] vandalism they've had at distribution points as well. I'm shocked and disappointed that this happens in our community. Our community is great because of all who are part of it. Let's agree there should be no place where this occurs, not the least here."



TIM QUIGLEY, OWNER
QUIGLEY DECKS & QUIGLEY CABLE RAIL

"Not only is *Our Lives* magazine a voice for the LGBT community, it has given me (a cis-straight male) a far greater understanding of the lives of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. The magazine is mailed to me because I advertise my business in it. From reading the articles and stories down through the years, I have come to realize we have more in common than we are different. Not only is *Our Lives* a magazine to the LGBTQ community, it is a tremendous public service, a service I believe the entire community would be worse off without. Patrick and Emily, you do great work and you have treated me with nothing less than kindness and respect through the years, and I

will vow to continue supporting you in every way I can for many years to come. Though I believe no matter how much I try to give back to you, I could never equal what you and the entire LGBTQ community have given me. Keep up the good work, love you all."



PAUL LORENTZ
GRATEFUL READER

"A couple thoughts about *Our Lives* magazine and lessons learned from 'coming out':

1. Coming out is not just about 'being honest.' It is asserting the power of living your truth openly and thereby removing the power of others to suppress you. For many years before I came out, I was bullied—at times pretty ruthlessly, to the point of feeling worthless and suicidal when I was in high school. After I came out, the people who might have bullied me shrunk away. They still might have had a problem with me, but it was clear—to them and me—that the problem was theirs and not mine. The shame of the closet is a weapon we give others to beat us with, and which we also use to hurt ourselves and even those we care about. Coming out not only takes that weapon away, but invites understanding, connection, and even compassion.

When you take away from someone their power to fundamentally erase you, they often feel threatened and react in anger. And anger is often borne of fear. We can't control the actions of fearful people, but we can react with positive strength and resilience.

2. That said, when you take away from someone their power to fundamentally erase you, they often feel threatened and react in anger. And anger is often borne of fear. And fear can come from many places. But fear is often a family value that is taught. At home, in churches, in high school gym classes, and in the evening news. We can't control the actions of fearful people, but we can react with positive strength and resilience. Coming out gives us the power to draw support from our family, friends, and communities in ways that turn the actions of the fearful and angry into sources of our own strength. Resilience is a muscle and every new setback gives us a chance to give that muscle a good workout.

3. *Our Lives* is a symbol of strength. It's a

magazine that celebrates the acts of coming out, living out, and loving out. It's a magazine that has specifically celebrated my own family in its pages, so I'm personally grateful that it exists. The tone of the magazine embraces community, kindness, inclusiveness, compassion, connection, unity, and understanding, and its articles often challenge our communities to find ways to advance those values even further. It's a magazine created by our communities, started as a labor of love by people who volunteered their time and talents to its writing, production, and distribution, that offers itself free to anyone who wishes to open it. There's a lot of power in that. It's no wonder then that some may feel threatened by that. It's no wonder then that *Our Lives* magazine might be the target of bullies and vandals who knock over newspaper distribution boxes, write hateful messages on its covers and pages, and—this morning—break the windows of its office.

4. *Our Lives* magazine will survive broken windows. It will survive the petty acts of vandalism on its distribution boxes and magazine covers. We can't make people not fear LGBTQ+ people, and not act out on that fear. But we can model fearlessness and community. This, to me, is a central part of what *Our Lives* magazine has always been about.

Thanks to Patrick Farabaugh, Emily Mills,

and everyone who contributes to this magazine's continued presence and success."



ALI TREVIÑO-MURPHY
LONGTIME READER

Living in Madison, I feel very safe being queer and being out and having a family. I know a lot of that has to do with other privileges I have. It's easy to forget about the haters, the ones who are so hateful they go out of their way to commit acts of violence and terror, but they are out there even in our "bubble." I'm feeling very grateful towards everyone who works at organizations who focus on the LGBTQ community, because their staff and volunteers are visible in a way that can lead them to have to deal with shit like this more than I do. Thank you for everything you do for us."



BETH MCCONNELL
READER & OCCASIONAL CONTRIBUTOR

Over the years I've done several photo assignments for *Our Lives* and I've come to think of the magazine and people creating it as sort of an extended family, one to which I am glad to belong, because these are moral, decent, kind people. I'm not sure there is any possible way they

can be any more affirming, living cooperatively and peacefully WITH EVERYONE.

The person who vandalized the office could only do so by first picking up a rock and saying to themselves, 'yes.' They exerted more physical effort to cause damage, and it would have cost them nothing to just leave the rock on the ground. Literally, it would have been easier for the vandal to not be a damaging public asshole, to just walk away, even if they never get over their fear of differentness. Really cool if everyone could someday be on the same page, but even if that doesn't happen, agreeing to disagree is always, always a viable/preferable option.



SHAWNEE PARENS
LONGTIME READER

This is both heartbreaking and infuriating. It's easy sometimes (especially for privileged folks) to say, "Oh, it's Madison, we're so progressive," but hate and homophobia/biphobia/transphobia are still rampant. I value *Our Lives* as a strong publication in my community and take this personally. Love & support to Patrick Farabaugh and Emily Mills who run the publication, but let's be clear—this wasn't an attack on them personally. It was an attack on the LGBTQ+ community. ■

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HOCKEY LGBTQ ATHLETES COMING OUT

Popping the Bubble

Madison Gay Hockey player **Tim Tender** shares his experience learning to expand his worldview—and his own sense of self—through his time in the league.

EVERY YEAR, THE MGHA does these essays, and I've had the opportunity to read quite a few of them over my three years with the organization. This year, after being tagged by someone in the league, I've chosen to write one myself. This probably isn't the typical "What Gay Hockey Means to Me" essay that you're used to seeing. This is more of a look back at my experience in the league, both how it has shaped me and how (I hope) I've been a positive influence on those around me.

Let's start a bit with my background: I grew up in southwest Pennsylvania in a rural town where people love their guns, and everything that isn't good is, well, "gay." Don't get me wrong, there are some great people, but there are also some very closed-minded folks who have never ventured outside of their little bubble. I moved to Madison in 2011 and, when I moved here, I had my own little bubble around me, too. I didn't know much about gay culture, and I surely didn't know any trans folks or even know gender queer was a thing. Like people who comment on a bad Facebook post, I thought the genitalia you had defined you. I was naive and uneducated about gender identity and sexual orientation.

As for me, I didn't really know I was gay until a few years ago. It took a good friend to get me to really think about things and connect the dots. When I did, it was quite a relief. I honestly can say that it felt like a weight had lifted. I know it sounds cliché, but I remember feeling it. I had known about the MGHA and decided to sign up.



NEW MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Unlike so many who write these essays, hockey wasn't new to me. I started playing in high school. I worked at an ice arena for six years, too, during high school and college. I had played adult league and was playing with a local group here in Madison. I had experience. I wasn't the best player, but I could certainly hold my own. I came into the league not knowing what to expect from a gay hockey league.



My first team was incredibly welcoming. I was still trying to get my bearings in this unique, inclusive league. It was a different experience for sure, but I quickly realized that success in this league wasn't measured in goals or wins, but instead in how well you play with others, your encouragement of the team, and even interactions with the other team. I learned that the MGHA aligns well with my demeanor and style of play. I decided to stick around and even signed up to be on the board for my second and third years in the league.

One of my favorite aspects of this league is the inclusive play. I love the encouragement and the idea that everybody deserves to play. If a lesser-skilled player gets the puck, we let them hold onto it for a little while to get more comfortable. If somebody accidentally knocks somebody down, we ask them if they're alright and sometimes even help them up. For me, this is huge.

Some advanced players may come into the league and struggle with the concept of not taking the puck end-to-end and I admit that I certainly have moments where I want to do just that. For me, though, part of the challenge and fun of this league is improving my other skills while helping hone the skills of the other players. The MGHA lets me work on my leadership abilities while letting me help and encourage those who have less experience. It lets me offer pointers. It gives me the opportunity to instill confidence in people who, due to a plethora of reasons, don't have that confidence yet.

TEACHER BECOMES THE STUDENT

If you remember, I brought a bubble with me from Pennsylvania. It shielded me from people who were different. For me, gay hockey taught me that there's a whole lot more to this world than what's inside that little bubble. Before I joined the league, I hadn't really known anyone who was trans or gender queer. I think I was honestly a little uncomfortable. I didn't understand it. I didn't know anything about it. It was just foreign to me, and foreign things can be scary.

I write this showing vulnerability and hoping that this doesn't make me a bad person. This league, though, has introduced me to a whole new world (go ahead, sing the song from *Aladdin*...I'll wait). I know that I'm a much more accepting and open person because of this league. I also know that I'm always learning. I know that if I don't understand something, I can ask. This league has given me a space to grow and has helped me expand my worldview.

Most of the time, these essays tell the tales of people who haven't felt welcome in organized sports or haven't been comfortable in team settings because of who they are. It's about the love and acceptance they find in the MGHA. I love that this league fosters those moments. It fills my heart to have so many people share success stories of feeling welcomed and loved when they play with our group.

My story is a bit different, but the outcome is similar. Gay hockey has given me a place to help the people I just mentioned. It's given me a way to give back and foster confidence and inclusion. At the same time, it's given me a place to learn how to be more inclusive. I'm sure I still have a bubble. I think we all do. What I do know, however, is that my little bubble is now much bigger thanks to the MGHA and the people in the league. ■

Big Gay Happy Hour by OUTWOD at WOOFs during CrossFit Games



AUGUST 3



OUTWOD ambassador Joseph Theis talks about the LGBTQ CrossFit group.

HOW DID YOU FIND OUTWOD?

I'd heard about it by doing CrossFit, and they were doing an event at our gym. I got on their website, and started researching more.

WHAT CAN PEOPLE EXPECT IF THEY GO TO AN OUTWOD EVENT?

It's like a big welcome party. It's the community and allies helping you through a fun, hard work out. You don't need to do CrossFit to be able to do the workouts. They're open to anybody. You get to meet other people in the community, and workout without any pressure.

HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE CROSSFIT GAMES BEFORE?

Last year was the first year in Madison. I was out of the country, so I wasn't able to. I'm excited to come check it out this year!

HOW WELL-ATTENDED ARE THE OUTWOD EVENTS YOU'VE GONE TO?

It can range from maybe 25 to 80, or more. With this happening during the CrossFit games, it could be in the hundreds because people are traveling to do things related to CrossFit. ■

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ART GENDER NON-BINARY TRANSGENDER SELF-PUBLISHING

Illuminating Joy

Karin Wolf interviews U.W.-Madison student **Rena Yehuda Newman**, whose new collection of essays and artwork gathers the work of transgender and non-binary artists in an effort to write their own stories of gender euphoria.

RENA YEHUDA NEWMAN (they/them), is a 19-year-old Jewish, non-binary transgender artist. Rena, originally from Evanston, Illinois, spends time writing, drawing, and self-publishing zines and pamphlets. Their new book is *Gender Euphoria: A New Collection*.



You're not even 20 but already you are described as an activist and organizer. Last year you organized students who protested against the mandatory purchase of meal cards as part of student housing contracts, for example. Tell us a little bit about your path to activism. When did you realize the power of collective resistance and the role you could play in such movements, and what was your first action?

I began organizing when I was in high school. I was lucky enough to have brilliant teachers and mentors who showed me and my peers the ropes. There were also a lot of queer and trans kids on the youth group board of my hometown synagogue, Beth Emet, and we decided to start running community conversations about gender. I realized how much we need each other, and how much we need our community. For me, organizing meetings and workshops was a way to educate and create connections. Since then, at U.W., I've been engaged in issues regarding cuts and decisions about the state budget for our school.

I have a lot of privileges, and I hope to leverage that power in ethical and justice-oriented ways. I write and draw, and when I'm engaged in organizing, I offer those skills. These are issues of equity and access, and especially in the case of the university, education is a right, not a privilege. I believe that everyone does better when everyone does better, and I'm obligated to be part of that change.

Your book *Gender Euphoria: A New Collection* is writings and art by non-binary and transgender creators. Congratulations on launching a successful crowdsourcing campaign that helped you fund this project that describes joy as a form of resistance. I know you have self-published before, but this is the first time you have published at this scale. What is your goal with this project?

Thank you! The goal is to spread this new idea of "Gender Euphoria" to the world. Too often, transness and trans identities are described only through struggle and pain. But our lives are not desolate—we're full of joy and beauty and jokes. I want this zine to open up new lenses and paradigms for thinking about gender. Even beyond that, I want it to act as an historical document where trans and non-binary people are dictating our own stories as whole, full historical subjects capable of immense joy.

The inspiration came from being a camp counselor. I had a few non-binary campers. When they asked for resources to read, I realized that I didn't have anything that would be empowering in a joyful way. I

wanted them to know that it's not just about the dysphoria—that there's so much euphoria, too.

Since you have been knee-deep in joy for the last couple of years you can probably tell us a lot about that feeling. Many people in our country have lately been experiencing grief, fear, and sorrow. Do you think those emotions can coexist with joy? Why or why not?

It's not only important but necessary that we hold our sorrows with our joys. You can't have joy without sadness, comfort without loss. "Gender Euphoria" is such a strong feeling precisely because it comes from a place of knowing the opposite. The contrast creates intensity and integrity. Documenting and talking about where we find that joy is a form of fighting back. In a world

where so many people (medical, legal, etc.) seek to erase the existence of trans people, to proclaim our joy is resistance.

What tips can you offer the reader who is having a hard time finding their joy, either because it was stolen, misplaced, or stomped out?

Keep track of the small things, the small victories, the small good-nesses. Write about your favorite article of clothing or a memory with a friend when your gender felt bright. Set intentions. Create hopes for yourself. Most importantly, reach out. We are not alone in our struggles, and we can create the strongest light when we are in community with others. But none of that negates how difficult it can be.

You work on changing the status quo. Is there anything you think should stay the same?

We have to continue celebrating. I once had the chance to meet Ms. Major Griffin Gracy. When I asked her about how we should create a sense of transgender history, she told me that we are like champagne glasses, cascading down from generation to generation. I think that sense of ourselves should endure.

What is the purpose of Art?

To communicate, to connect, to illuminate.

You'll graduate from U.W.-Madison in a few years. Do you have thoughts about what you will do after that? If we connect in 10 years for an interview, what do you hope the title of that piece will be?

I hope to be an educator, whether formal or informal. Who knows where this project will go? Maybe something like, "Where we've been and where we're going?" How about "Celebrating Gender?" Could even be "Tiny Gender Adventures!" Gender is a journey, and I believe that it can be a joyful one. ■

PRIDE PHOTOGRAPHY LGBTQ LEADERS

Faces of Pride

LIONHEART: Photos and words by **Charles Wetzel**.

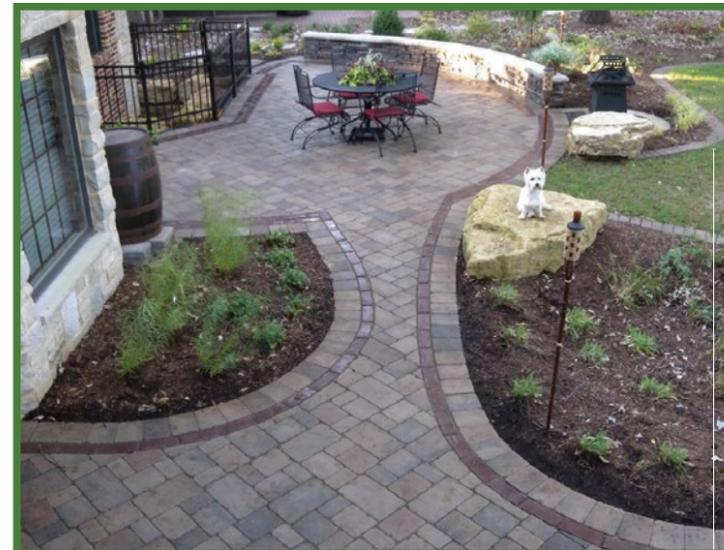
"I'VE GROWN UP in a community that's, on balance, accepting of LGBTQ+ people. Regardless, there are still negative connotations attached to the community. The idea that queer folks are living on the fringes of society, that our presence is inherently grotesque or disruptive, is still



too common. In LIONHEART, I'm re-visualizing the LGBTQ+ community. These images portray queer leaders in a way similar to how heads of state, university presidents, and royalty are depicted in their official portraits.

"Emily Mills, Kaci Sullivan, Ali Muldrow, Mark Pocan, and Jo-Casta Zamarripa represent some of Wisconsin's best. Their leadership has inspired me and countless others—LGBTQ+ or otherwise." ■

LIONHEART was on exhibit at Madison Library's Pinney Branch for Pride month.



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July & August

Summer gets hot with more festivals than you can shake a stick at, and plenty of options for fun in (or out!) of the sun. Find your preferred way to soak up the vitamin D, or to keep cool, with one of the events below.

For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Events on page 20.

JULY

12-15

LA FETE DE MARQUETTE

McPike Park (formerly Central Park)

Located in the heart of Madison's east Isthmus, Fete promises something for everyone: 20 performances on three stages, games and activities for families, 14 local restaurants, an eclectic array of arts and crafts vendors, and plenty of great beer and wine! Free admission, and other proceeds benefit the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center's programs and services.

wil-mar.org/fete



JULY

5-8

NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Marriott Madison West

The four-day musical and cultural extravaganza incorporates workshops, concerts, comedy, theatre presentations, a marketplace, newly released films and videos, a live auction, spirituality series, writer's series and much, much more.

nwmf.info

7

HOT SUMMER GAYS

The Wisco (Willy St. Pub & Grill)

Queer Pressure and Dyke Dive come together to showcase some of the best queer musical talent in Madison and the surrounding area, followed by a dance party. Live bands, DJs, and lube wrestling round out this day of summer fun. 21+, with sliding scale entry fee. (HSG returns August 24 with a hip-hop showcase at Art In, and August 25 with bands at Robinia Courtyard.)

facebook.com/hotsummergays

14-15

ART FAIR ON THE SQUARE

Capitol Square

One of the Midwest's most popular outdoor celebrations of the arts returns as MMoCA presents the sixtieth annual edition of the event. With its mix of music, entertainment, and outdoor dining, as well as nearly 500 artists exhibiting paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture, jewelry, handmade clothing and accessories, and fine craft, the fair draws big crowds to Madison's Capitol Square.

mmoca.org

14-15

WAUNAFEST

Centennial Park, Waunakee

Celebrate the only town in the nation named Waunakee with a long weekend of festivities including sports, concerts, food, vendors, and a parade.

waunafest.org



19-22

DANE COUNTY FAIR

Alliant Energy Center

Wholesome fun for all ages, including live music, carnival rides, stunt shows, a roller derby exhibition bout, kids' games, vendors, show animals, and fair food galore.

danecountyfair.com

27-29

WISCONSIN AIDS RIDE

Southcentral Wisconsin

The annual trek through Wisconsin's scenic backroads and rolling hills, all to raise money for ARCW, gets rolling again with six different route options to suit everyone from amateurs to hardcore roadies.

arcw.convio.net

28

ROYAL TEASE:

THE BURLESQUE SPECTACULAR

FIVE Nightclub

The Wisconsin Burlesque Association returns with its glittery blowout of all things burlesque and drag, for one night only. Nationally recognized performers and some of the best local acts from across the state combine for an unforgettable night. Chris Harder, the "Raunchy Romeo of Burlesque," headlines along with drag king extraordinaire, Spikey Van Dykey.

28-29

ATWOOD FEST

Atwood Ave at Schenk's Corners

The annual neighborhood festival, complete with quirky parade, features an array of mostly local live music, art, and delicious food from nearby restaurants and vendors. Also includes KidsFest, MakerMarket, and the Community Art Project.

atwoodfest.org

AUGUST

9-10

CONSENT CULTURE CONFERENCE

Edgewood College

Co-sponsored and presented by GSAFE, the conference is open to all educators and professionals who want to understand consent as the basis for human interactions.

Attendees will have opportunities to contemplate the implications of consent as it relates to professional relationships with co-workers, supervisors, supervisees, and constituents.

<https://bit.ly/2sSjBTd>

16-19

SUN PRAIRIE SWEET CORN FESTIVAL

Angell Park

Celebrate the mighty ear of corn (and some of the best of its sweet variety in the country) all weekend at this fair that's just \$1/day. Attendees also enjoy free entertainment, children's activities, and more. Over 100,000 people from around the Midwest attend the event which serves over 80 tons of sweet corn during the weekend! Note: The corn is not genetically altered.

sunprairiechamber.com

18

EKEN PARK FESTIVAL

700 Block of Mayer Avenue

Madison's cozy northside neighborhood celebrates itself with a family-friendly, community-oriented event featuring music from a wide range of genres, delicious local cuisine, beverages, fabulous raffle prizes, and much more.

ekenpark.org

23-26

ORTON PARK FESTIVAL

Orton Park

One of the country's longest-running outdoor music festivals takes place a few blocks off Williamson Street in the heart of Madison's east side. This MNA-sponsored event is known for great music, an array of terrific vendors from local restaurants and businesses, kids games, an elegant Jazz Brunch, a rather quirky auction, and a magical aerial trapeze performance under one of the park's great oaks.

marquette-neighborhood.org/festivals/orton-park-festival



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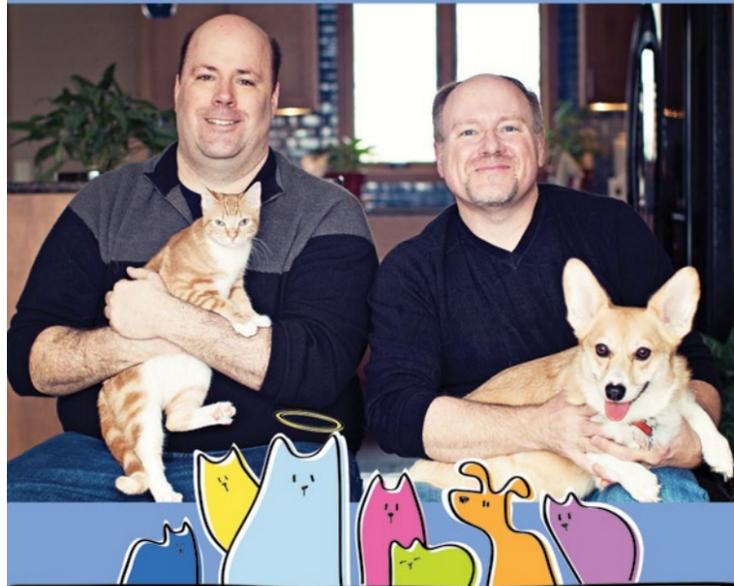
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CONNECT → OUR CALENDAR

PRIDE CALENDAR

June may be the official Pride month, but here in Wisconsin, we like to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community all summer long. From small towns to mid-sized cities, here are the fabulous events to help you build connections and have some fun—wherever you may be in the Badger State.

AUGUST 19 **OutReach PRIDE Parade** | Capitol Square and State Street, Madison

Across Wisconsin:

JULY 14 **Pride Alive Green Bay** | Joannes Park, Green Bay

The Eleventh Annual Pride Alive hits northeast Wisconsin for a day of live entertainment, food, queens, family fun—and of course, beer. All are welcome at this free community event! For further information about the event, including how you can get involved, visit the website. newpridealive.org

JULY 15 **Kenosha Pride** | Veterans Memorial Park, Kenosha

Southeastern Wisconsin gets in on the LGBTQ+ Pride festivities with a parade and festival. Sign-making for the parade begins at 11:30 a.m., with the official welcome and announcements around Noon. The fest itself will kick off around 12:30, with DJ Lorax, and entertainment by live bands and performers until 9:00 p.m. Vendors, food, and more will also be available. kenoshapride.org

AUGUST 18 **Pride Fair on the Square** | Veterans Park, Elkhorn, Walworth County

For the second year running, LGBT of Walworth County presents its Pride Fair for LGBTQ+ people and their allies. The fair is meant to showcase local, LGBT-friendly businesses, organizations, artists, and more, and to help build community and connections. lgbtwalco.org

AUGUST 25 **"Rock the Pride" Rock County PrideFest** | Telfer Park, Beloit

Join the Yellow Brick Road Organization for the first-ever public Rock County PrideFest! The day will feature family activities with all-ages entertainment in the evening. Free. yellowbrickrd.org

SEPTEMBER 8 **La Crosse PRIDE in the Park** | Riverside Park, La Crosse

The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connections hosts its LGBTQ+ Pride celebration in northeastern Wisconsin, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. 7riverslgbtq.org

Madison:

JULY 21 **Pride King & Queen Contest** | FIVE Nightclub

Want to represent as the King or Queen of Pride in the OutReach Pride Parade? Throw your glittery hats into the ring with the contest at Five, open to all genders (in either category) and 18+. Event starts at 9:00 p.m. and features emcee Tempest Heat-Stratton (Miss Courage MKE). Contestants must pre-register, and there is no cost to enter. Audience cover is \$5, all proceeds to benefit OutReach Pride Parade. facebook.com/FiveNightclub

JULY 29 **Meat: Pride Edition** | WOOF's

Woof's monthly meat raffle will specifically benefit OutReach's Pride Parade. The raffle starts at 5:00 p.m., \$2 per entry, with 10 chances to win. Prizes also include a two-night stay at the Hampton Inn and Fuegos Chef's Table.



AUGUST 3 **OUTWOD Crossfit Games meet-n-greet** | WOOF's

Members and friends of LGBTQ+ Crossfit athletes (many in town for the games that weekend) mix and mingle, with a VIP beer garden, late night happy hour, and a fundraiser for the OUT Foundation/OUTWOD. 7:00–9:00 p.m.

AUGUST 11 & 12 **Madison NAGVA Tournament** | Madison LaFollette High School

The North American Gay Volleyball Association hosts competitive level volleyball tournaments nationwide to its 1700+ members. Play runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, with social events held at local Madison venues. nagva.org

AUGUST 15 **"Tom of Finland"** | Majestic Theater

A special 7:00 p.m. screening of "Tom of Finland," a documentary examining the life and work of Touko Laaksonen, one of the most influential and celebrated figures of Twentieth Century gay culture. A portion of proceeds go to benefit GSAFE. "Tom of Finland" fetish party to follow at 10:00 p.m. at Woof's.

AUGUST 17 **Gay Madison Kick-off to Pride Show** | FIVE Nightclub

Come celebrate with the current Gay Madison Court and friends as they put on a pride-filled drag show followed by a huge dance party. No cover; 18+.

AUGUST 17 **Spit-N-Seaman Annual Pride Kick-Off Boat Cruise**

Followed by a MRWL gear party at Woof's from 10:00 p.m. to close.

AUGUST 17-19 **Mr. Wisconsin Leather Weekend** | Woof's

Celebrate all things leather and fetish at the fifth annual weekend of parties, presentations, contests, and workshops. mrwlevent.com

AUGUST 18 **QPOC Pride Brunch** | Robinia Courtyard

The QPOC Pride planning committee along with *Our Lives* magazine want to invite you to a free brunch for LGBTQ people of color from 11:00-3:00p.m., featuring entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, and more.

AUGUST 18 **Family of FIVE Rainbow Celebration** | FIVE Nightclub

Join the FIVE Court as they put on a huge Rainbow soiree for Madison Pride! With special surprises throughout the night. 10:00 p.m. to close.

AUGUST 18 **WOOF's PRIDE Block Party** | King Street

Day-long block party featuring DJs, performers, vendors, food, and more. DJ Sarah Akawa (Queer Pressure) to open. Also featuring BEARRACUDA, the nation's biggest bear dance party! Special guest: Big Dipper. 4:00 p.m. to Mid-night. All proceeds benefit GSAFE.

AUGUST 18 & 19 **Madison Pride Volleyball Tournament** | FIVE Nightclub

Get your serve on with a day-long tournament. Cap is seven teams per division and it's first-come, first-play. Runs from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Saturday, and 3:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Sunday. Email Kurtis_Hopp@yahoo.com for details.

AUGUST 19 **MRWL Pride Brunch** | Woof's

Join Mr. Wisconsin Leather for brunch at the Rigby, starting at 9:00 a.m., before heading over to the OutReach Pride Parade nearby.

AUGUST 19 **Pride On The Patio** | Woof's

After-the-parade fun on King Street featuring DJ Tony Ritschard.

AUGUST 19 **OPEN's Pre-Parade Brunch** | Madison Museum of Contemporary Art Lobby

Join the Out Professional Engagement Network for brunch before the big parade. Details and registration at openmadison.org.

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LAW QPOC COMING OUT FIRST LOVE RACIAL JUSTICE

BOYNTON, OKLAHOMA: To say it was a small town is to overestimate its size. The town sits along Highway 69, and if you blink you may just pass right through.

If you pause and look off to the side, you will see a house sitting in the middle of a field. That house is where I began. My mom starting having labor pains around 2 a.m., but because the car had a flat tire, there was no way to get her to hospital. I was coming out (for the first time)! In a room in the home of my grandparents, I took my first breaths. As my grandmother ran frantically around the house, my aunt delivered me. My grandmother's best friend's sister, a nurse, cut the umbilical cord—if not my connection to Boynton.

My close family is small in size. There was my grandfather, a Korean War vet who became a police officer; my grandmother, who worked

for years with students at the School for the Blind in Muskogee; my aunt and her two children, and of course my mom and my sister.

I did not have much of a relationship with my father. Two memories I have with him—nearly being bucked off a horse and being scared out of my mind as I rode a motorcycle with him—aren't all that fond. I can't say that I like or dislike him—that would require that I spent time with him. I never had feelings of inadequacy. I never pined away wondering why he never called, wrote, or expressed to me a desire to form a connection. Growing up without him was just normal. I had my family.

How might I have turned out had he been a regular feature in my life? Who knows? Learning things like shaving and tying a necktie were things I did on my own. The biggest male influence in my life was my grandfather. He was 6'2", but in my mind he was a giant. He was

a man of faith and strength. I remember countless times sitting at his feet (he had a favorite chair) while we discussed space, black holes, and other scientific phenomena. As a young, scientifically precocious child, I felt as though I had been listened to and not just humored.

Spending summers in Boynton was always fun. I remember my grandfather coming home with treats after having stopped at the “bread house” (what we called the Wonder Bread store that sold Little Debbie snacks). Early one morning he set out to spend the day with his brother. It was a typical day—we were just waking up as he was leaving. I remember seeing his image in the doorway as he said, “I'll see you all later.” My grandmother, sister, cousin, and I spent the day running errands. We returned and saw his truck parked in the yard but all the lights in the house were off. We walked inside and found him laying on the floor in the bathroom. He was conscious, but not able to speak. My grandmother called for paramedics. I ran to his side. Boynton didn't have paramedic service, so the nearest ambulance was 20 minutes away.

We learned later that he had suffered a stroke. When he got to the hospital his conditioned worsened. I remember walking down the hall of the VA hospital in Muskogee, and my mom saying to me, “Papa has passed.” It was the first time someone so integral to my life had died. In the many years since then, I have so wished he could have seen the person I have become.

THE AMBASSADOR?

I was born in Boynton but McAlester, known as “Little Dixie,” was my hometown. It has a very small black population. In ninth and tenth grade, when I started taking Pre-AP courses, I was “the black kid” in class. I was always the token person of color in class. It was isolating.

When the only diversity shown is a National Geographic film depicting “primitive” tribes in Africa or slaves in the Deep South, being the lone person of color becomes the altar upon which others feel the need to lay their burdens. I was the ‘go-to’ person if there was a discussion about slavery in history class, the person from whom approval was needed when answering a question.

I had to deal with the fact that my client and I were usually the only people of color in the courtroom. It's gotten to the point in my practice that I tell my clients of color, “Do not be surprised if there are no people of color on the jury.”

At the same time that I was the Black Ambassador I also faced ridicule from other black students. I “talked white.” I was “proper.” Because I was an honors student, I was somehow more white than any other black student. For some time growing up that treatment prevented me from making black friends. I was always nervous that I somehow would not be “black enough” for them. Thankfully, time and maturity have moved me away from those feelings.

Spending time as the only person of color in school did lead to some humorous moments: Each nine-week period, my middle school forced the students to participate in a sporting event. This particular time it was basketball. I was not particularly athletic. There I was, though, the only black kid on the court, students filling the bleachers, the intensity of the beginning of the game hanging in the air. A break: my team had the ball. Players began to jockey for position. I was on the court, glasses and all, doing my best to make myself open.

“Don't pass the ball to me,” I thought to myself. Suddenly, I heard a voice over the din of the crowd: “Pass the ball to Mario!” My heart

Finding Pride in Your Tribe

Groups, teams, clubs, and gathering places are an important part of building our LGBTQ community and finding connection and fulfillment. Different people need different types of support and connection, and fortunately for us, Madison has a lot of options. We reached out to a handful of folks at few of those places to ask: “Why do you like being part of that community and what role does it play in your life?”



DINO MANIACI
OWNER, WOOF'S BAR

As a bar owner and extremely social individual, I have been fortunate enough to meet thousands of individuals over the past 11 years at WOOF'S! The most gratifying part of being behind the bar is knowing people's names and stories, building a history with them, and then subsequently introducing these same people, who may never have met, to each other at the bar. The budding actor that just came out to the established theater director, the newly relocated English major from Oshkosh to the retired English teacher from the same home town, the aspiring sax player to the visiting band director from NYC. Taking pride in remembering everyone's names and a little bit of their story so that this circle of community feels like a family.



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In Madison Roller Derby I have found a space (and team) where no one bats an eye at your LGBTQA orientation/being/presentation, etc. We are a mix of different-yet-similar people who share something that brings us all joy,

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stopped. Time stopped. All I saw was that tan sphere moving slowly toward me. As it inched on, my mind raced, plotting my next move: Catch the ball! Pivot! Catch the ball! It seemed so easy in my head. Without warning—smack! That slowly moving ball crashed into my face.

My glasses flew off. There I stood, embarrassed and unable to see. As I scrambled to get my glasses, the other team got the ball and scored. The only consolation for me was that I could not see what was going on.

UNPACKAGING MYSELF

After tenth grade, I left McAlester to attend the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, a two-year, residential high school. The school's demographics were different than McAlester. My class had 75 students. While I was one of two black students in my class, there were other students of color as well as students of different religious faiths.

It was in this setting that I began to grapple with my own sexuality. The feelings and thoughts I had about being gay were strange. I didn't know how to process them. In fact, it took me some time to even admit that I had those feelings. I did my best to push them aside. I tried to convince myself that I was attracted to women. I went with a female friend to prom. I told myself that I had infatuations, crushes, on some of my female classmates.

No matter how I tried to be analytical and rational about things, my true feelings remained. It was the first place that I actually had the internal monologue about being gay. I would see people and have (what I considered then) improper feelings. "I can't be thinking this other guy is cute. That's not how I was raised. What will people back home think?"

The first time I put my thoughts on paper was July 27, 1997. Two months earlier I had graduated from OSSM and I was back home in McAlester waiting to go off to college. I was given a journal and had started writing in it in June. My first entry about being gay: "I went to Tulsa with [friends]. One of [my friend's friends] asked if I was gay.

Well, I was definitely taken aback. But in all honesty, I don't know if I am or am not. I've never had a girlfriend, but I have had crushes on girls. But part of me has seen the attractiveness in males—so I'm a bit concerned. I don't think I want to be gay, but I know it's not some choice to be made by me."

So many things to unpack from that entry: my confusion, my reluctance, but also my intellectual response to it. It wasn't a choice to be made by me. My choice was in deciding how to move forward.

"One of [my friend's friends] asked if I was gay. In all honesty, I don't know if I am or am not. I've never had a girlfriend, but I have had crushes on girls. But part of me has seen the attractiveness in males—so I'm a bit concerned. I don't think I want to be gay, but I know it's not some choice to be made by me."

I did what I thought was the right thing: I pushed the thoughts down. I created a mask to hide myself from myself. It wasn't until college that I began to accept who I was.

September 20, 1997 journal entry: "I met a gay guy...he's pretty cool. But now I'm faced with the whole homosexual question again. I just wonder why I should have this question to answer. None of my other friends do. Why am I the exception?" (Little did I know that the friend I've known the longest would come out to me after I came out to him.) The entry continues: "I have close friends, but telling them would make the situation more real. I'm not ready for that. I shouldn't feel so alone, but I do."

Reading those words today hurts my heart. I want to tell that 19 year old Mario, "It's really OK! You can be out to your friends. They love you unconditionally!" I experienced that unconditional love on November 2, 1997. That was when I first came out to someone. She was my friend at OSSM and at college and remains my friend to this day. "I was so relieved when she supported me! Now every time I see her, I want to give her a big hug in appreciation!"

After that moment, it became easier to tell my friends. One by one, I opened up to them and each one continued to love me for me. As I think back on it now it just seems silly that I would be worried things would turn out otherwise. That's the beauty of hindsight.

STUDENT OF THE LAW

The stress of being out to friends began to wane as I opened up to more people. By my sophomore year of college, I started dating someone. We met when I was a freshman in college—he was a year ahead of me. My first year of school, we were friends. I honestly didn't know he was gay—I'm not sure he knew either. As the year progressed, our friendship grew closer and as cliché as it is, we told each other of our feelings February 14, 1999. He stayed in Stillwater as I finished my last year of college at Oklahoma State University, and after I graduated, the two of us moved to Dallas together.

Within a couple of years in Texas, he decided he wanted to go to law school. I had a teaching job and wasn't quite ready to leave the city. He moved to Kansas to start law school, and I stayed in Dallas one more year. I lived alone, which was quite an adjustment. I had been out of school at this point for three years and decided it was time for me to go back. I also decided on law school.

I applied to various schools, including Kansas and U.W.-Madison. Kansas put me on their waitlist, whereas U.W. accepted me. I had to make a choice: Wait to see if a spot opened up at Kansas, where my first



love was, or chart a new course on my own.

I made the hard choice, but in the end, it was the right one for me.

Law is not easy under the best circumstances. Here I was, moving to a different part of the country. I didn't know anyone here. I didn't know what a "bubbler" was. The stress was compounded as I realized that my first relationship was, in fact, over. There was a period of time that we didn't speak to each other for several months. Now we have a good connection. We text and try to have a phone conversation at least a few times each month. I really am happy with the way things turned out. Someone that I have known for so long and shared so much with is still a part of my life. The love I felt for him as a boyfriend has changed to a deep, abiding feeling of connection. It took years to get there, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Studying for a Torts final while riding the post-breakup roller coaster is exhausting. My friends and Whitney Houston got me through that first year of school.

Socially, I was able to find a good group of other gay law students. We would have "gay lunch" at least once a week. Gay lunch is like straight lunch, only more fabulous. We sat in the atrium of the law school and shared laughs with each other. We had our share of superficial jokes, but there was also a depth and breadth of experience that made us all feel connected.

Having those friendships as well as those I developed with my law school mentors has been a driving force that got me to where I am today.

VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

I spent almost 10 years as a public defender, where I was the voice for the voiceless. Being a public defender is daunting. Not only did I

and it is refreshing to be oneself without worry. I had no idea that an abundance of love and acceptance was waiting for me in this community, and I am sure glad that I found it.



TIM TENDER
MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

The MGHA has become a big part of my life here in Madison. As an advanced player in the league, I have the opportunity to teach others a great game, and I absolutely love that. At the same time, I continue to learn more about LGBTQ culture and gender identities. I've seen this league be a lifesaver for some people, and I'm happy to be a part of something so positive.



JOSH FEVEN
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

I joined First Congregational United Church of Christ because it called itself a gay-friendly church. But I found a family of choice that goes far beyond "gay-friendly," approaching nurturance on the Riddle Scale. The assurance of that level of appreciation from my church family strengthens me far beyond Sunday mornings.



ADAM AWE
PRIDE IN HEALTHCARE

PRIDE in Healthcare is a student-run organization at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine & Public Health that promotes LGBTQ+ visibility in the healthcare field. As a medical student, PRIDE has given me a platform to advocate for future patients by helping my classmates understand barriers to care and health disparities unique to the LGBTQ+ community.

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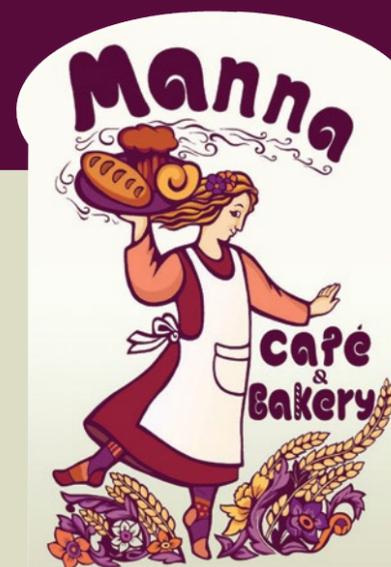
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Court Commissioner Mario White inside the Dane County Courthouse at 215 S. Hamilton St. in Madison.



lawyer should look, too: older, gray haired, and white. The stereotype is so pervasive that even some of my clients of color held that belief. We have our own biases. I recall being on the phone with a client who said, “You’re just another white guy trying to keep a black man down.” I was left speechless for a moment as I tried to unpack that statement.

There were times in my practice when clients would ask me to withdraw after having only met me once. Being a person of color in a profession that is mostly white means proving yourself not only to other lawyers but also to your own clients. Over and over again. It’s exhausting.

Literature and Hollywood have created the image of how a great lawyer should look, too: older, gray haired, and white. The stereotype is so pervasive that even some of my clients of color held that belief.

I recall being on the phone with a client who said, “You’re just another white guy trying to keep a black man down.”

After those 10 years as a public defender, I took an opportunity to apply for a position as a circuit court commissioner. When people of color walk into my courtroom, they see a face that looks like theirs. They may not always get what they want, but I hope that my presence and the work I and others like me do means that they have just a little more confidence in the system when they walk out of the courtroom than they did walking in.

WE ARE FAMILY

I remember the weeks leading up to when I finally came out to my mom. There was a lot of agony and stress. What’s the best way to do it? When? Where? I was a college student, living on my own, and I had a job. I was self-sufficient, but still the idea of being that vulnerable was daunting. I didn’t even know how to approach the topic.

I was home in Oklahoma for the holidays spending time with my mom. She noticed that I was acting differently. It was as if I had reverted to some younger stage in life where I needed more affirmation. Given all that I had accomplished academically the fact that I was suddenly “needy” was something that caught her attention.

One night, we were sitting up late talking in her room and she asked if everything was okay. “Here it is, the pivotal moment,” I thought. There are few times in life when you can see different life trajectories splitting off ahead of you. Coming out is one of those moments for gay people. I ran through the options: “Say nothing, Mario, it’s fine,” “Spill your guts, Mario,” or “Make something up!” While I don’t remember what I said, I do know it involved disclosing something that I had kept secret for a long time. It involved letting my mom know that I had been in a relationship with a man for two years. It involved being authentic.

While I don’t remember exactly what she said, to paraphrase Dr. Maya Angelou, I remember how she made me feel. I felt supported. I felt loved. She was in my corner. Just as my anxiety about coming out to friends was unwarranted, so it was when I came out to mom.

POST SCRIPT

I had dinner with a law school friend one night, and I opted to walk home afterward. It was late, but the weather was nice. As I stood at the intersection of John Nolen Drive and E. Wilson, a car approached. I heard someone in the car yell, “Faggot!” I was taken aback. It’s 2018. There are so many things happening in the world and this person was so full of hate that he had to throw out that bomb. It reminded me, yet again, why LGBTQ Pride is still so important—to have, to show, to celebrate. ■

deal with the “How can you defend people you know are guilty?” question, but I also had to deal with the fact that my client and I were usually the only people of color in the courtroom. It’s gotten to the point in my practice that I tell my clients of color, “Do not be surprised if there are no people of color on the jury.”

Some people feel that racial diversity on a jury does not matter. I ask them to imagine being accused of a crime; the cop who made the arrest, the prosecutor who filed the charges, the bailiff watching in court, the court reporter who is making the official transcript, the court clerk who keeps track of evidence, the jury deciding guilty or innocence, and the judge who is presiding over the whole show—imagine that not one of them looks like you. Does racial diversity matter? I believe it does.

Literature and Hollywood have created the image of how a great

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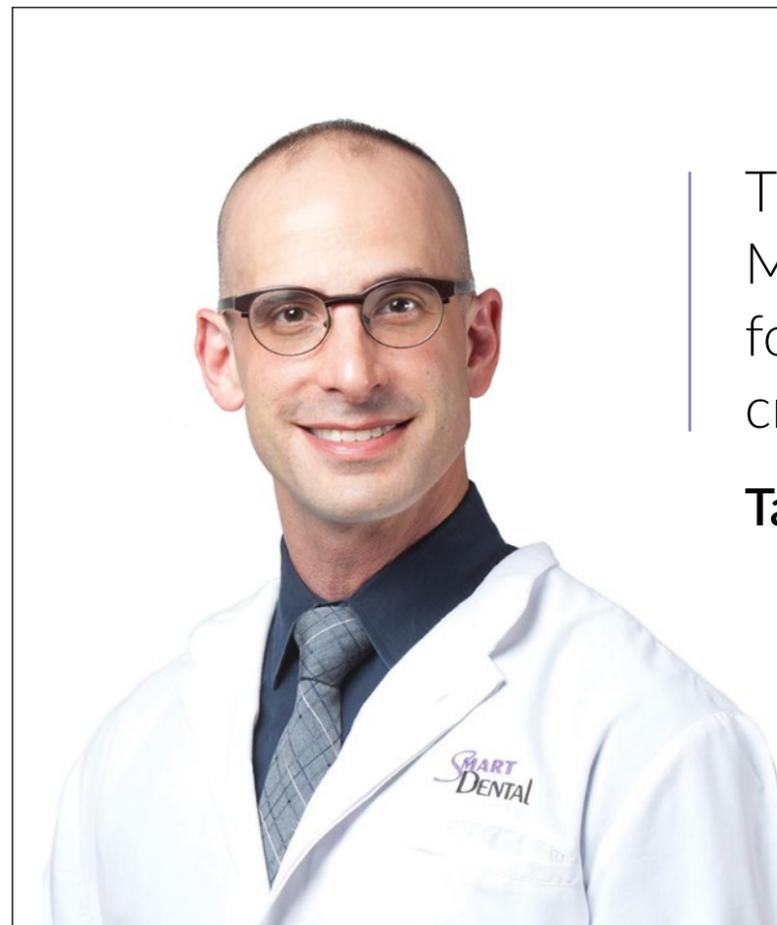
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Slow to Queer

U.W. Gender & Women's Studies Professor **Dr. Sami Schalk** on the many twists and turns in her life as a bisexual, polyamorous, black woman, and creating the queer life her younger self didn't know was possible.

QPOC QUEER COMING OUT POLYAMORY BISEXUALITY

I OFTEN (SEMI-JOKINGLY) refer to myself as a unicorn: I'm a black, queer, polyamorous, femme with a PhD, a tenure-track job, and a book published by a major academic press. I am an anomaly, an exception, a rarity, in so many ways. So when I tell people about my background, there's often an assumption that my childhood and young adult life had to be fairly traumatic and terrible given who I am now.

I grew up in a small town in Kentucky where I was often the only person of color in classes and at events. I was an only child raised by my white single parent mother who sent me to Catholic school for 12 years and where we learned things like birth control causes breast cancer and gay people can recover from homosexuality.

I didn't know LBGTQ+ people or adults of color growing up at all, unless you count those I saw on TV. Most people I knew in real life were straight, white, and desired normalcy. They finished high school, went to a local community college or university, got married, had kids, and replicated the quiet middle class life their parents had. I never knew that the life I would eventually create for myself was even possible.

That said, growing up I was loved and supported in many ways—my mom bought me so many books and enrolled me in dozens of programs and camps to encourage me to be smart, creative, outgoing, and driven. I never doubted I was loved, and yet, I also felt like I didn't quite belong. I often felt I was too smart, too fat, too dark, too mature, and just too much for the little slice of world I was born into.

Eventually I realized I had to get out of my small, conservative, Christian hometown to see what else was out there. Finding the life I wanted to live, a life where I felt I belonged, meant leaving Kentucky and having some distance from my biological family, but I have gained so much more than I've lost in the process.



Looking back now I can recognize that I was experiencing and grasping at something I had no language or framework for at the time: polyamory, non-monogamy, and intimate friendships.

MORE THAN SEXUALITY

Queerness has been a slow journey for me. There was no clear turning point or transitional moment, no big coming out, no traumatic tale of familial rejection—though no celebratory narrative of full familial acceptance either. At 13, I knew I was attracted to women and I started personally, privately identifying as bisexual. While recognizing my attraction to multiple genders would perhaps be the starting point of many queer narratives, sexual attraction is such a small slice of what queerness means to me. I think of queer as an expansive and shifting term. It is sex and desire, yes, but queerness for me is also a form of community, an ethic, a way of being in the world, and a mode of relationality. When I think about my childhood and adolescence, there are so many things besides my attraction to women that feel queer about it, things that shaped me into the kind of queer person I am today.

Of course, it's easy to look back from the distance of 20 plus years and create a linear story, to craft a progressive narrative about my move from oppression to freedom, so I want to make clear that's not what I'm doing here.

My path to queerness has never been linear or predetermined and this slow journey is, I hope, far from over. What I write here is just one version of my story. I could also tell it a hundred other ways, for different audiences, in different moods, at different stages of my life.

RECOGNIZING AND FORGING QUEER RELATIONSHIPS

I grew up in a house of women: me, my mom (who never dated until I was in my mid-20s), and my single aunt who lived with us for several years to help out. I knew married couples, of course, but I figured out as a kid that marriage and even a partner wasn't necessary for family or love or happiness. I was also part of a big extended family. My mom was one of 10 kids, and I am the oldest of 10 grandchildren.

My aunts, uncles, and grandparents helped raise me and I helped raise my cousins. Through these experiences I understood what it meant to have a big support network of people who loved and cared about each other, even when they didn't always like everything about one another. I learned that family mattered and that family included people tied to me by blood, by marriage, and by choice.

In high school, I had a close intimate relationship with two guy friends—what I would now consider a mildly sexual triad relationship. The boys were best friends, both on the basketball team, and we were all in classes together. At parties, I would make out with them both and they would take turns cuddling me on my bed when I had friends over to watch TV. One time we went to see a movie in the theater and I held both of their hands as I sat between them. But I never officially dated either one of them. Instead, I supported them in finding other girls to date or take to school dances—sometimes literally talking to them on behalf of female friends. I loved them both and felt that the relationship the three of us had was distinct and unique.

Of course, I also experienced bouts of jealousy and fears that they didn't care for me the way I cared for them—all the tumultuous emotions of any teenage relationship. Looking back now I can recognize that I was experiencing and grasping at something I had no language or framework for at the time: polyamory, non-monogamy, and intimate friendships. Again, each of these young men identified as straight, and now as far as I know are each happily and monogamously married, but the relationship I had with them was non-normative and a little queer.

For me, these childhood and young adult experiences with chosen family and non-monogamy are just as much a part of my slow journey to queerness—at least, queerness as I understand and define it for myself—as my first crush on my best friend in middle school and my attempts to impress her by learning to play the video games she liked. Even in small town Kentucky, even in Catholic school, I slowly discovered and learned more about myself, what I wanted and didn't want, through experimenting with different kinds of family, friend, intimate, and romantic relationships—queering the world I was born into until I had a reason and a way to go somewhere else.

AN EXPANDED WORLD AWAY FROM HOME

Once I left home for college, my slow journey to queerness picked up some speed. Away from the place where I was raised and the people in it, I was allowed to expand and explore even more. I quickly realized that a lot of the things I thought I was supposed to do, the things everyone around me was doing, didn't actually have to happen for me to be a good or happy person. I learned from my new peers and professors that there were so many more ways to be in the world than I had been shown in Kentucky or on TV. I began to learn a new language for the things I wanted to have and to become.

Over the course of my undergraduate career I went from making out with a lot of girls in bars in order to get guys to pay attention (and buy us shots) and holding secret crushes on people in my women's studies courses to wondering if marriage and kids were really for me and exploring BDSM/kink scenes and open relationships. Eventually, I came out as bisexual to close friends, but more publicly I was simply sex-positive. I worked at the campus Women's Center and regularly encouraged people to get free condoms from us—often carrying some with me to give out at bars or parties to folks who might need them. I even hosted a Pure Romance party for my twenty-first birthday—one of those Tupperware-style events where a local consultant comes and sells sex toys on commission—in order to encourage my friends to buy vibrators and other things to improve their orgasms and sex life overall. As I embraced what improved sex could offer, same-sex desire was just



SISTER PERVERSULA FELLATIOPIA
MAD CITY SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE

I belong to the group to serve and connect with my community through fundraising, condom outreach, and spreading joy. I am honored and grateful to be a Sister, and to be a part of a global network of Twenty-first Century nuns. Personally I feel rewarded when I am servicing others. As a Taoist, I feel selfless service to others is the greatest joy, and it has immeasurable rewards I could not begin to describe. It's not about recognition for me. It's about doing the work with joy.



PATTI THOMPSON
LEZTALK MADISON EMAIL LIST-SERV

Digital e-groups were and still can be efficient ways for sharing and requesting information. Leztalkmadison, a moderated group on Yahoo! marking its eleventh year, funnels information by, for, and about lesbians in the southern Wisconsin area. Digital platforms like Facebook and Twitter have grown over the years, but good, old email remains a strong methodology to connect to community. (leztalkmadison-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)



LIZ DANNENBAUM
ROLLERS LUNCH

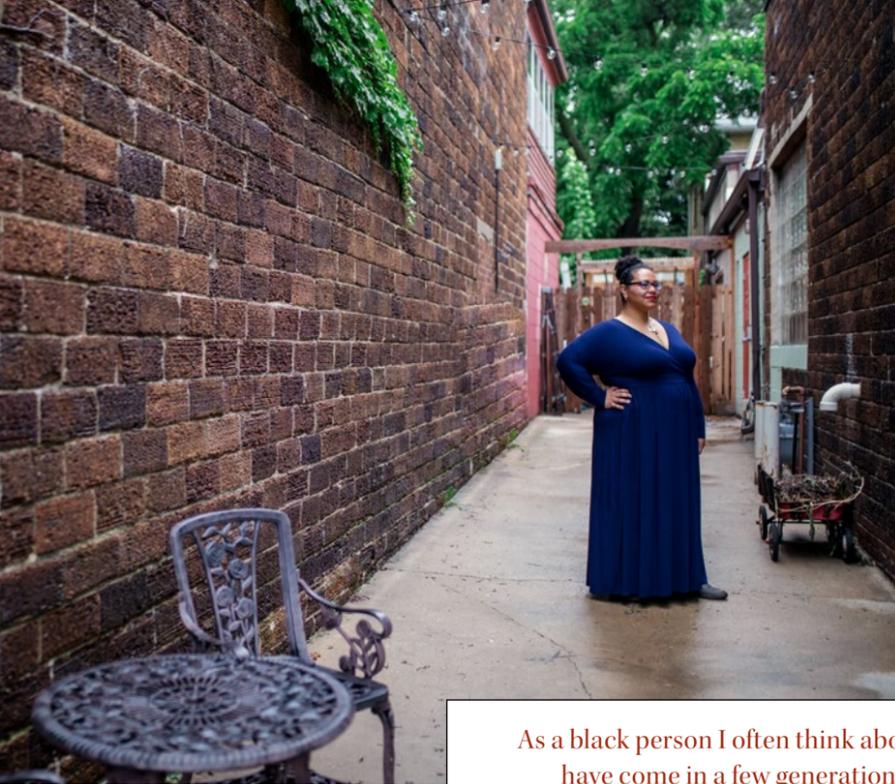
I think there aren't many venues for older lesbians to meet and mingle. Lesbians can find each other in other places: church, working for candidates and causes, online with groups like Meet Up. But some older lesbians aren't comfortable with computers, aren't at all religious, and don't have the famous "gaydar"



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As a black person I often think about how far we have come in a few generations and how impossible my life would seem to a slave or someone living under Jim Crow.

one component of what I wanted to explore.

Eventually, when I was working toward my PhD and reading a lot of queer theory, queer became my preferred term of identification because it marked my resistant position to the norms of relationships. Discovering queer as an expansive term to describe non-normative relationships and sexuality was hugely helpful in my more public “outness,” if you will. For much of my early twenties, I struggled with internalized biphobia, particularly my concern that I hadn’t had “enough” sex with women (note: I will never have had enough sex with women) and my fear that “real” queers would not accept or read me as part of their community if I was in a relationship with a man.

EMBRACING MY OWN SENSE OF QUEER

I also often felt like, as my partner often jokingly puts it, “the wrong kind of gay.” I presented as femme, with long hair and skirts; most of my friends at the time were straight; I didn’t know half of the queer/lesbian bands and singers my lesbian friends adored. In other words, I wasn’t yet a part of any queer culture or community, and I feared not fitting in.

During my PhD program in Gender Studies, though, I was surrounded by lesbians, gay men, queers, trans folks, bisexuals, pansexuals, asexuals, polyamorous people, furry-identified people, and a number of other identities and sexualities I was encountering for the first time ever or for the first time in such quantity (seriously, straight folks were a real minority). This community of fellow students and professors, through readings, discussions, parties, drag shows, and karaoke nights at the gay bar, helped me see the diversity of queerness and queer communities so that I came to see I had to define my queer for myself.

I chose to identify as queer because queerness signaled my commitment to living differently; to defining my romantic, sexual, intimate, friend, and familial relationships on my own terms. For me this now includes prioritizing my career, choosing to never get married or have children, being polyamorous, living alone, engaging in BDSM and a sex positive life, and committing myself to building a community of

outsiders and weirdos who don’t quite fit into the worlds they were born into, either.

I wish my younger self had known that such a queer life was possible, and yet the journey here, the experimentation and questioning, the conscious choices and difficult conversations, are all so essential to who I am now: a proudly black, queer, polyamorous, femme woman; a professor of Gender & Women’s Studies who spends her days researching social justice issues in the contemporary U.S. and teaching college students about race, gender, disability, and sexuality.

In many ways, the seeds for this life were planted long ago in small ways I could have never understood: from being raised by a single parent with a big extended family, to my secret intimacy with my two best guy friends in high school. Queerness has been a slow journey, but it began earlier than my first crush on a girl or the first time I told someone I was bisexual. In writing this article, I want to honor the ways that people and experiences shape us, the way they point us in the right directions, even when we eventually want or need to leave those people or experiences behind. Leaving them, growing up or apart from them, does not negate their value or their impact on who we are.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORY

This isn’t a story of triumph or overcoming. It’s a story of growth, of slowly learning what I wanted, often through trial and error, and of figuring out how to work and live outside of the standard frameworks for adult life we’re given in this capitalist white supremacist hetero-patriarchal world.

Personally, I’m not a big fan of the “it gets better” platitude directed at LGBTQ+ youth today. I understand its practical value in trying to give hope to young folks who may be considering suicide due to bullying, harassment, and abuse from peers, family members, and society. The value of that hope is undeniable.

I also know that for certain LGBTQ+ people, especially those multiply-marginalized by not only homophobia, but also sexism, cis-sexism, racism, ableism, classism, and xenophobia, it doesn’t necessarily get better, and definitely not permanently so. The current political climate should make that more clear than ever. So many trans women of color are being murdered. So many disabled queer people are being denied access to sexual expression and queer community spaces.

Locally, Wisconsin state employees have lost domestic partner benefits because of the legalization of gay marriage. This is a particularly strange way that things getting better for some folks (here mostly white and middle- to upper-class gays and lesbians) can mean things getting worse for others—such as LGBTQ+ people for whom marriage is not an option because it would disrupt custody arrangements, spousal support agreements, or social security disability payments—not to mention those who simply just don’t want to get married. It doesn’t always get better, sometimes it gets worse or just different, but sometimes, hopefully more often than not, we learn to handle it better.

My slow journey to queerness has meant learning to be in the world differently, to have different values, and different coping mechanisms than many of the people I grew up with in Kentucky. I am better at owning and loving who I am. I am better at supporting myself and find-

ing support without needing blood/legal relatives (although I am privileged to be able to choose to involve some of them if I want). These skills I have developed rely on certain degrees of privilege, especially economic privilege.

In this moment, with the incredible conservative backlash against advancements in LGBTQ+ rights along with the rights of immigrants, women, people of color, and disabled people, I am even more hesitant to insist “it gets better.” But my experience with queer communities tells me that we are incredibly adaptable and resilient: we survive. Not all of us, but many of us—enough of us to carry on.

MY PAST-SELF’S WILDEST DREAM

I’d like to close with another brief story: At my high school, senior superlatives were granted to one “boy” and one “girl” for each category. I was voted most likely to succeed. Last year, I found out that the other person voted most likely to succeed, who was my friend from honors classes and musical theater (I know, I know, so gay), is now a bisexual, polyamorous, queer, trans woman and an engineering professor named Mara. I never wanted to go to high school reunions before, but now I want nothing more than to go back with her and show folks just how much we have truly succeeded, not just in our careers but in creating the beautifully queer lives we could have never imagined possible as high school seniors.

In fact, when I asked Mara if she knew she was trans in high school, but just didn’t come out (which was the case with me in terms of my then-bisexual identity), she told me she didn’t know, that growing up as the oldest child in one of the most conservative families in our Catholic school, she didn’t even know what transgender was/meant or that trans people existed until college. As queer people, we often come from spaces and people that cannot accept who we are, so we fashion ourselves and our lives from our own imaginations, creating new worlds where perhaps young queer people might have to work a little less hard and wait a little less long to create the lives they might not think are possible now.

There’s a phrase I’ve seen shared by many black folks on social media and I’m not sure who first said it. Some Googling suggests it was maybe Ava DuVernay, but no matter who said it first, there are plenty of mugs and t-shirts for sale online that read “I am my ancestor’s wildest dreams.” I think the very black nature of this sentiment can’t be understated: we, African Americans, are descended from enslaved people, people who, even when freed, started with literally nothing and were regularly subjected to intimidation, discrimination, exclusion, and violence of all sorts. As a black person I often think about how far we have come in a few generations and how impossible my life would seem to a slave or someone living under Jim Crow.

From a perspective of queerness, though, I think that rather than my ancestor’s wildest dreams, I am my own girl-self’s, my past-self’s wildest dreams. Growing up I did not know adults like me existed or that relationships like the kind I have were allowed. I am living a life I could not have even imagined, but one that, in many ways, I desired and worked toward in indirect, non-linear ways throughout my life. I got here learning about queer ways of being from non-queer-identified people doing slightly queer things and with the help of many queer-identified mentors who showed me that stepping outside of the norm, no matter how scary or unsafe at times, would have rewards beyond my wildest imagination.

I hope that in five years I will tell this story differently. I hope in 10 years I look back at this writing and realize how much more I have grown and moved in new directions in my queer life journey. I hope whatever comes next is something I have not yet imagined for myself. ■

we always hear about. When you come to the Rollers lunch you know that everyone there is a lesbian near your age. That’s special.



EMMALEE PEARSON
MADISON COLLEGE GENDER & SEXUALITY ALLIANCE

I’ve been the co-advisor to the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at Madison Area Technical College for several years now, along with my colleague Victor Raymond. We are able to support both students and faculty alike via weekly meetings, guest speakers, panel discussions, plus field trips to OutReach. As an alum of the college, I enjoy providing outreach opportunities and improving the sense of community for everyone on our campus. The more we learn about ourselves and each other, the more we can grow together.

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PRIDE

QPOC PRIDE REPRESENTATION RACIAL JUSTICE VISIBILITY



AKIYA ALEXANDER, aka Kilo SkitLz is a hip-hop artist originally from Evanston, Illinois who was raised in Chicago. As a black woman in the gay community, her past has helped shape her. Kilo fell in love with R&B and Soul at a young age and found hip-hop through Kriss Kross, Mc Lyte, Lauryn Hill, Eve, and Queen Latifah. She began making her own music in 2010 and has been featured on tracks with 1neofma-

ni of BloodLine, eventually becoming BloodLine's "1st Lady." She has made waves in Madison's hip-hop scene and won Female Artist of the Year at the Madison Hip-Hop Music Awards.

As an artist, Kilo expresses herself through her music. Her song, "ReiGnBow," explores the topic of self expression: "I want people to see beyond color, beyond sexual orientation, just look beyond the stereotypes. Everyone has an internal expression but everyone does not express it externally because of what people might think. My mother always told me people will not always like you and you can not please everybody. Through my work, my music, and my daily life, I like to spread knowledge to my community, es-

pecially about staying true to who you are. Respect yourself, and you will respect others." **CONNECT:** facebook.com/kiloakaskitlz



DAOSAVANH PHAKEOVILAY is a founding member and organizer of the "No Stress Collective" DJ collective in Milwaukee. In addition to organizing queer dance parties, she also organizes queer dating events that seek to provide spaces for queer people to find



DUKE VIRGINIA is a photographer, intersectional feminist, Womanist, and vegan originally from Detroit's west side. Duke's blackness, queerness, and womynhood intersect constantly. Living in Madison, Duke feels black more than anything, due to experiencing anti-blackness while doing routine activities, like grocery shopping or working. Her passion lies in capturing

love, lust, and everything in-between. These events celebrate queer love in a fun process. "I feel like the day-to-day living and fighting for equity can drain so much energy, but it's important to also prioritize fun, companionship, laughter, and sexual desire."

As a queer, Lao refugee woman who is masculine of center with radical politics, Dao has always felt connected to oppressed groups and bases her organizing on building community. As a young woman and refugee, she was taught to not take up space and aim toward heteronormative capitalist goals of a career, marriage, and children. In coming to terms with her queer identity, the examples of queerness she first found were emulations of assimilation to hetero culture. This has influenced her organizing; she wants all events and spaces to stop centering cisgender white men. Rather, she feels, events and spaces should ensure that they provide access to the most marginalized groups. Dao's organizing was built off of her and her friends' experiences. "We set the rules in order to keep people safe, and we felt safe and free enough to dance and enjoy the community of womyn or queer people." **CONNECT:** facebook.com/nostresscollective/

candid portraits, telling stories from the lens of a black, queer womyn in which she often shares a common identity with the people she photographs. "My work reflects the different spaces I'm allowed access to based on my identities. I can work closely with other queer, black womyn and create images that reflect them as accurately as I would reflect myself. It's kind of amazing when I think about how these different groups of people who would never interact personally with one another have the one thing in common of trusting me to create images that portray them as they would themselves." **CONNECT:** dukevirginia.com



BRODERICK PEARSON AKA "MONTELL INFINITI-ROSS," through his affiliation with a collective of likeminded men, found not only his identity but also his purpose. Says Pearson, "The House of Infiniti was made up of black, gay men who wanted to see something better for the community, and do HIV prevention on a broad spectrum." The organization raised more than \$100,000 of city and state funding that enabled community outreach, group-level intervention, and propelled Pearson to the forefront in his current capacity as a mentor and community educator in a research-oriented position with the Medical College of Wisconsin. In his role, he helps to assess, facilitate, recruit, follow-up, and coordinate various initiatives that focus on the African-American gay and bisexual community. Pearson is also widely known for his success in pageants. "Montell Infiniti-Ross," as he is known, currently holds the title of 2018

Mr. Gay Madison but has also won several prelims to Mr. Gay USofA such as Mr. Gay Wisconsin USofA (2013), Mr. Gay Iowa USofA (2014), and Mr. Gay Southern States USofA (2015); Mr. Five Nightclub 2014, and placed in the Top 12 at Mr. Gay USofA (2013), to name a few.

Working in HIV education and prevention, Pearson sees at least two related challenges facing male QPOC. The first is lack of education around personal empowerment and good decision making regarding sexual health. The other is a general lack of unity within the LGBTQ community. "One thing that has changed over time is that type of constructed family environment...that support where one person is looking at that next generation and saying, 'You know what, I want to be like a big brother/big sister program for this individual. I want to motivate, inspire, and encourage this person to do better than me.'"

For his professional work, Pearson was invited to the Cohort Initiative Fellowship Program sponsored by the Department of Health, HIV and AIDS Services of Wisconsin that equips men of color to take on leadership positions. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/broderick.pearson



SANTERA MICHELS is a queer, mixed indigenous (Keeweenaw Bay Ojibwe) educator and organizer born and raised in Milwaukee. Her work focuses on supporting LGBTQ and HIV+ people who are currently and formerly incarcerated, abolishing white supremacy, and achieving liberation. For Santera, being queer and indigenous provides a blueprint for how to navigate

the white supremacist, hetero-patriarchy, and ablest society. She pulls queer pride from her indigenous roots to resist oppressive norms. She has great pride in knowing that her identity has existed before this country and that her identity existed in a liberated world.

An organizer with Milwaukee's Black and Pink, which works toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex in advocating for LGBTQ people who are imprisoned, Santera suggests engaging in harm-reduction actions such as supporting people who are incarcerated by sending them letters of love and support, calling their prison wardens when they are being mistreated, and putting money on their books. Additionally, she supports campaigns to get cops out of schools (such as the work being done in Madison and Milwaukee), and supports the campaign to Close the Milwaukee Secure Detention Center.

CONNECT: facebook.com/MKEBlackandPink



SARAH AKAWA is a party planner, founding member of the Queer Pressure Collective, DJ (Saint Saunter), graphic artist, and student studying Information Sciences. She grew up in central Wisconsin, and her mother is a transracial adoptee from Japan. Sarah identifies as a mixed-race, queer person of color.

She began planning concerts and parties at age 13 and is passionate about organizing nightlife spaces for queer people that challenge the current hegemony and provide access for queer people and other underrepresented identities. Her main project is curating Queer Pressure, which started in 2014 as an under-



At the 2017 OutReach LGBT Pride Parade we invited attendees to have their picture taken at our booth. Hope to see you there again in August!



ground queer-only, do-it-yourself, intentionally political dance party in collaboration with DJ Boyfriend. Queer Pressure has grown to become a collective, supporting queer artists, DJs, performers, and musicians, seeking to provide safer spaces created for and by queer people. In addition to the monthly Queer Pressure parties and art exhibitions, she partners with Dyke Dive to curate the queer summer music series, Hot Summer Gays. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/saintsaunter/



SATYA CHIMA is currently living in Madison and working as the Bias Response Coordinator at U.W.-Madison. A graduate of the University of California-Santa Cruz, her scholarship focused in Feminist Studies with Law, Politics, and Social Justice. Her current position works to support and advocate for students who have experienced bias or hate incidents through trainings with staff and faculty, support meetings for victims, and educational conversations with respondents. Her identity as a mixed-race, queer person of color and her background of growing up in a predominantly white community greatly influence her work and what she strives to accomplish within the University and Madison community as a whole.

Satya is passionate about fighting for social justice, even when the work is exhausting due to one's own experiences of racism, homophobia, and microaggressions. "The stakes become higher, the risks are higher and therefore, the work becomes harder." Her hope is that the queer and trans people of color communities can support one another and build alliances

across complex identities to heal in a world full of ignorance. **CONNECT:** doso.students.wisc.edu/staff/chima-satya/



THEO AGBI is a first year Chemical and Biological Engineering PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He also holds a bachelor's degree in engineering from Yale University. At an early age he became a member of Prep for Prep, a preparatory program designed to help students transition from public school to prep schools in New York. This experience led to an admission to Phillips Academy Andover, where his experiences allowed him to construct close-knit friendships that were instrumental in the development of his queer identity alongside his Nigerian culture.

The youngest of four boys raised in traditional Nigerian household in New York City, Agbi attributes much of his work ethic and impetus for thoughtful construction of family structure to the culture. Andover offered Agbi the tools to navigate much of the cynicism and hardship associated with coming into his queer identity.

While his academic training and prior internship (at the National Renewable Energy Lab) is in science, Agbi's identity as a black, queer man fuels his passion for empowering people to express themselves freely. Through his current research in catalysis, he plans to use this platform to examine sustainability and economic access for low income persons. While his knowledge of science and policy is an asset, he finds that carrying the burdens of "blackness" and "queerness" are daunting within his field.

Agbi challenges himself to

connect with others and appreciates affinity spaces (e.g., for music, poetry, and/or activism) that give people the space to vent. He believes that more POC-created and decentralized spaces of this nature are necessary to create mixed communities that allow people to connect to each other's plights. Importantly, he believes that events in the Madison area that incorporate "POC-ness" require more depth and visibility. "More people who are visible in and who identify with the LGBTQ community are a key catalyst for this type of change," he said. **CONNECT:** linkedin.com/in/theodore-agbi



MICAH DOMBROE is a student of Pharmacology and Toxicology at U.W.-Madison. From their own struggles with mental illness, as well as the struggles of loved ones, they became motivated to pursue a career in psychiatric research at the age of 15. Additionally, because Micah is a transgender student in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math—traditionally dominated by white, straight men) there are some unique challenges which they are still learning how to advocate for themselves in and out of the classroom. In addition to being a student, Micah organizes with the International Socialist Organization, participating in radical movements for reform and revolution.

As a child of a Vietnamese war refugee, Micah's racial identity is intertwined with their gender identity as a non-binary transperson. In Vietnam, and many other places in Southeast Asia, there's very little understanding of the LGBTQ experience, and violence against queer individuals

is frequent and extreme. Micah's mother migrated to the United States in order to guarantee a better life for her children, and cherishes their transgender identity as a representation of one of the many ways in which it was easier for Micah to grow up in America rather than Vietnam. For this, Micah is forever grateful.

Micah is also an artist and DJ. Burn the Suburbs Studios, or "BTSS," is an artistic craft-work project they launched last year, with the mission to "make the world a queerer, more intentional, more holographic place." With BTSS, Micah hopes to provide all people access to things that make them feel beautiful, which are gender-affirming, and accessibly priced: "Self-care is a necessity, not a luxury." Micah DJs in the Madison area under the name KALYCHO, a reference to the sex-determined coat patterns of calico cats, which are virtually always female. The name is a rejection of the bio-essentialist and trans-exclusive assertions that gender is determined by genetics, and therefore is immutably male or female. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/burn.the.suburbs.studios/



JINX OGÉ is of Jamaican and German descent. His mother immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 17 and met his father here. He recalled the challenge of growing up in a biracial home that is derivative of two very different families—one starting their lives from Jamaica from nothing and the other side that was very well-established. His father was disowned by his family for dating a black woman. Meeting that side of his family at age 10 is a very profound memory for Jinx. "I've grown past it, and I've processed

it, but I think it's always something that I remembered because it was a very big decision when they had me. He had to make a choice, and I think that followed us for a very long time."

Ogé is a frequent public speaker and is a runway model for Babes 'N Beaus. Many of the issues he faces in his personal life he found in his professional life. While the fashion community is very gay friendly, "I really felt out of place in there... there's still the moments when you'll get someone blatantly say to you, 'I already have a black model' and you're like, 'What does that mean?'" However, there are moments, such as landing a role on the hit series "Empire," that make it all seem worth it.

Jinx has been an active participant in Black Fashion Week and other fashion shows but believes that being able to look in the mirror and not only say but really believe that "I am beautiful" is his biggest accomplishment. He enjoys volunteering in various organizations in the LGBT community. He and his husband Micah enjoy building spaces for QPOC to express themselves creatively and started a dance team called the Space Cats that is currently working on a production of Thriller. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/jinxoge



SHAQ MATTHEWS, currently in Milwaukee, works in development for a local non-profit and is a DJ with No Stress Collective. As a queer black woman, her identity goes hand-in-hand with the spaces that she seeks to create with the collective. Shaq, also known as DJ 88, enjoys DJing because of the universality of music and the ability to just dance and forget

about the chaos of life. She seeks to provide the same escape for others. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/dj88mke/



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

Borden was already a yogi but became more disciplined in his practice as a form of healing. A few years later, in 2002, he completed his first yoga teacher training, and marketed his yoga offerings under the name reUnion yoga. "Yoga means union. It helped me find a needed reunion with myself," he said. "Yoga is a way to get back to who you are and who you are meant to be, to do the work you need to do."

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

In April 2018, Borden became a board member for GSAFE. One of his goals for his new role is adding layers to how we define authentic visibility. Simply being—a father, a Madisonian, a gay man, a teacher—is enough, and its value should not be underestimated. "Representation is key—if you don't see people that look like you, you don't see yourself reflected," Borden said.

Borden and his husband, Johannes Wallmann, are marriage equality activists. They were

plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the state of Wisconsin that made it to the United States Supreme Court. Recently, Borden's husband, a professor at the U.W.-Madison and a professional jazz pianist, released an album titled "Love Wins." It features Borden's vocals and chronicles the couple's journey to marriage equality. **CONNECT:** reunionyoga.com



MICAH OGÉ is employed by Johnson Controls as a Manager of Residential Portfolio Marketing. In his five years there, he's played a key role in development of inclusive marketing programs and client relationship management. For his work, he's received numerous awards, such as the Chairman's Award (the highest given to

employees of Johnson Controls), five Merit Awards for customer engagement and relationship building, and was designated an Ignatius Scholar (for scholars who have spent a significant amount of time in service) while a student at Marquette University. Common among his interests and a commendations are his passion for servant leadership.

Ogé credits his lifelong Catholic faith-based education for shaping his world view. However, he also believes that his identity as a gay man also contributes to and influences his professional and volunteer work. For example, Ogé noted, "It's important to consider not only your outlook on life, but that of your audiences."

To ensure others can feel healthy and whole at work, Ogé has helped lead a business resource group within his organization called Johnson Controls for Equality. This is a company-sponsored organization focused on allyship and concerns that are of importance to the LGBTQ community. He is active in the communi-

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ty, volunteering at the Milwaukee LGBT Center and PrideFest. He is also often invited to speak to students at academic and professional development events on topics such as self-confidence and being your authentic self at work.

Before Johnson Controls, Ogé worked in experimental marketing and account management. He managed relationships with clients such as Google, Best Buy, and REI. He holds a bachelor's degree in public relations and ethics from Marquette University and is currently pursuing an MBA at Cardinal St. Ignace University. Ogé and his husband, Jinx, recently celebrated one year of marriage and 10 years overall together. When asked the one thing he'd like to see changed in the LGBTQ Community, especially for people of color, he said, "More people who are visible in and who identify with the LGBT community. We are part of everything everywhere and folks should see that." **CONNECT:** twitter.com/micahjoge or [linkedin.com/in/micahjoge](https://www.linkedin.com/in/micahjoge)



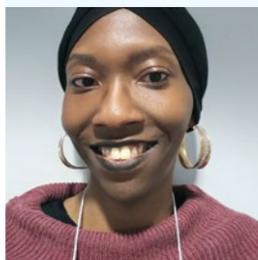
FRANZO LAW II is currently President of Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus, Wisconsin's gay and gay-friendly men's chorus. A member of the group for more than four years, serving as board president for three, he also sings with the Wisconsin Chamber Choir and the Isthmus Vocal Ensemble.

Particularly in his role as President, Law has focused on building relationships across communities. "When I first came here, it was very clear that there were strong divisions between the gay communities, which I thought was weird," Law said. For example, he noted that "there were people who would only go to one bar, but wouldn't go to

another because they didn't feel welcomed. We are too small to be dividing ourselves further." As a result, Law has tried to create spaces that help to bridge the divide, such as a joint concert in Watertown with the gay men's chorus of Milwaukee.

Franzo identifies as a gay, black man, but further as a "benevolent coastie." He has a keen interest in language and different people's language patterns. "It's really easy to hide one's gayness, but you can't hide one's blackness. It's just part of how I walk through this world and being able to be comfortable in telling that story is very important for me. So is being at the table where the conversation is happening, because I think a lot of times, the right people aren't at the table. Decisions are being made, and assumptions are being drawn."

Franzo moved to Madison in 2011 with his husband of four years, though they have been together 11 years overall. Franzo completed his PhD at The Graduate School and University Center (City University of New York). Until 2016, he was a Post-Doctoral Fellow conducting research on developmental language acquisition. He now serves as the Product Portfolio Manager within the U.W. Extension focusing on instructional communication systems. **CONNECT:** [franzowal.com/](https://www.franzowal.com/)



MARIE KELLY is an activist and creative based in Milwaukee. Kelly joined SHEBA, Sisters Helping Each Other Battle AIDS, eight years ago as a way to build community with other black trans-women. "Once I started seeing and learning from other people like myself, I became happier and more confident," she said.

Kelly routinely volunteers at community events, like Milwaukee PrideFest, to get the word out about SHEBA. "I've gotten so much out of the group. We are making ourselves known more and more," she said. Kelly credits Brenda Coley, who facilitated SHEBA, as a huge help during her transition. "When I got my name change, Brenda was there for me." Kelly's passions include singing and modeling. She was featured in a photo exhibit, Our Trans Family, along with other SHEBA members in 2016



BRENDA COLEY is the Co-Executive Director of Milwaukee Water Commons, a cross-city network that fosters connection, hands-on collaboration and broad community leadership on behalf of Milwaukee's waters.

Joining Milwaukee Water Commons in 2016, Coley brought a long-standing commitment to social justice, expertise in leadership development, and organizational capacity-building, community organizer skills, and strategic thinking to her job as Co-Executive Director. Coley honed her skills in various positions within both Milwaukee LGBT and academic institutions.

Before MWC, Coley worked as Associate Executive Director at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and the Medical College of Wisconsin Center for Aids Intervention Research where she coordinated HIV Behavioral Research.

Coley also worked at Diverse & Resilient, a public health agency with a goal to eliminate health disparities within the LGBTQ community throughout the state. Coley directed several initiatives while at D&R including SHEBA an

African-American male to female transgender group focused on leadership development and HIV prevention. SHEBA began as a program of the AA House of Infinity. Coley's work with SHEBA has spanned 25 years. "The lessons I learned working with those women in SHEBA have informed my life and continue to do so," Coley said. "I have made life-long friends and learned life-long lessons."

In 2013, she started Brenda Coley and Associates, a consulting firm that helps local and national organizations build the cultural competence to approach marginalized populations around health, leadership development, and social justice issues.

As an African-American, bisexual woman, in a committed, 30-year relationship with her partner Dr. Sandra Jones—a retired professor of English and Africology at UWM—she has seen our world transform regarding society's perception of the humanity of LGBTQ people. Coley believes structural change is a key step to cultural change. She referenced *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court case that legalized gay marriage in the United States in 2015, as an example of cultural attitudes leading to a major shift after protections were granted. "It is always important to get at the system for long-lasting protections regarding communities that have been discriminated against," she said. **CONNECT:** [milwaukee-watercommons.org](https://www.milwaukee-watercommons.org)



MATTHEW LEWIS recently returned to his hometown of Milwaukee after completing a B.A. in English with a creative writing emphasis and a certificate in gender and women's studies from the U.W.-Madison. He's currently

the Intersectionality Among Men Program Coordinator at Diverse & Resilient. This role allows him to explore his passion for poetry and playwriting with his desire to be a community advocate. The focus of his role is HIV prevention and education to LGBTQ men between the ages of 18 and 29.

Lewis credits his time working at the LGBT Campus Center and spending time in the Audrey Lorde Co-Op, the Crossroads Program, and the Rooted Discussion Group while at U.W.-Madison for helping him to identify his passion for creating spaces for people to feel welcome. In college, he also wrote a play and a poetry series about his experiences as a queer, black boy—at the intersection of sexuality and religion. He indicated that college "allowed him to give a name to all the things he dealt with growing up." His experience was not without challenges, such as feelings of isolation on a predominantly white campus and navigating hypervisibility within an already marginalized group.

Lewis plans to use his current role to create more spaces devoted to people of color that focus on "healing, but at a pace not judged by deliverables or defined timeline." In addition, he believes it is important to see more QPOC as first-person narrators of our stories to ensure that we are "in the driving seat of our own liberation." **CONNECT:** diverseandresilient.org/staff/matthew-lewis/



OSCAR VILLAREAL is the co-owner of Fuegos, a Latin-inspired steak, vegan, and tapas restaurant. He recalled vivid memories during his childhood squarely focused on family. Early in his childhood, he worked on his family's orange orchard in

Texas and, later, several vegetable farms in Wisconsin. Around age 20, he worked in a factory but quickly realized that he missed the "fresh air...and freedom" that came with working on a farm. He desired something that challenged him creatively. "I took a look at the guys there [in the factory]. I mean there were lifers in there just waiting to retire. I just couldn't see myself doing that for 20, 30 years."

To the chagrin of family, he left his good paying job in the factory for a minimum wage job washing dishes in an apprenticeship at The Red Geranium Restaurant in Lake Geneva. He quickly moved from dishwasher to cook, while pursuing formal culinary training at Waukesha County Technical College (the only American Culinary Federation Accrediting Commission certified culinary program in Wisconsin) and working odd jobs to make ends meet for his family...which was also expanding at that time.

Growing up at a time and in a

culture that neither tolerated nor was kind to those who believed they might be gay, Villareal married twice and was in a relationship with one other woman. "Growing up, I had the secret of being gay and watching how my cousins and uncles would pick on all the gay family members, or those that were brave enough to say they were. God bless them for being brave, because it was a rough thing." Despite how his marriages ended, Villareal beamed as he talked about his eight children (two now deceased), and the struggles he encountered just to maintain custody of them and to keep them together.

Moving to the Madison area and thinking about leaving a legacy for his children is part of what led to the creation of Fuegos. Villareal is active in and supportive of the LGBTQ and other communities. In fact, several of his employees at Fuegos live with a disability. His husband Jordan, "the beautiful side of me, as I call him," has a fused leg due to

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having suffered a gunshot wound there. "Jordan has always been there for me and been helping me through this time, when it was the roughest of my life, and also he is sober. That's how I met him."

Oscar has been a winner of the Culinary Olympics in Orlando, received a Levy Legends Award, received nine Best of Madison nominations for Fuegos, and helped numerous others in their times of need. When asked what he'd like to see changed or better for QPOC, he was very clear: Unity. "I'd like to see more acceptance, and I think there needs to be stronger unity within the gay community," he said. "For example, if all the gay businesses were on an app and you could support all gay businesses throughout this country, that, to me, would be amazing. "There's no reason to give money to people that are out deliberately trying to hurt us, in general as queers. If I'm going to support anybody, I would rather support somebody to help somebody, not support somebody to do hatred towards others. That's just not what I'm for," he said.

CONNECT: fuegosmadison.com



WARREN SCHERER is the director of the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center and an Assistant Dean of Students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Scherer started at the Center last school year, after more than nine years supporting LGBTQ+ students at the UWM's LGBT Resource Center.

Scherer grew up in the Richmond, Virginia area. He defines himself as a "second generation, queer, biracial, African-American man." His mother also identifies as a lesbian, and the rest of his family was supportive when he came out. "My coming out pro-

cess, I'd argue, was non-existent. I grew up in a very welcoming and affirming family," he said.

Scherer said he wanted to work in higher education to mitigate the struggles LGBTQ+ students may encounter on campus. "When I think about the work that I do, I often think about the vulnerable populations and how we can intervene and address barriers that higher education creates for them, and actively remove them," he said. "If education is a long-term determinant of well being in life, we need to make sure higher education is affordable, accessible, and affirming. I feel like I can be a change agent in that arena."

Scherer is excited about current and upcoming initiatives piloted by the Campus Center—including collaborating with health services on an informed consent model to allow trans and non-binary students to better access medical care, and a "life skills" course to help students navigate relationships.

"I see the Campus Center being a bar-setter and a standard for other centers across the country in terms of programming, student engagement, and policy and procedure changes." **CONNECT:** warren.scherer@wisc.edu



GATLIN DRESIDAN is the administrative coordinator at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee. An Arkansas native, Gatlin moved to Milwaukee in 2014 and has developed a passion for serving young people.

"I took the job as a part-time gig. I was working from home and growing my business, but I wanted to get out and meet people. I've since moved to full-time and I like it. I really do enjoy working with kids," he said.

Gatlin's advertising firm, MAD-KIN, specializes in social media marketing for small businesses. He helps them visually brand and promote their products and services. Gatlin earned his bachelor's of arts in communications, public relations, and marketing from Northeastern State University in Oklahoma in 2008.

As one half of a same-gender loving couple, Gatlin said he often encounters people with one-dimensional perspectives of what it means to be LGBTQ. "People tend to mistake what being gay, or same-gender loving is. People have a one track mind," he said. "When I interact with students, parents, and clients, I try to show a different side of what it is."

Gatlin is huge college football fan and enjoys writing, social media engagement, and spending quality time with his friends, partner, and two teenage daughters. **CONNECT:** instagram.com/iamgatlin



DANA GORDON ROWE grew up in Madison and was interested in theater, but did not feel like there were many outlets for gender-queer students. "The roles were either for guys, or girls, and there was nothing for me," they said.

Today, Rowe serves as a volunteer for Proud Theater, a safe space for LGBTQ+ teens to share their stories and experiences among a supportive community. Rowe helps students with storytelling, scene work, and serves as a caring, supportive adult for young people who need it.

Rowe also serves as a mentor through Madison Urban Ministries' Mentoring Connections, a program to support young people with a parent who is incarcerated. Rowe said their life experiences inspired

them to work with young people.

"Life doesn't work out well for people who don't have a lot of resources, or folks without someone reliable to encourage them," Rowe said. "It was the people who facilitated the youth groups I was a part of who got me here, saying, 'You are worth something, you can do something.'"

Last year, Rowe earned their masters in tax accounting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Rowe is an avid sports player, with a particular interest in rugby, softball, and hockey, and also served on the board of directors for the Madison Gay Hockey Association. Rowe plays many instruments and enjoys creating music in their spare time. Rowe also has a knack for making greeting cards, jewelry, and other wearable items.



DEZHORN GAUTHIER is a Milwaukee-based model, entrepreneur, and educator. Although Gauthier had a successful career as a model before his physical transition in 2014, naysayers thought height, build, and other industry standards for male models would prohibit him from finding work. "All (the negativity) did was ignite a flame in me. I told them, 'Watch and see,'" Gauthier said.

After his transition, Gauthier was featured in "Brothers, Sisters, Sons & Daughters," a Barneys New York campaign shot by photographer Bruce Weber. He continues to work in the modeling industry.

Gauthier started *Black T*, which he heralds as the first magazine focused on Black trans identity and culture. Gauthier said one of the reasons he started the publication was to provide space for Black trans folks to see and celebrate one another.

"Even though we are small, it is a huge accomplishment for the Black trans community...it's for us, by us," he said. "The magazine is for everyone to show themselves and their accomplishments...it is all about our excellence." *Black T* has subscribers in all 50 states and 11 countries.

In addition to the magazine, Gauthier's Dezhorn International Foundation finances top surgery, medical binders, care packages, and scholarships for LGBTQ+ youth. Gauthier said all of his work centers around visibility for LGBTQ+ folks to ensure young people feel like they are not alone on their journey.

"I don't do what I do to look pretty on a magazine. I want to show our LGBTQ youth that they can be whatever they want to be," he said. "I am here to educate, empower, and inspire."

Gauthier earned his juris master in Legal Studies in 2017 from the Washington University in Saint Louis School of Law **CONNECT:** instagram.com/dezhornrgauthier



STEPH TAI is an administrative and environmental law professor at the U.W.-Madison. Tai is an alum of Georgetown Law School and worked for the United States Department of Justice before becoming a professor in 2006.

Before making the switch to the legal field, Tai earned a PhD in atmospheric chemistry from Tufts University. Tai said they were motivated to go back to school for law to make more of an impact on climate change issues.

Tai is also the co-chair of the committee for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people in the university, a group organized to advocate for the

interests of LGBTQ+ faculty and staff at U.W.-Madison. Lately, the group's focus has been on establishing equitable and affordable healthcare, especially for trans faculty and staff.

Tai said their LGBTQ+ identity helps them be more aware of under-represented views and issues and tries to raise that sense of awareness in their law students. "A lot of times, folks don't feel empowered to represent themselves. I try to encourage my students to think carefully about what views get represented and what do not."

Tai also supports students through their involvement with Q-Law, an organization for LGBTQ+ law students. Tai said they would encourage aspiring, queer lawyers to join a workplace where they can be themselves.

"People wonder about being out on their resume, I think it is important to do so, not just for community representation, but you don't want to work in a place where you can't be out. I encourage people to be as much of themselves as they can," they said.

In their free time, Tai enjoys lifting weights, listening to punk rock, and watching horror movies. **CONNECT:** law.wisc.edu/profiles/tai2@wisc.edu



LUCIA NUÑEZ is the Vice President of Equity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement at Madison Area Technical College. Nuñez works with faculty, staff, students, and the community to create welcoming and inclusive environments across Madison College's nine campuses. In addition to small changes, like including appropriate pronouns on name badges and table tents to monthly events celebrating students' diverse backgrounds,

Nuñez thinks it is important to create systemic change when it comes to diversity and inclusion. During her tenure, she's helped to facilitate workshops on implicit bias. The college also surveyed students to help the administration better understand how they feel about campus culture to create data-driven solutions.

Before her transition to Madison College, Nuñez worked as the Director for the City of Madison's Department of Civil Rights. She said the shift to higher education was the "perfect opportunity" to enable her to "work upstream" and build a positive culture, versus responding to issues after the harm is done. Nuñez also served as executive director of Centro Hispano, a non-profit in Madison dedicated to social and economic empowerment for Latinx people.

Nuñez thinks it is critical for institutions of higher education to thoughtfully engage with the communities around them. She is particularly proud of the expansion of Madison College's South

Campus, which broke ground earlier this summer. Nuñez said Madison College worked closely with south-side residents and community partners to gather input about programming and design for the new campus. "The campus will embody the south side and the diversity that exists there," Nuñez said. **CONNECT:** madisoncollege.edu/



LIAN WEI XIANG, currently based in Milwaukee, grew up all over the Midwest. She fills her time with organizing events and DJing with No Stress Collective and enjoys dancing, live music, cooking, and taking care of her plants. Some notable events she has organized are Sex Ed for Adults,

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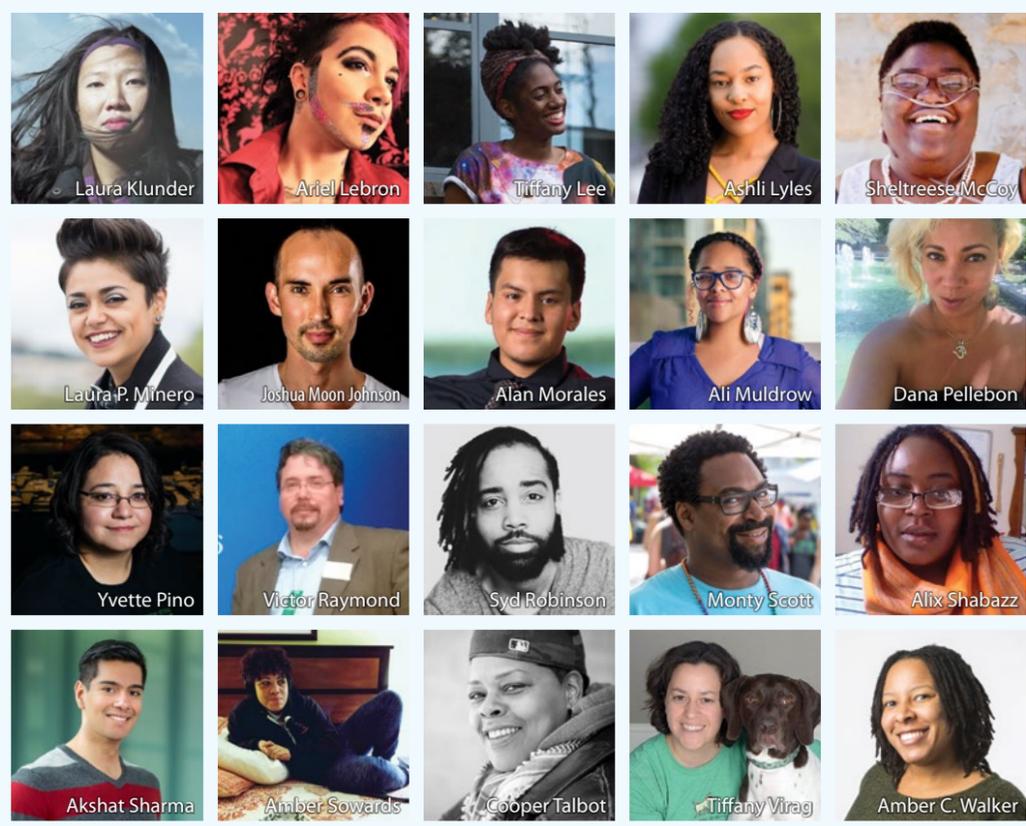
Lian is a transracial adoptee from China, adopted by a white family with two brothers from Peru. For Lian, growing up transracial meant a lot of longing for China and its culture while being immersed in white culture and not belonging to either. She often hid that she was adopted because of being embarrassed, from not understanding what a transracial adoption does to one's identity, and lacking the language and support to seek others with the same experience. For the transracial adoptees out there, Lian wants to say, "I see you! Keep talking about our experiences and creating things out of them. My biggest hope right now is for East Asians to recognize and work on the anti-Blackness perpetuated in our community, and to continue creating our own art and music and culture that isn't copying another's."

She wants the Milwaukee community to support queer and women of color in entrepreneurial roles, and to see queer people of color being paid for their work. The thing Lian loves most about being a queer person of color is the camaraderie of shared experiences, the pride when community members have amazing accomplishments. For her, work is always wrapped up in her identities. When No Stress Collective throws parties, Lian and the collective focus their marketing and advertising on people of color and queer people. They try to make sure the space feels right and hold problematic people accountable. Lian notes other women of color and queer-led parties like Queer Pressure (Madison) and Hunnies and Hot Sauce (Oakland) structure their parties in a similar manner. For Lian, "having intersectional identities allows me greater empathy and means I am constantly trying to recognize where I am privileged, leveraging that, and learning to do better." **CONNECT:** facebook.com/nostresscollective ■



#QPOCPRIDE

Recognizing 2017's list, with updates supplied to **Our Lives** by the list's participants.



Since our 2017 List:

ALI MULDRON became Co-Director of GSAFE, was voted Madison's favorite activist, and awarded the MLK Humanitarian of the Year.

MONTY SCOTT graduated from the Wisconsin Health Leaders Fellowship with the state's AIDS/HIV program. Additionally, he's joined the Statewide Action Planning Group (SAPG) for Wisconsin HIV Community Planning.

ARIEL LEBRON has been awarded Choreographer of the Year for their work on the production of "The Nance."

CEDRIC JOHNSON has become the Community Services Manager with Madison Gas & Electric.

VAUNCE ASHBY has retired from her role as Director of Education with the Wisconsin Historical Society.

CEDRIC ELLIS has been named one of the Top 35 Most Influential African Americans in Wisconsin. In addition, his current role at CUNA Mutual has expanded to include leadership for Information Technology, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Corporate Social Responsibility, Procurement, Vendor Management, Project Management Office, Board Relations, Corporate Brand & Marketing, Human Resources & Communication and Corporate Aviation.

ALNISA ALLGOOD played a major role in the Collaboration for Good's launch of a Social Good Accelerator (SGA) that targets social entrepreneurs that are people of color, women, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community, and/or elderly.

BRIA S. BROWN started B. Brown Productions LLC, her own videography business.

COOPER TALBOT began working with Girls Rock Camp Madison and won the award for Favorite Local Radio Personality at the 2018 Madison Area Music Awards.

AKSHAT SHARMA will graduate from U.W.-Madison with a Ph. D. in immunology in August. He accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at University of Texas Health.

TIFFANY VIRAG started Elite Recovery Zone, a body maintenance and sports recovery center. Virag started the business to fill a void in sports recovery for athletes of all ages.

SYD ROBINSON stars on the new show, "Brothers," a drama series following the lives of four trans-male characters living in Brooklyn, New York. Brothers is available on Vimeo, Hulu, and Amazon Prime.

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INTERSEX PARENTING HEALTHCARE ADVOCACY

Intersex and OK

When one Wisconsin parent learned his child was born intersex, it set him and his entire family on a crash course with medical professionals, and toward an even greater fight for acceptance and support.

NOT LONG AGO, I received an email from Eric Lohman, a professor of gender and media at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He identified himself as the parent of an intersex daughter and a board member of InterACT, a non-profit that advocates for delaying surgery in children born with intersex bodies.

He reached out after hearing about and seeing our Colors in Bloom Campaign that Diverse & Resilient kicked off in February with a song and music video by Lex Allen, and now with billboards and ads that run through the month of June. The campaign is dedicated to reminding LGBTQ youth they are beautiful, loved, worthy just as they are. This is the message that he is trying to send his child, too.

I receive a lot of emails from parents, often those with trans kids, who are looking for resources. However, this was an email asking to meet to help educate me about the Intersex community and the struggles of intersex youth and parents. I eagerly set up a time.

Upon meeting with Eric, I was instantly drawn into his deep knowledge sharing and passion for his child and other children who are born intersex. I knew that children born with intersex bodies are typically subjected to cosmetic gender surgeries before they are old enough to consent. However, I was unaware of the resistance that parents and advocates met when trying to learn about other options besides surgery. Despite massive resistance from the Intersex community, these violent surgeries happen every single day throughout the world, including at Milwaukee's Children's Hospital. Seeing an ally in Diverse & Resilient, Eric sat down with me in April to explore us to listen to and partner with InterACT.

When Eric was pursuing his PhD in Ontario, Canada, he took a graduate class on queer theories and methodologies. In that class, he learned about intersex issues and he learned about queer bodies and gender. One of the topics discussed was intersex issues, including nonconsensual gender surgery. At that



AUGUST 27: "Raising Rosie: Our Story of Parenting an Intersex Child" Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee | Eric and Stephani Loman, authors of the new book about raising an intersex child and navigating a medical establishment that still tries to impose unnecessary surgery on those children, among other challenges, will hold a reading and presentation to discuss strategies to advocate for and support intersex kids. 7:00 p.m., free.

I was unaware of the resistance that parents and advocates met when trying to learn about other options besides surgery. Eric learned that urological surgeons estimate that 75–85% of intersex children have nonconsensual surgery before the age of one due to pressure on parents.

time, he swore that if he ever had children, he would never allow that to happen. At that time, he barely understood just how common the surgery was in the United States and around the world.

In 2012 Eric and his wife Stephani gave birth to their daughter, Rosie, named after Rosie the Riveter. Since birth, Rosie has confirmed her gender with her parents. Eric had a full view of the birth while his wife's view was partially obscured because of her inability to sit up soon after an epidural. As soon as their child was born, Stephani slapped Eric on the arm and said, "See! Ultrasounds are often wrong! We have a boy!" She thought

it was funny but Eric noticed the doctors all looking around the room and none of them were laughing. They looked concerned.

Upon looking down at this beautiful new baby, Eric thought that his newborn baby may be intersex. All the things he had studied earlier were still fresh in his brain and it seemed hard to believe that this was going to be the reality for his family. He went to cut the umbilical cord and confirmed that Rosie was, in fact, intersex.

About 10 minutes after Rosie was born a doctor came in to tell them that their child was "not quite a boy and not quite a girl," and that their child showed signs of a very serious condition that would require close monitoring. At that point, they were told, it was too early to know, but Eric could tell they were tiptoeing around the issue.

Three days later, they had a meeting with a medical team. Rosie's condition had deteriorated. She was treated for Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH). Rosie's body was not producing the much-needed cortisol that most bodies produce, instead producing dangerous levels of testosterone, which caused the in-utero development of ambiguous genitalia. The team that the hospital assembled included endocrine physicians, social workers, surgeons, pediatric specialists, and more. A pediatric urologist recommended surgery at about six months to cosmetically change Rosie's genitalia.

At the same time, Eric and Stephani were pleased to learn that their daughter's body was otherwise functioning fine so they didn't feel that immediate surgery was necessary. Not having surgery was never presented as an option, and Eric says that he got hostile with the team because he felt their wishes as parents were going unheard. The surgeon was quite insistent on his own theory, and Eric felt unable to get through to him. Eric wondered what happens to parents who have not had access to the research.

They felt misled and bullied. The meeting ended but a few days later when the CAH was confirmed, the pressure resumed. It appeared that this surgeon thought they were

questioning his skills as a surgeon and presented pictures of other genital surgeries he'd successfully completed. This was upsetting and traumatizing to Eric and Stephani. After two more meetings, Eric felt that this surgeon was turning belligerent in his insistence that they consent to surgery on their child.

After Eric and Stephani's experience, they found InterACT, an organization that uses innovative legal and other strategies to advocate for the human rights of children born with intersex traits. One of their main goals is to end non-consensual cosmetic genital surgeries on children and let these children decide about their bodies when they are adults. You can learn more about InterACT at interactadvocates.org.

Through all of his research and advocacy, Eric learned that urological surgeons estimate that 75–85% of intersex children have non-consensual surgery before the age of one due to pressure on parents. Eric, Stephani, and InterACT believe that the pushing of these nonconsensual surgeries is a human rights violation.

The day I sat down to write this story, news broke that has Intersex advocates rejoicing. A paper released by three former U.S. Surgeons General—Dr. Joycelyn Elders, Dr. David Satcher, and Dr. Richard Carmona—called for an end to forced medical surgeries

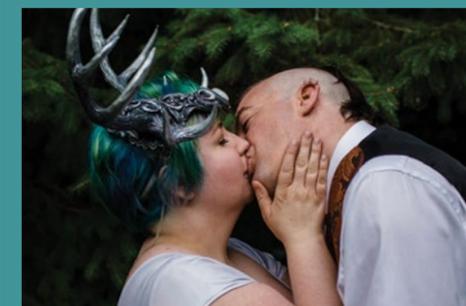
on young intersex people.

"I really hope for a world that has a growing understanding and respect for intersex bodies and that intersex children can grow up and love their bodies for how they are and meet partners who do as well," Eric told me, voice full of emotion and pride for his child and this work. "It won't happen as long as nonconsensual surgeries are happening. We cannot have intersex people who love themselves if the medical community continues not to listen. We want intersex children to know that there is a community and society that loves and accepts them for how they were born. This is why I felt an instant connection to the Colors in Bloom campaign."

Eric and Stephani have been featured on Katie Couric's documentary, "Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric," and they have a book coming out in July titled *Raising Rosie: Our Story of Parenting an Intersex Child*. They plan to hold an awareness fundraiser for InterACT on November 3 in partnership with 88Nine Radio Milwaukee. ■



KATHY FLORES is the statewide LGBTQ Anti-Violence Manager for Diverse & Resilient and a board member for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.



Dutcher

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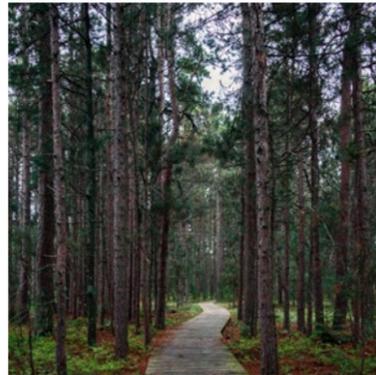
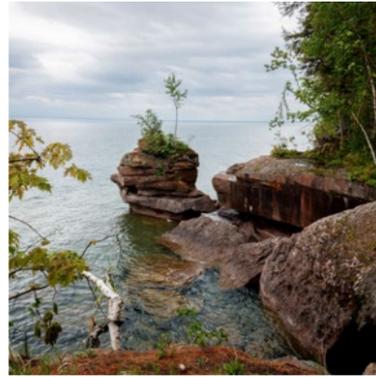
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BOARDING THE FERRY IN BAYFIELD, the Ojibwe word *nagadan* or “to leave behind” was my mantra for the weekend. For a long time, Madeline Island was considered the spiritual center of the Ojibwe, and it’s easy to see why. From the moment the ferry departs, you can feel it transporting you to another world. By the time you arrive in La Pointe, you’re already noticeably more relaxed. The very small-town life here is welcoming you, and the miles of sparsely populated forests and lakeshore invite you to explore them at your own pace. The band Owl City’s new single “Madeline Island,” evokes the feeling you get while visiting:

- We left our cares on the mainland
- Boarded a ferry boat
- We saw La Pointe for the first time
- And we felt right at home
- Drove out to Big Bay State Park
- Picked out our campsite
- We settled in underneath the stars
- And there we were
- We left our shadows on the lakeshore
- We soaked up all the sights
- About drowned in a downpour
- But for the Northern Lights

Madeline Island’s perfect mix of Wisconsin’s “Up north” state-of-mind and geography can be found across its 14 miles of wooded forest. Lakefront cabins are tucked back off the road and hidden by the woods, all offering you a piece of their “superior life.” There’s also dozens of campsites in both Big Bay State Park and the local Town Park. If you’re in search of solitude and a beach, I strongly recommend following the boardwalk from Town Park to a 1.5-mile stretch of

beach, and further beyond to more than seven miles of hiking trails. Madeline Island first caught my attention after the 2010 census. For the first time in history the census allowed you to indicate the gender of your spouse, so there was a campaign for LGBTQ-identified folk in committed relationships to “queer the census.” What came of it was a first-of-its-kind map showing where we live. As expected, per capita Dane and Milwaukee counties were well represented. Ranking just as high though was Ashland County at nearly 8%, home to Madeline Island. As it turns out, this northernmost part of Wisconsin is home to not only a progressive community, but a thriving LGBTQ one as well. While touring La Pointe I felt at home by the number of LGBTQ-owned businesses, Pride window clings, and bumper stickers I saw. If you’re looking to create your own signature Wisconsin vacation, or just a quick getaway, I’ve listed some of my tips and recommendations below so you can make the most of your own time on Madeline Island, too. For me, it was one of the best vacations I’ve had in our state, and I am already daydreaming about how soon I can go back.

GETTING THERE

The **Madeline Island Ferry** (madferry.com) is the main way visitors arrive, and can accommodate passenger, bicycle, and car transportation. It departs regularly from Bayfield to La Pointe. The cost is \$7 per person, and \$12 per auto.

WHERE TO STAY

Last-minute lodging on the island isn’t impossible but can be challenging. It is best to book your vacation home or campsite far in advance. There’s something for everyone, from secluded cabins on the lake, to condos in the center of town, to park campsites. For local help with rentals, I highly recommend connecting with the LGBT-owned **Madeline Island Vacations** (madelineislandvacations.com). Owners Mike Rasmus, Dave Johnson & Ron Madich share over 50 years in the motel,

vacation, and hospitality industry and have trusted relationships with dozens of local properties and homeowners. If camping is more your style, you’ll need to reserve your spot at wisconsinstateparks.com.

THINGS TO DO

There’s a lot to see and do on this small island (a population of just 302), and even more if you can get out on the water to explore the surrounding Apostle Islands. **Adventure Vacations** (adv-vac.com), in the center of La Pointe, is a great place to base your exploring from. They offer boat and kayak tours, hiking tours, and gear rentals ranging from stand-up paddle boards to wetsuits and other water gear.

If you just want to hop on a moped or bike and explore the island by land, you can rent either just across the street at **Motion to Go** (motion-to-go.com). Besides the rentals themselves, Motion to Go also has a series of maps on site that you can take to help plan your route.

The **Madeline Island Museum** (madelineislandmuseum.wisconsinhistory.org) is a must-visit while you’re there. It’s part of the Wisconsin Historical Society and can walk you through 300 years of island history, from Ojibwe lifeways to the fur trade. Plus, the museum’s store features books, handmade jewelry, Ojibwe crafts, and other gifts.

SHOPPING

If you’re like me, one of my favorite things to do when I travel is to find authentic things that I can bring home. For such a small town, La Pointe has no shortage of shops and boutiques offering just that. The island doesn’t allow any chain retailers, so everything you come across has local roots. Here are a few that stood out to me:

Madeline Island Candles (madelineislandcandles.com): This LGBT-owned boutique offers everything from soy to beeswax candles, and a new candle line made from essential oils. It also has a list of unique accessories and specialty soaps, too. An unexpected bestseller: soap on

a rope—because of how common outdoor showers are on the island. **Bell Street Gallery** (bellstgallery.com): This local gallery features artwork from 40+ local artists, an open-air pottery garden, and an Art Bar that hosts live music several nights a week, June through September. **Dockside Gifts** (docksidegifts.com): An LGBT-owned gift store located right next to the ferry terminal that offers items for your home. They carry a mix of metal art, kitchen items, apparel, and more.

DINING

Q&Z’s Bakery & Cafe is the newest business on the island, and a great spot to get a breakfast pastry. I highly recommend the rhubarb muffins. Rumor has it that they’re the best in town.

Another fantastic breakfast or brunch spot is **Farmhouse** (farmhouse-madelineisland.com). Owners Lauren Schuppe and Gip Matthews have a talent for mixing style with a discerning approach to their farm-to-table menu. They’re even working to add their own farm to expand what they can source directly from the island. Fun fact: Lauren is also the town’s librarian.

Plan to do dinner at **Café Seiche** (cafeseiche.com). This LGBTQ-owned restaurant has the best menu on the island, from grilled beef tenderloin to pepito crusted whitefish—usually caught the same day when in season. And for vegetarians, you’ll find options with your name on them, too.

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST

Tom’s Burned Down Café (tomsburneddowncafe.com) may have been the most unexpected highlight of my trip. The best way I can describe it is if an eclectic, artsy junkyard could double as a neighborhood dive bar. The vibe is relaxed and social, and you can tell its patrons take pride in how unique and one-of-a-kind it is. Definitely make a point to stop in, if just to take in the décor. —Patrick Farabaugh

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2018 GSAFE award recipients (L to R): Mercedes Danforth-Hernandez, Rashmi Phillips, Ashli Lyles and Kaitlyn Von Behren.



Future's So Bright

We asked some recent **GSAFE Scholarship Winners** what they're most proud of when it comes to their activism.



Kaitlyn Von Behren
West Bend
2018 recipient

"This highlights a debate I have been having with myself. At the beginning of this school year, I saw a problem, my school district's trans-exclusive nondiscrimination policy, so I took steps to fix it. I am proud of that. However, I hope that in the future standing up for trans youth will be a thing that most, if not all, students and educators do. In short, I wish that my activism was something I find ordinary. I wish standing up for trans youth was the standard, not the exception."



Rashmi Phillips
Stoughton
2018 recipient

"The part of my activism I'm most proud of is how much I'm able to help guide young people—especially young LGBT people—through their journey. Activism is the reason I want to go into teaching. Being a teacher isn't just about assigning papers and grades, it's about fighting for your students and caring about their lives. Activism is an essential part of teaching. It's always an honor to know that you've helped a young person get closer to living as their authentic self!"



Elijah Holmes
Madison East
2017 recipient

I like that I don't have to be loud or be in the spotlight. I just have to be true to who I am and speak my truths. In doing so, it's easy to tell where my passions lie. In choosing to stand for something, I advocate on the behalf of those who can not speak up for themselves. My activism creates conversations that allow for others to learn and grow. It prompts change and provides a opportunity to educate others.



Ashli Lyles
Madison East
2018 recipient

I mostly work with consent and racial justice, which means in order to really dig deep into both you have to open yourself up to how you interact with the world while taking a close look at identity and privilege. I'm proud of how vulnerable it's allowed me to become and how it's influenced others to become more vulnerable. It's given me many platforms to share my experiences as a person with many intersections, and in return has opened the door for others to do just the same comfortably.

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