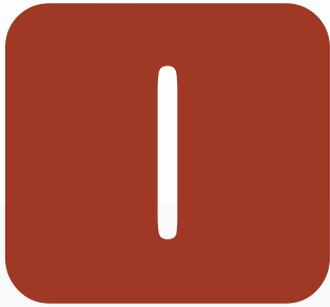


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HOME & GARDEN

Tips, Trends and Creative Solutions from Area Experts

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

March / April
2019



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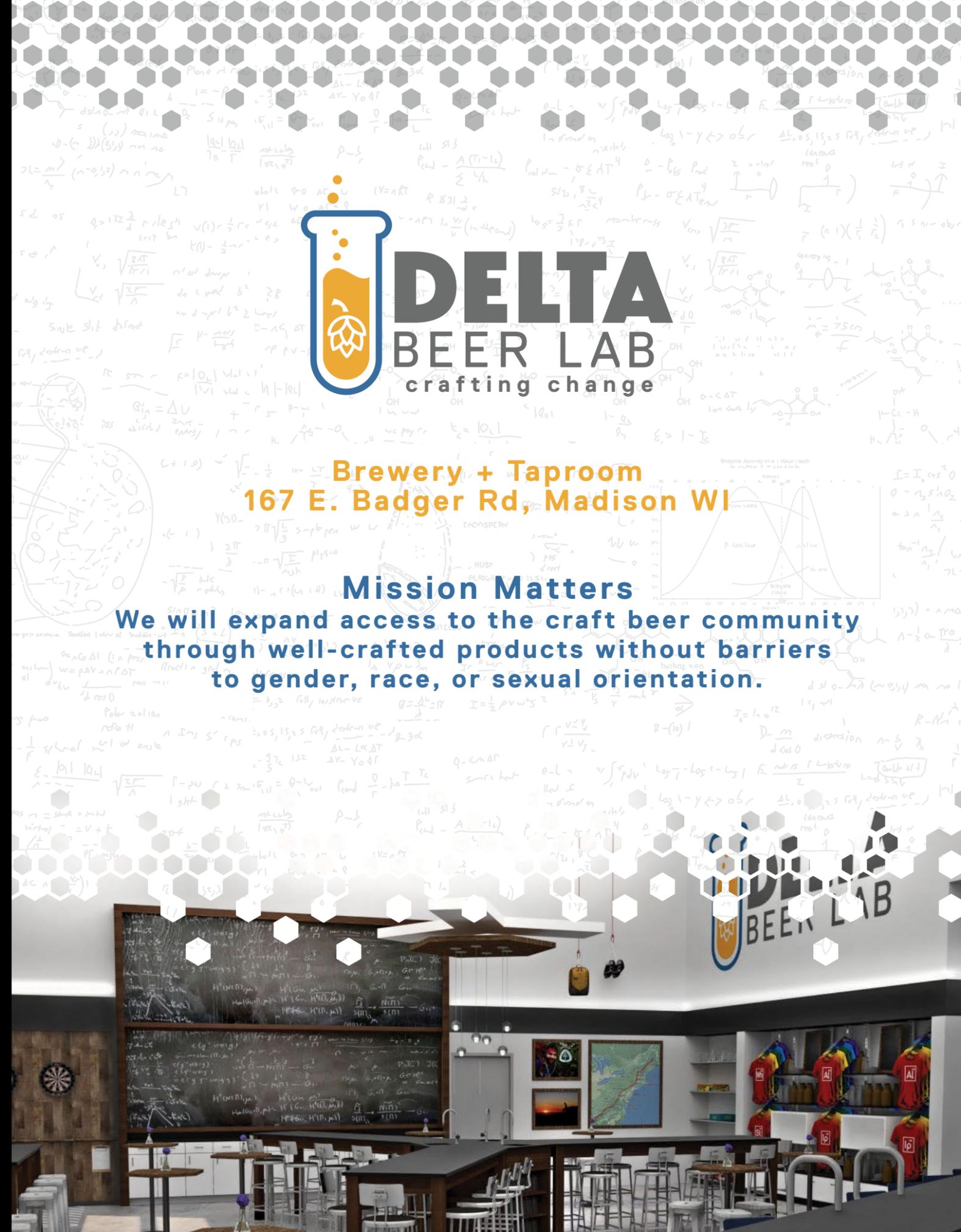


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- Harvey Fierstein

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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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SAT, APR. 13
8:00 PM
SUN, APR. 14
2:30 PM

John DeMain, Conductor
Marc-André Hamelin, Piano
Mozart: Symphony No. 38, Prague
Strauss: Burleske, Marc-André Hamelin, Piano
Ravel: Piano Concerto in G,
Marc-André Hamelin, Piano
Debussy: La Mer

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EDITOR'S NOTE EMILY MILLS

A HOME OF OUR OWN

Our March issue highlights the myriad ways in which LGBTQ+ people build homes and communities for ourselves, in ways both familiar and novel.



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS, so the saying goes, and nowhere does that old adage ring more true than among the queer community. I love the diversity of ways in which we create our families, and how that creativity and commitment to doing what's right and not just what's expected also shows itself in our physical spaces.

This issue features the intensely personal in the Madeline Island retreat-turned-home of **Michael Childers** and **Glenn Carlson**. We get to know more about the professional side via **Barry Avery** and his Fontaine Home interior design business, which opened a new storefront in Middleton this past winter.



Sabatini



Pressman



Madison

There's also the matter of our social spaces, and the story of **Rico Sabatini's** recent re-takeover of Plan B on Williamson Street is certainly a fascinating study in how a nightclub can become something much more when it serves a minority community. With former Inferno owner **Apollo Marquez** and local queer event promoter **Lili Luxe** both on board, and a new name—Prism Dance Club—I'm optimistic about the changes in store for the space.

Meanwhile, the last couple of months have seen an uptick in political mobilization, as LGBTQ identified candidates for local office make waves. April 2 will be our chance to turn out at the polls and help insure a place at the decision-making table for our community, from the school board to the mayor's office.

I'm also thrilled to see more people of color, dissatisfied with the status quo in Madison, taking charge and starting new social, political, and artistic endeavors that serve them and their communities more directly. Read all about **Sabrina Madison** and her Progress Center for Black Women on

page 24, and about the new Black Arts Matter Festival on page 22 for examples of this long-overdue shift. Writing for this magazine is always edifying, and nothing better exemplifies that opportunity and my gratitude for it than my interview with longtime Madison activist and advocate, **Jenny Pressman**. If you don't already know this stalwart of radical liberal politics, racial justice, and queer equality, please make a point to sit down with her story in this issue.

There's so much more in these pages, too, for you to enjoy and hopefully glean some useful information. As always, it is my wish only that we continue to meet and learn from each other, and to build our beautiful LGBTQ+ home into something stronger and more creative every day. ■

OUR READERS



WAUPUN, WI

Ashton J. Yakel, UW Army Veteran

The news of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the transgender military ban brought forward a lot of emotions in me, like anger, fear, and great sadness. I am not a hero, I never had to be assigned to a combat zone as there has never been a great need for anti-aircraft missile operators in the current war in the Middle East. My overseas time was spent in South Korea, where I helped protect the airspace in the event that Kim Jong-Un attempted to launch missiles aimed at the U.S. or its allies. I had a job to do, and I did it.

There are currently between 10,700 and 15,500 transgender service members who are now all being affected by this ban. There are countless more transgender veterans, like myself, heartbroken to see that the country we swore to defend is undermining us and our service. Yes, the time right now is scary, but I still encourage everyone to stay strong and keep fighting. We will not let Trump, or those who follow blindly behind him, take us down. ■

PHOTO BY TREVOR TOPEL

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ANGELA BAERWOLF is a former English teacher turned school social worker. They are the president-elect of the Wisconsin School Social Workers Association. Angela enjoys facilitating Madison's Queer Book Club, regularly hosting Queery on WORT FM, journaling, and cuddling with their cat and wife. Their super power is empathy.



IAN DEGRAFF is an editorial photographer specializing in lifestyle, travel, and agricultural storytelling. He travels everywhere with a camera and light stand so he is always able to create his signature soulful, moody lighting wherever he goes. After studying photojournalism at Western Kentucky University, he moved back to Madison and lives with his macaw, beehive, and partner. Follow his work at iansteven.com.



STACY HARBAUGH puts words and photos together for a living including work in marketing, journalism, and activism. Originally from Indiana, she moved to Madison in 2004 for the green spaces, progressive politics, and Packer bars. Professional connections can find her on LinkedIn and followers are welcome on Twitter @stacyharbaugh.



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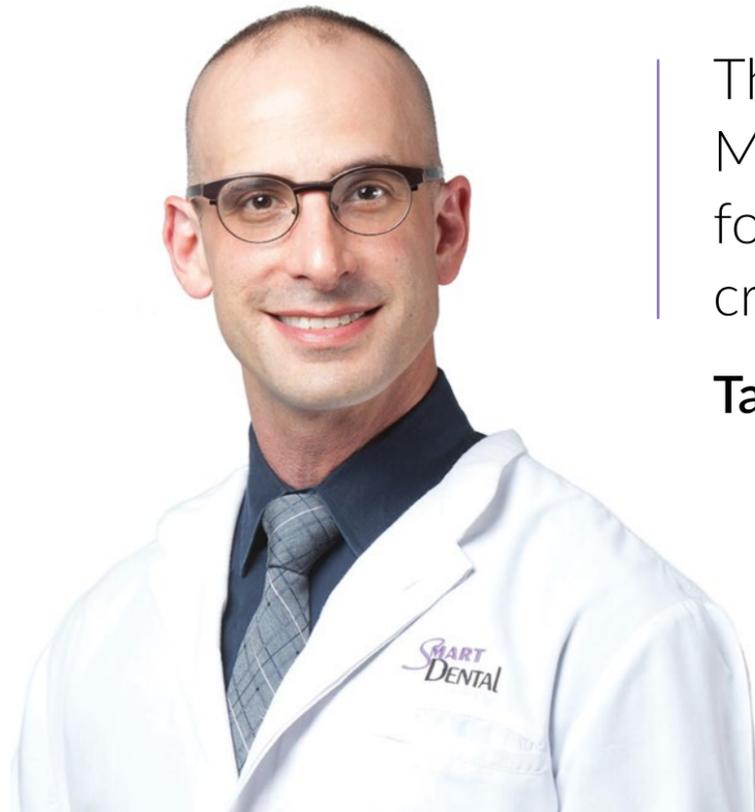
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Madison's Next Mayor?

Former alder **Satya Rhodes-Conway** is running to change the face,
and the overall approach, of the capitol city mayor's office.

POLITICS | ELECTIONS

MADISON FACES MAJOR CHANGES in its local representatives this year, with all Common Council seats up for election in addition to several school board seats. Perhaps the biggest ticket to come up for reelection is the title of mayor, and the race has already broken ground for an office that's had a fairly static look for its entire history.

The February primary saw incumbent mayor Paul Soglin eke out a victory that will put him through to the general election on April 2. Soglin has already served as the 51st, 54th and 57th Mayor of Madison, having been elected nine times to the post, most recently in 2015. During his gubernatorial bid in 2018, the seeming perpetual-mayor initially said he would not seek reelection.

In October, however, Soglin changed course and decided to throw his hat back into the ring once more.

Meanwhile, three other serious contenders declared their intentions to run as well, and represented the most diverse slate of candidates perhaps in Madison history. Alder Maurice Cheeks, River Alliance of Wisconsin Executive Director Raj Shukla, and former alder/current managing director of the Mayors Innovation Project Satya Rhodes-Conway presented the most serious challenge to Soglin's incumbency in some time.

Cheeks and Shukla came in third and fourth in the February 19th primary, respectively, with Rhodes-Conway receiving the second highest vote count in the

NIGHT LIFE COMMUNITY SAFER SPACES

Re-New Beginnings

As **Plan B** becomes **Prism Dance Club**, new management looks beyond a simple rebranding of the east side night spot and toward a more inclusive and diverse mission statement.



PLAN B IS DEAD. Long live Prism Dance Club.

Original club co-founder and former co-owner Rico Sabatini announced in mid-January that he would once again take over operations at popular-but-troubled Madison nightclub Plan B. It wasn't long before Sabatini added to the change by bringing on former Inferno Nightclub owner Apollo Marquez as a co-owner and longtime promoter/performer Lili Luxe as program director.

The new line-up helps launch a major shift that includes not just a new name—Prism Dance Club—but also a rededication to making it a fully inclusive venue for the LGBTQ+ communities in Madison.

When Sabatini initially posted about his decision to buy out the former owners, including his former partner and co-founder Corey Gresen, he cited feeling “heartbroken” over what he'd seen happen to the space they'd started together in 2009.

“What was once a safe haven for the queer community had turned into the opposite of its sole purpose,” wrote Sabatini. “I look forward to the opportunity in making [the club] a staple the community is again proud to call home.”

Tensions and accusations of misconduct by former co-owners and staff at the club boiled over late in 2018, which led to the push to sell it (read our full coverage online or in our January issue).

At a sit-down chat in early February, the new crew laid out their hopes and plans for the future of Prism. Immediate changes included lowering prices “to be in line with other Madison venues” and not charging a cover for 21+ patrons on Thursday or Friday nights, as well as some initial staffing changes.

A fundraiser in mid-February raised some money to help with needed building maintenance, including a major update to bathroom facilities (which will become gender neutral) and a private dressing room for performers. Marquez says the structure is in good condition, and that the need is mostly for upgrading audio equipment, painting, and other minor renovations. → Continued on Page 12



PRISM co-owners Rico Sabatini (left) and Apollo Marquez (right) with program director Lili Luxe.

primary, just 323 votes shy of Soglin's total. She will go on to challenge him in the general election this spring.

Rhodes-Conway served as the District 12 alder on the Common Council for six years starting in 2007, and says people were already telling her to run for mayor back then. Ruefully, she references a statistic that says women have to be asked seven or eight times to run for office before they do. When asked what finally changed her mind, she was thoughtful:

“I started to see a set of challenges that Madison is facing,” Rhodes-Conway told *Our Lives*. “That I feel like our tipping point challenges...if we don't work on affordable housing prices, that determines what kind of city we are in, in five to 10 years. If we're not prepared for climate change, ditto. And if we don't invest in transit, if we don't tackle racial equity...it determines what course we go on as a city. And I feel like we weren't doing enough, in any of those things.”

During his gubernatorial bid in 2018, the seeming perpetual-mayor initially said he would not seek reelection. In October, however, Soglin changed course and decided to throw his hat back into the ring once more.



Soglin

She's quick to add that she also made sure to get the permission of her wife, Amy, before running. Simply campaigning for the office has already changed their day-to-day quite a bit

and, Rhodes-Conway notes, it would only change more if she becomes mayor.

“One of the things I love about Amy is that she is not a particularly public person,” she says. “And she is pretty quiet, but she's not shy about saying what she thinks.”

Rhodes-Conway notes that there's a good and needed balance in their relationship because of their differences. One pushes the other to be a bit more out, the other keeps things grounded. As her campaign continues to build post-primary and she faces off against Madison's longest-serving mayor, that support and balance will become all-the-more needed.

NOT WITHOUT CHALLENGES

Even though being the mayor doesn't bring quite the same level of spotlight as state or national office, there are still barriers and challenges to overcome.

“I thought a lot about running as a woman, running as an out lesbian. Both of which are easier things in Madison than they are in other places. But not without challenges.”

Madison has only ever elected one woman as mayor (Sue Bauman), and the Common Council finally achieved gender parity just a handful of years ago—which ended last year after a series of resignations. There has never been an out queer mayor, either, Rhodes-Conway notes.

While she says she hasn't experienced much overt homophobia here in Madison, both it and sexist ideas—whether subconscious or not—definitely still persist.

“I have a pretty thick skin around both sexism and homophobia and heterosexism,” she says. “I tend to not always be able to parse out if people's reactions to me are about that or about something else. And I sort of proceed like that doesn't exist, like that's not gonna stop me. That's your problem, not my problem.”

However, in advance of her announcing her candidacy, Rhodes-Conway noticed a small pattern emerge while working to build up support for a run.

“Mostly older, mostly white, mostly men, would say things like, ‘Well, it's really good to talk with you, and I really appreciate you listening. You know, I always thought that you being on [Common Council] that you had to be the smartest person in the room, and I'm really glad to see you've mellowed from that.’ Who gets to be the smartest person in the room? Clearly women don't get to be the smartest person in the room.”

There have been instances, too, where being the only out queer person at the table meant she was the one to stand up and speak out when homophobia worked its way into council discussions. The decision in 2012 about who to grant use of the historic Collins House saw coded language used to dismiss an application by Bob Klebba, David Waugh, and their son (they eventually did get the permit, and have since transformed the space into the Mendota Lake House B&B).

Rhodes-Conway says the other applicant, in touting her historic preservation credentials, quipped, “Now, you wouldn't really want to give this house to somebody who would paint it pink or purple.”

“And I think it went over everybody's head. Except mine,” she says. “And I was like, ‘Hold up. Don't say anymore because you're going to get yourself in trouble here.’ And then the discussion goes on and the council members are asking questions or making statements, and one of the other alders says, ‘Well it sure



Satya celebrating her February 19th primary win at the Harmony Bar.

Madison has only ever elected one woman as mayor (Sue Bauman), and the Common Council finally achieved gender parity just a handful of years ago—which ended last year after a series of resignations. There has never been an out queer mayor, either, Rhodes-Conway notes.

would be nice to have a family in the house.’ And he's talking about this straight couple and their baby, and their mom. He's definitely not talking about Bob and David and their son. And that was when I lost it.”

After that, Rhodes-Conway told the council member that he needed to apologize to Bob and David, and explained why the statement was hurtful. The experience highlighted the importance of having a place at the table, especially for members of minority and/or marginalized populations. Sometimes the harm isn't intentional, she notes, but by simply lacking those perspectives in the discussion, it's impossible to make the best and most informed decisions.

THE BIG ISSUES

Madison is at a major crossroads in terms of its growth and trajectory as a city. All three of the major candidates who faced off against Soglin in the primary (Rhodes-Conway, Mo Cheeks, and Raj Shukla) listed equity in housing, transit, and education as priorities and points of major concern. All three took the current mayor to task for his seeming lack of urgency or vision when it came to those issues.

For Rhodes-Conway, creating affordable housing that's close to good jobs, thus lowering transit times and costs for the people who can least afford them, is at top of mind. She advocates for a housing-first approach to

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All should be ready to go for the re-launch of Prism in early March, after a brief, two-week closure.

TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Marquez is well-known in Madison for having run the beloved Inferno from 1996 to 2015. The club was regarded as a haven for darker, alternative nightlife, including having been the home of the Leather & Lace fetish night that has since moved to Plan B/Prism. The event will continue to be held there on the first Saturday of every month.

"I am beyond thrilled to have Apollo join me in this venture," Sabatini says. "He is a veteran in [the] club scene and his expertise is invaluable."

Marquez, who became a real estate agent after selling the Inferno, says he's been interested in getting involved at the club for years. He says his inquiries were rebuffed by Gresen back when he briefly had sole ownership. He's excited now to help see the business thrive, noting that there's still a lot of potential in the space itself and the community it should be serving.

"We don't want to turn off any specific crowd, and at same time it should feel welcoming to anyone," Marquez notes. He's already taking the same approach to providing training and accountability to security and staff at the club as he's always done.

"At Inferno I never had a great big guy guarding the door," he explains. "I've never hired a bouncer that was like, 'I'd totally kick out anybody for you.' I don't want you working for me at all. A lot of that's just training. You're not just training your staff, you're training your people...you have expectations for your patrons, too. They have to know how to function in this place."

In addition to city-offered training, Sabatini plans to have Prism staff undergo specific and intentional training on mindful conflict resolution. "It's about conversation and not confrontation," Lili adds.

All three also promised to be proactive as management as well. They ask that anyone experiencing any issues while at the club report it to staff immediately and assure that a more proactive and constructive follow-up procedure will be expected.

"With the training you also have management who is responsive, who is accountable, who has empathy and actually has standards and resolve," Luxe says of the new team. → Continued on Page 14



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people experiencing homelessness, too. The current systems are creating greater inequality and segregation between communities in the city, but Rhodes-Conway doesn't see that problem being taken seriously by city leadership. A good first step, for instance, would be having "a mayor who doesn't hate the homeless."

She also stresses the need for a trauma-informed approach to helping people get into permanent housing, highlighting the disproportionate impact homelessness has on the LGBTQ community in particular.

"It's pretty important to acknowledge that the homeless population is not monolithic, and that different parts of it have different needs," she says. "[We need to] speak specifically to that. Different people require different solutions. And so to make sure that we are not trying to fit people into boxes they don't fit in. And that we actually are trying to speak to their needs and to help them."

It's a matter of building capacity and leadership, she notes, and involving community in decisions about itself, especially for those people that are part of historically disadvantaged populations. "Agency," she adds.

BIG PICTURE CHANGES

Fifteen years of work with mayors and other cities across the country have taught Rhodes-Conway a lot about what's possible, what works, what doesn't, and what hasn't even been tried. She wants to bring that sensibility to building a coalition of other Wisconsin towns and cities to work together to tackle those challenges.

There needs to be real movement within Madison government, too. Rhodes-Conway says she's often frustrated by the habit of commissioning reports only to see no action taken on the findings.

"What you really need is the committee to study the thing and write the report and then work on it," she suggests. "I'm as big a fan of process as the next Madisonian, but I don't like process for the sake of process. I like process for the sake of getting something done. Let's have a good process. Let's come to some conclusions. And then let's move into the implementation phase, please."

Her philosophy is both functional and aspirational. There is a desire to better support people and organizations that help those in need of services. However, she emphasizes the greater need to really tackle the injustices that create many of those problems in the first place.

"We spend a lot of time and energy and money on helping people navigate an unjust

society, and rarely do we spend time and money and energy on changing the unjust structures," Rhodes-Conway says. "It's the harder thing. But now I'm thinking a lot about that, and what does it mean? How do you change unjust structures? And what does that mean in the context of the city of Madison?"

VOTE LOCAL

Total turnout for the February primary was abysmally low. Just 37,700 votes were cast in the mayor's race. Local elections and local government are, Rhodes-Conway points out, where individuals can have the most impact, though. It's why she says she's been so committed to doing the work that she's done, and is seeking to do in the mayor's office.

"Local government is the level of government that has the most impact on your daily life," she notes. "Local government plows the streets, picks up the trash, delivers the water, takes away the waste, controls your property taxes, funds your neighborhood center, runs your buses. It's so fundamental to day-to-day life and it's often invisible to people. And that day-to-day impact is why people have to care about local government."

There's a certain level of excitement that comes with it, too. With the federal government in seeming partisan gridlock, and even state level politics gripped by similar dysfunction and gerrymandered seats, cities are leading the way on innovative and equitable development.

Fifteen years of work with mayors and other cities across the country have taught Rhodes-Conway a lot about what's possible, what works, what doesn't, and what hasn't even been tried.

"Cities are leading on everything. They're leading on climate, they're leading on immigration, they're leading on economic development. You just go down the line and cities are leading on it," she says.

"Who can experiment? Who can try new things? Who can get stuff done? Who has to get stuff done? It's all local government. And so we should care not only because it impacts our day-to-day lives, but because we have a chance to lead. And to lead nationally on a set of issues. We should be doing that." —Emily Mills



LGBTQ Organizations Update

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

Reported by **Emily Mills**

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

NEWS

Important notes about area LGBTQ groups

ARCW

The St. Louis location, St. Louis Effort for AIDS, moved into a new location on January 4. The new location, at 2653 Locust Street, offers the first HIV Medical Home to the St. Louis area.

CREAM CITY FOUNDATION

In January, the foundation launched its annual LGBTQ+ Health Conference. People and organizations came together around a shared commitment to equal access to physical and mental health care services, finding welcoming and culturally com-

petent providers, and access to health insurance without fear of discrimination.

Testimonies were shared that inspired change within health care systems. The foundation wishes to thank everyone who attended, and to the event sponsors, for making this important conference a reality.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT

Governor Evers and Dept. of Administration Secretary Joel Brennan visited Diverse & Resilient in Milwaukee in February to learn more about the issues facing the LGBTQ community. The governor confirmed his commitment to supporting LGBTQ Wisconsinites through policy, legislation, and advocacy.



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



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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.

Information on donating or applying for a grant is available at:

newharvestfoundation.org

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"Ultimately, we can't promise perfection, we can't control every patron who walks in the door, but we can control how we handle the situations that arise."

SAFER, AND MORE ENTERTAINING, SPACES

Through her work with Leather & Lace, as well as an events promoter for places like Tavernakaya, Luxe has always focused everything she does on creating and supporting safer, queer-inclusive spaces. She's also keen to refocus Prism on being a dancing-focused club, with entertainment to support it.



"If you were to go into a big city and go into a big club, you're expecting an entertainment factor, and I think that's what we really can showcase and become," she says. Adding more spectacular, party-focused visual elements will be key, along with diversifying the line-up of DJs and performers. Luxe says she hoped to work with the Madison Circus Space to help showcase some of their performers, as well as keeping the queens, and finding other individuals and groups to involve.

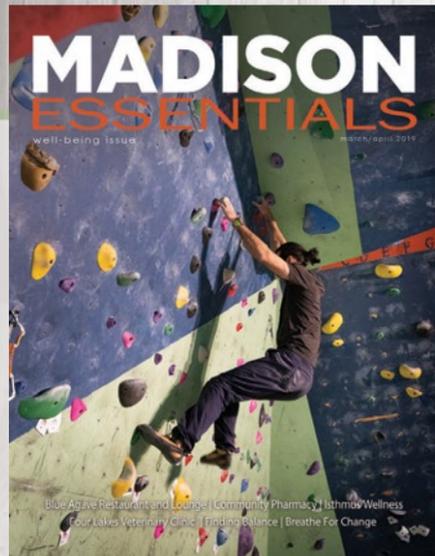
"I have trans and gender non-conforming people that I plan on booking, and we're gonna have a lot more diversity overall. We want, when you come in here, for you to see something that feels like you, that looks like you, that is you, that you can embrace and feel part of and not feel excluded from."

"I want you to be able to come in here, show affection, make out with whoever you wanna make out with, and feel comfortable," Sabatini adds.

In terms of the biggest challenge facing the new club, Sabatini admits that it will be earning the community's trust. All three are determined to put their money where their mouths are to make that happen, and say they've already begun working with several community members and groups to make the space more reflective of that spectrum.

"I look forward to helping with political fundraisers, non-profits, like we used to do in the beginning," Sabatini says. "This should be everyone's space. I'm hoping to get back to that." —Emily Mills

YOUR Local COMMUNITY PUBLICATION



Madison Essentials

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MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY The 2019 rugby season has officially begun. The team kicked off the New Year by reflecting at their annual banquet in January. A few of the highlights from the past year include a divisional runner-up finish in Amsterdam at the Bingham Cup, the every-two-year International Gay Rugby (IGR) tournament that hosts around 80 teams; a complete sweep against tough competition in a three-way tournament in Columbus, Ohio; and a second place finish that came down to the last play in our inaugural Madtown Scrumdown Tournament.

Rugby101, the first practice of the year held specifically to introduce new players to the game of rugby and to the team, was also held in January. Several new players were joined by the veterans to help demonstrate some fundamental rugby skills, as well as a few fun games.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER **Jamie Erdheim** (Youth Advocate) and **Alex Corona** (Transgender Resource Coordinator) attended the 2019 Creating Change Conference in Detroit. They attended four days of LGBTQ+ workshops, caucuses, and events on various topics ranging from strategic organizing to LGBTQ+ racial justice. Creating Change is presented by the National LGBTQ Task Force and is the nation's largest queer conference.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Pride 2019: Details are still being worked out. Outreach is meeting with Community Pride Coalition, City of Madison Street Use Committee, and other community members on Pride this year. Please stay tuned for more information. However, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Angie Rehling atangier@lgbtoutreach.org.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

ARCW The annual Felicia Melton-Smyth Holiday Drive provided gifts for nearly 300 families/patients this year; collecting over 1900 gifts. Thank you to everyone who gave!

DIVERSE & RESILIENT **Anthony Harris**, program manager, and **Gerry Coon**, President and CEO, received the Advocate of the Year Award from the Milwaukee Tobacco Free Alliance for their efforts to reduce tobacco use among LGBTQ people in Wisconsin.

GSAFE The board of directors wants to extend a special note of thanks and recognition to outgo-

BALTAZAR DE ANDA SANTANA NAMED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LATINO ACADEMY OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Baltazar De Anda Santana

The board of directors for the Vera Court Neighborhood Center announced in early January the hiring of Baltazar De Anda Santana as the Latino Academy of Workforce Development's new executive director, who was one of the co-founders of the organization back in 2011.

De Anda Santana was instrumental in helping the Latino Academy grow from 2011 to 2016. In 2016, he left the Academy to become the director of Community and Volunteer Engagement at the United Way of Dane County. Most recently, De

Anda Santana has been working with the Wisconsin Bike Federation as an ambassador for Share and Be Aware program. De Anda Santana is also the director of Orgullo Latinx LGBT+, an organization dedicated to supporting queer Latinx people in the Madison area.

The Latino Academy of Workforce Development developed out of the Latino Family Resource Center program at Vera Court, in recognition of the serious need for Spanish-language vocational training and employment services throughout the Madison and Dane County communities. The primary goal of the agency has been to create a safe, culturally competent space that empowers Latino adults to succeed and integrate into the local economic and educational systems.

"I have a hard work ethic and I love my community; I love Madison...but it's going to take a community effort to help achieve some of these goals," De Anda Santana told Madison365. "My job is to push and sometimes fight to make sure that we provide the tools the Latino community needs so they can continue thriving."

ALEXANDER EINSMAN
MS LMFT



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One Remodeled Home at a Time



Fair Wisconsin Executive Director Megin McDonell and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes stand beside Gov. Tony Evers as he signs his pro-LGBT executive order.

GOVERNOR TONY EVERS SIGNS PRO-LGBTQ EXECUTIVE ORDER

On his first day in office, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers signed an executive order to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ people within state agencies, state contractors, and state grantees. 'Governor Evers heard his constituents loud and clear and took action to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in the workplace,' said Megin McDonell, Executive Director of Fair Wisconsin. 'This Executive Order modernizes our state's internal policies to make sure Wisconsin government employees are judged solely on their job performance, not who they are or who they love. Our state is at its strongest when we're all free to work hard, earn a decent living, and go about our lives without fear of discrimination. Discrimination has no place in our state, and this Executive Order is an important step toward making sure our state is a safe place for everyone to live, work, and play.' Governor Evers has been a longtime ally of the LGBTQ community, dating back to his days as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Wisconsin state law provides nondiscrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public spaces, though it is one of 31 states nationwide that lacks explicit and comprehensive protections on the basis of gender identity or expression.

ing board co-chair Evelyn Gildrie-Voyles. She has been the heart, soul, and glue for the board and organization during a period of transition. WI LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE A special shoutout to the Milwaukee Bucks for holding an exceptional Pride Night on February 9. Presented by Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber, the Bucks hosted their third Pride Night and went all-out to show their support for the community. From a special pre-re-

ception for LGBT ERG/BRGs, to a drag performance on centercourt at half time, they went above and beyond. The Chamber is so appreciative to be a part of this night.

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership

CREAM CITY FOUNDATION

The new year brings a new Board Chairperson, Sam Hall Jr. Sam is Managing Partner at Milwaukee Law

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.



Gildrie-Voyles



Hanson



Andersen



Immel

Firm Crivello Carlson, S.C.

GSAFE The organization is pleased to welcome Lane Hanson back to the fold as their newly appointed treasurer. Currently a social worker and teaching at UW-Madison and Edgewood College, Hanson completed a year-long internship while pursuing their MSW. Two newly elected board co-chairs were also recently announced with excitement, Vivienne Andersen and Jake Immel. Andersen is a Madison area realtor and MOTH Grand Slam Champion. Immel serves as Donor Engagement and Grants Manager at Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Christie Carter-Old has been brought on as the new Adult Program Coordinator. Christie grew

up in Wheaton, Illinois and comes from a family of educators. She taught 12 years of English as a second language to adults and school-aged children before earning her Masters in Education and Instructional Design from UW-Stout last May. She's an advocate for both LGBTQ and differently abled people, and believes that the best way to advocate is to educate.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The organization welcomes Eric Strong as a new board member. Eric joined the board in December.

BOARD RECRUITMENT: Outreach is looking for passionate, energetic, hard-working people to grow our board of directors. We are focusing on anti-racism and racial justice issues, so we welcome folks who have experience, passion, and drive in that work. Anyone who is interested should reach out to Steve Starkey atsteves@lgbtoutreach.org or by phone at 608-255-8582.

DEVELOPMENT & CALLS TO ACTION

New programs, outreach, or changes in mission.

FORGE Two years ago, FORGE began a journey with the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division's Community Access to Recovery Services (CARS) to help improve their ability to appropriately and respectfully serve trans and non-binary clients. CARS provides an array of supportive community services for people with severe and persistent mental health



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When Pride Fought Back RAID! ATTACK ON STONEWALL A New, Original Play by Malissa Petterson directed by John Siewert April 19 - April 27 Tickets on sale now: www.bartelltheatre.org | 608-661-9696



CANDIDATE FOR WISCONSIN STATE SUPREME COURT COMPARED HOMOSEXUALITY TO BESTIALITY, CALLED HIMSELF A "CULTURE WARRIOR"



Judge Brian Hagedorn

A candidate vying to become the newest justice on the Wisconsin State Supreme Court once compared same-sex relationships to bestiality, and railed against organizations like Planned Parenthood in anti-choice rants, a review of past blog posts has found.

Judge Brian Hagedorn is currently serving on the Wisconsin Court of Appeals' Waukesha-based District II. He faces off against chief judge of the state appeals court, Lisa Neubauer, in the April general election.

The revelations come after an exhaustive review by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel of a blog Hagedorn kept from April 2005 to August

2006 called "Anno Domini" (Latin for "in the year of our Lord"). In it, Hagedorn, an evangelical Christian, complained that the Supreme Court ruling that struck down Texas' anti-sodomy law would lead to the legalization of bestiality.

"The idea that homosexual behavior is different than bestiality as a constitutional matter is unjustifiable," he wrote in October 2005.

"There is no right in our Constitution to have sex with whoever or whatever you want in the privacy of your own home (or barn)," he also wrote.

Hagedorn also talked about complaining to his supervisor at the law firm for which he worked at the time about their posting supportive images and stories from LGBTQ people during Pride month. "What was being sold was not tolerance, but homosexual propaganda," Hagedorn wrote on his blog. "Moreover, this served to create a hostile work environment for Christians. In the end, I was told too bad."

Serious questions about Hagedorn's ability to base decisions on the law and not his personal beliefs have understandably arisen. Asked about this, Hagedorn's campaign issued a statement via political adviser Stephen Thompson, who claims the candidate is and will be impartial in his role.

conditions and/or who have been affected by alcohol and other drug (ab)use, specifically serving those who are uninsured or low-income. Funding from Cream City Foundation helped underwrite focus groups and employee surveys to assess specific needs and concerns. As a result of that groundwork, FORGE is facilitating a six-part training series to be completed in March. The project will make Milwaukee much friendlier for trans/nb folks accessing care.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

The Board of Directors is working on updating and changing the organization's mission, vision, and values statements. Outreach and programming efforts will be focused on racial justice, anti-racism, intersectional feminism, and anti-white supremacy work in 2019. Please stay

tuned for more information.

OutReach is collaborating with Safe Communities on an opioid prevention coalition. Partners include Teens Like Us, GSAFE, and OutReach's Trans Health Advocate Ginger Baier.

Ginger is also hosting Transgender Competency Training events; the first public event is on March 4 at the Sun Prairie Public Library. For more information about this and future events, please email ginger.v.baier@gmail.com.

WI LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The 2019 Business Leadership Academy was recently launched, with a mission of developing and fostering the next generation of LGBTQ leaders in the workplace by providing quality and transformative programming. Today's business environment for both small businesses and cor-

porations requires leadership skills like effective communication, creativity, collaboration, and the ability to motivate. The academy also works to provide a small cohort of Chamber members with the skills needed to be successful out LGBTQ leaders in senior management positions. A great group of initial participants have committed to the year-long program, including two from Madison.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in.

ARCW The 33rd Annual Make A Promise Gala & Auction will be held Saturday, March 30 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee. This year's theme—"Don't Stop Us Now"—draws inspiration from the legendary British rock band Queen. Reserve your tickets today by visiting: one.bidpal.net/makeapromise2019.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT The 2019 LGBTQ Summit will be held at the Milwaukee Westin Hotel on Saturday, March 2. A joint production of Diverse & Resilient and Fair Wisconsin Education Fund, the annual Summit focuses on building a more skilled and connected network of LGBTQ and allied individuals who are empowered to achieve and protect LGBTQ equality in their local communities across the state of Wisconsin.

GSAFE The biennial Safe Schools, Safe Communities: State Conference on LGBTQ+ Youth is scheduled for March 8 at Janesville's Parker High School. Safe Schools, Safe Communities will feature a variety of speakers and workshops facilitated by local and regional experts. Conference participants will gain critical skills, tools, knowledge, and connections to help lead and support efforts to create more inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth.

The annual Celebration of Leadership Scholarship and Awards Banquet will be held on Saturday, April 27 at Monona Terrace in downtown Madison. Please note the new, earlier date.

MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

The annual MGHA Classic Drag Show returns to FIVE Nightclub on March 8 and features professional queens helping hockey players realize their drag dreams. The event raises money to support the organization's MGHA Classic Hockey Tournament scheduled for April 26-28 at the Capitol Ice Arena in Madison.

The tournament is an opportunity for MGHA players to share the MGHA spirit and mission with the wider hockey community and with



AFTER FLOODING DESTROYS OFFICE, GRATEFUL PATIENTS RAISE MONEY FOR ORIEL MEDICINE

A patient at Oriel Medicine has started a GoFundMe to raise money to help get Oriel Medicine into a new office, after flooding last year in Madison devastated the original space on the west side.

Dr. Kathy Oriel left UW Health and went into private practice in the fall of 2017 in order to more effectively and compassionately service LGBTQ+ patients in particular. Along with her nurse, Melisa Arndt, they've become one of the few go-to primary care spaces for the queer community and those with addiction issues.

One of her patients, Melissa Serrano, says she was driven to start the fundraiser because "the devastating loss of her office could potentially leave hundreds of at-risk individuals without the medical care they deserve."

"On a personal note, Dr. Kathy Oriel and Melisa Arndt are incredible human beings," Serrano explains. "Over the past year, they've fought selflessly and tirelessly for the LGBTQ+ community by leaving well-established careers at the University of Wisconsin to ensure vulnerable individuals are no longer discriminated against in our healthcare system. They've saved the lives of people I love. But their journey shouldn't end here; there are thousands of more lives of people you love who need Oriel Medicine."

For her part, Dr. Oriel says she was initially uncomfortable with the idea of accepting money from the public. "As someone who is very privileged, it seems wrong for folks to give me funding," she told Our Lives. "As I've spoken to folks I've realized this isn't about me. It's about a setting for medical care that folks care about."

Find out more about the fundraiser and give at gofundme.com/protect-lgbtq-health-at-oriel-medicine.

other gay hockey associations. Registration includes: four games (Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning/midday), tournament jersey, and entry to social events.

Early Registration deadline: March 1. Regular Registration deadline: March 23.



ROBIN BERGDOLL

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

"I will admit to a small obsession with eyewear. My favorites are these Mykita in what I call "Bucky Red." I love that I can find my eyewear locally and that Ulla offers me frames that are as individual as I am. Every time I enter the doors of Ulla, I have a very personalized experience!"



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SEVERAL MEMBERS OF AND ALLIES TO THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY ARE RUNNING FOR LOCAL OFFICE IN MADISON THIS SPRING, INCLUDING GSAFE'S ALI MULDROW



On February 19, after the results of the spring primary rolled in, both **Ali Muldrow** and **Ananda Mirilli** were clear winners in their respective races for Madison School Board.

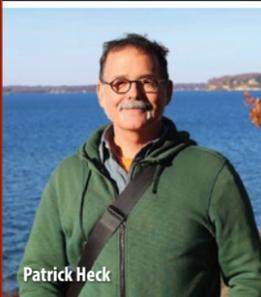
The two had run a somewhat unprecedented joint campaign, rallying supporters and donations to their shared vision of an increased focus on addressing racial disparities in education, fostering safer environments with a restorative approach, and creating healthy and sustainable public schools.

Muldrow is co-executive director for GSAFE, the state's leading organization working to build safer and more inclusive schools, and to provide leadership training opportunities to LGBTQ youth. Mirilli is an education equity consultant at the Department of Public Instruction and has worked for the YWCA of Dane County and Madison School District.

In the April 2 general election, Muldrow will face off with conservative gadfly Dave Blaska for the open Seat 4, and Mirilli will go up against incumbent TJ Mertz for Seat 5.

Two candidates vying for the District 2 alder seat are both gay men with a history of progressive political and social activism.

Patrick Heck is a 15-year resident of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood, where he's been active on the TLNA in various capacities during that time. Prior to moving to the city, Heck was the chair of Equality Virginia, the state's leading LGBTQ lobbying organization. He works as a climate and weather researcher at UW-Madison, and says his priorities will be on thoughtful and sustainable development, including a focus on affordability, mitigation of issues related to climate change, modernizing the transportation infrastructure, and the creation of a neighborhood dog park.



Jim White has lived in Madison for five years and says it's the first place he's lived where he felt an immediate sense of community. White has spent his time volunteering to work for various local and national causes and campaigns, managing a winning school board race, and also says his priorities will be affordable housing, better transit options, racial equity, and dealing with climate change.



MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY While it's still winter the Minotaurs will be practicing indoors every week. Those interested in playing with the team can still join in: new players just need to show up at practice with athletic clothes and shoes to participate. The ongoing non-contact indoor practices will continue through **March 10**, every Sunday 4:00–6:00 p.m. at the East Madison Community Center. After March 10, the team plans to head outside, with practices held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. until dark, at Nannyberry Park in Fitchburg.

Save the Date: **May 11**. Come watch the Minotaurs take on tough IGR competition in order to get their Madtown Scrumdown Tournament title back home.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Save the Date: The annual Big Night Out Gala will be held on Friday, **October 11**, at Discovery World. Please contact Allicia Washington-White, Fund Development and Events Manager, at 414-292-3076 if you have any questions.

OPEN The 10th Annual Dinner returns to the Monona Terrace on Friday **March 15**, with keynote speaker U.S. Representative Mark Pocan. Join LGBTQ+ professionals and allies for an informative and fun evening of community recognition and reinvigoration. Madison's own radio personality Aaron Rogers will emcee, with DJ Nick Nice providing music throughout the night. The 2019 OPEN Community Grant recipient will be announced, as well as the (new) 2019 Community Advocate Award winner. Find out more and register at openmadison.org.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER LGBT Senior Alliance is hosting their annual spring social on **April 18**, 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the Madison Senior Center, 330 W. Mifflin St. A full dinner is provided. Filmmaker Michelle Citron will be showing two short films centering isolation in the pre-Stonewall area in the lives of two lesbians. Suggested donation of \$10 will help cover the cost of food.

OutReach's Transgender Health Advocate, Ginger Baier, has been asked to speak on transgender health issues at the biennial Health Lit-

NEW PROJECT AIMS TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NON-VIOLENT PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING

A new community service project is taking root on Madison's Northside. Safe Bodies, Strong Voices is a program focused on self-defense and self-expression, with a pilot program for girls, ages 12–19, begun in February 2019. Founded by attorney **Joanne M. Keane**, the group focuses on teaching non-violent personal safety techniques as the "path forward to a bright and inclusive future."

According to Keane, "Violence threatens to reach epidemic proportions in our society. Young people and women are among the most vulnerable to physical intimidation. It should be no surprise, then, that manipulation, aggression, and threats of force or violence disproportionately target young women. Safe Bodies, Strong Voices is committed to empowering and seeks to facilitate active participation and contribution in all areas of society. In school, at home, on the job—and in all personal relationships—young women must overcome the forces that so often stifle or even silence their voices."

Three basic components make up the program: self-defense to neutralize the threat of unwanted, unwelcome touch without risking the threat of criminal charges; self-expression and de-escalation techniques; and real-life application. Keane says that special guests will share their personal experiences, too, in an effort to connect people from different backgrounds and diversify awareness of disempowering circumstances and lessons learned from them.

The public is also welcome to join the conversation and the work, free of charge, at occasional Survivor Impact Panels, which will "bring the issue of 'violence' down to a personal level in a memorable way. By courageously sharing their experiences, survivors will open doors to conversation, connection, and healing."

Find out more: SafeBodies.StrongVoices@yahoo.com, on Facebook, or at 608-244-7188.

eracy Summit on **April 2**. The summit is a project of Wisconsin Health Literacy, a division of WI Literacy, Inc.

PROUD THEATER Wisconsin's premier LGBTQIA+ Youth Theater organization, in collaboration with Trinity United Methodist Church, PFLAG-Madison, and the First United Methodist Church of Madison, will hold its fourth annual LGBTQIA+ intergenerational conference, "Connections IV: Changing Times." The event is open to members and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community, and will be held on Saturday, **March 9**, at the First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Avenue in Madison, Wisconsin, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This year the event will also include a special encore performance of Ben Moffat's engaging and original production of "Imperfect Gentlemen," a one-person show that explores the real-life story of how a family reacts when their father comes out as transgender in the 1980s. Moffat originally performed "Imperfect Gentlemen" in Madison in 2018 and is returning once again as a special treat to celebrate the Connections event. The performance will be at 6:30 p.m. at the church after the Connections Conference and is a fundraiser for Proud Theater.

Registration forms can be requested by sending an email to connections@proudtheater.org. A \$5–\$20 donation is suggested to attend.

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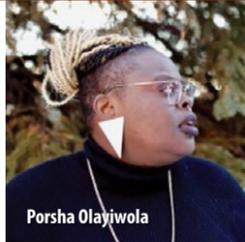
OURLIVESMADISON.COM

BLACK ARTS MATTER

NEW FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS CREATIVE WORKS FROM BLACK AND QPOC ARTISTS



Shasparay Lighteard



Porsha Olayiwola

Black Arts Matter Festival, a new interdisciplinary celebration of work by Black and queer Black artists, comes to the city from **March 3 to March 9**. The series of events aims to challenge what people think about how the voices and creative works of Black artists are represented in Madison.

This is the inaugural year of the festival, begun and produced by current UW-Madison student **Shasparay Lighteard**. The Austin, Texas native is herself a poet and a member of the First Wave Urban Arts program, but says she set out to create the festival as a way to expand the presence of Black art and artists beyond just a campus environment.

"Being from Texas and then coming to Madison was hard for me. Extremely hard," Lighteard says. "One of the questions I asked myself was, 'How could I make this place home? What was missing? I can't change the weather, but I thought maybe I could prioritize Black arts in a predominantly white space.'"

That led to a yearlong process of collaboration with various academic mentors at both the UW and Edgewood College, as well as learning how to write grants. The fest eventually found funding through the Studio Service Learning Grant with the Division of the Arts, as well as through several other grants.

Another part of the motivation to create the festival was a simple matter of community building for Lighteard. She notes, for instance, that she's just one of four Black theater majors at the UW (that she knows of). "Maybe this festival will open people's hearts. Challenge them, make people value Black artists in a way that would make me more comfortable staying in Madison past graduating from UW."

The festival includes plays, films, and a poetry slam competition to close out the week. Of special interest to readers, a choreopoem performance by **Porsha Olayiwola**, "Black & Ugly As Ever," will explore "what it means to move through reality as a queer, fat, dark-skinned woman." That event is free and scheduled for March 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Anderson Auditorium on the Edgewood College Campus.

"I am a queer, fat, Black woman from the South, and quite honestly, I don't know anyone else that holds those identities here," Lighteard says. "I stand out here. I am also ignored here. That is why bringing Porsha O's one-woman show means so much to me. She is so near and dear to my heart as someone who is a working slam poet and who is now a theater practitioner. I am excited to just feel understood, to see someone who looks like me occupy space here. To be a main character. To tell her story."

Lighteard's hope is straightforward: that the people of Madison come out to learn about and celebrate Black arts and artists.

"I want to feel like Black arts matter in Madison," she says. "With this festival, I intend to build an organization that improves community climate. I want Madison to feel a little warmer for people like me."

Full schedule of events can be found at bamfestival.wixsite.com.

sin "Chamber on Tap," an evening networking happy hour event, on Thursday, **April 4** at MOOD a Salon in Appleton. This is a great opportunity to come and meet other business owners and professionals that share your values. This is a free event and all are welcome.

On **April 10** the Chamber will host its 2019 Central Wisconsin Digital and Social Media Conference at UW-Stevens Point. Gain knowl-

edge and insight from some of the best social media, digital marketing, and sales industry specialists. This one-day event will include a keynote, breakout sessions, and a networking power luncheon. This conference is for those who want to learn the basics and for those who are seeking new strategies to build upon their current digital and social media plans. Please visit wislgbt-chamber.com for more information. ■

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POC NETWORKING COMMUNITY BUILDING

Miss Progress

Sabrina Madison and her Progress Center for Black Women seeks to build capacity for a strong, sustainable black community in the city of Madison.

SABRINA “HEYMISS PROGRESS” MADISON is a gregarious, no nonsense, hardworking woman. She’s also something of a force of nature. The Milwaukee native moved to Madison in 2007 and has since busied herself building resources and support specifically for Black communities in the city. After years of successfully organizing the Black Women’s Leadership Conference (BWLC) and the Black Business Expo (BBE), Madison decided the work needed a physical home, too—a place where Black women in particular might find sanctuary and support.

“I started to think about how I was promoting events and this center,” Madison says, “and I wondered if [queer women] felt welcome.”

That dream was realized in 2018 with the opening of the temporary home of the Progress Center for Black Women in Fitchburg. Madison plans to undergo a major fundraising process to either build or buy a more permanent and spacious location for the center in the next two or three years. In the meantime, the current office realizes the beginning of an even more ambitious dream.

“My goal is to open five of these in different cities in the course of my lifetime,” she says plainly. The reason, Madison explains, is to help create a legacy of mentorship and support for Black women and their families. Social time, kid-focused events, and what she calls “kick-back” sessions are all part of that, in addition to larger events like the BWLC and BBE that aim to build capacity for Black entrepreneurs and businesses.

WELCOMING TO ALL

All of that, she adds, has to include Black women who identify as part of the LGBTQ community. “I started to think about how I was promoting events and this center,” Madison says, “and I wondered if [queer women] felt welcome.”

Madison credits her son for first helping open her eyes to just how important it was to be visibly supportive and inclusive of the LGBTQ community, particularly for Black folks. She moved to the city as a



“I feel like ‘Pose’ should be required viewing for all Black families.”

young single mother in the hopes of giving her son a better place to grow up, and avoid the cycle of crime and prison that plagued many of her male relatives back in Milwaukee. He attended West High School where, she says, he cultivated a diverse friend group. That included at least one young gay man.

“My son came home one day just pissed, and told me that his friend’s mom had literally locked him in a closet for coming out as gay,” she recounts. The young man was later kicked out entirely, in the middle of the night, with no support. Madison did her best to help at the time. “I couldn’t believe it; I was really shocked. How do you do that to your own kid?”

Madison says she has no prejudice against LGBTQ people, but also hadn’t fully realized just how much hate and trauma impact the community on a regular basis.

“I have a ‘come as you are’ philosophy for the center,” Madison says. “Now I’m just trying to really think about, how do I let it be known that all are welcome? How do I make this a resource for more people?” She says regular conversations with her son, as well as community members like GSAFE’s Ali Muldrow, have helped her better understand how to be more mindful. That, and movies like “Moonlight” and the FX series “Pose,” which Madison says totally changed her understanding of Black queer and trans community and chosen family.

“I feel like ‘Pose’ should be required viewing for all Black families,” she says. Misunderstanding and animosity from parts of the Black community toward those who come out as queer are still very real challenges that Madison says she regularly encounters. She wants to be more intentional about how she presents her work, and to whom, while also finding ways to bring different women together to learn about and better understand different backgrounds and identities.

A COMMITMENT TO SUCCESS

Madison has a lot of love for her adopted city, while also being a realist about its problems and challenges. She admits now that she moved here with “rose-colored glasses,” visiting the usual, beautiful tourist spots like State Street and the Capitol. Once here, however, she started noticing the divides that exist between certain people and neighborhoods.

“I kept getting asked if I was from Chicago, which I’d never gotten from people before. And folks, usually white, would warn me to stay away from particular parts of town,” she says. “I figured out quick that those were the places most likely to have other Black folks, so I started asking where I ‘shouldn’t go’ specifically so I knew where to go!”

Her son, she realized, also suffered real culture shock upon transferring from a school environment where almost all of his teachers and administrators were Black, to one in which they were almost entirely white.

She has strong critiques for how the city interacts with its communities of color. While Madison credits the many support services on offer for those in critical need, she highlights a lack of programs or just an environment in which people of color can build skills, success, and sustainability.

“This place, it’s almost like it’s committed to our failure,” she muses. “I feel like Black folks become white folks’ projects,” instead of actually working together to implement real solutions. “There are too many reports and not enough follow-through,” Madison adds.

That’s part of why she decided to take matters into her own hands and create the center, as well as the various events, built by and for Black women. A large part of the motivation is pure altruism, but there’s an element of the personal, too: Madison sees a lot of her friends in the Black community leaving the city for places where they feel more welcomed and valued.

After all, she points out, “If you don’t see opportunities for mentorship or advancement, what’s the point of staying?”

Find out more about the Progress Center for Black Women at centerforblackwomen.org. —Emily Mills



ABOVE: Sabrina out with good friend, GSAFE Co-Director, and school board candidate Ali Muldrow (Left). Vavance Ashby at the Progress Center for Black Women’s Photos with Santa event in December. **BELOW:** Sabrina hosting a listening session with Senator Tammy Baldwin at the then newly-opened Progress Center last fall.



BOTTOM PHOTO BY SPENCER MICKA.



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THEATER QUEER QPOC

Creating Empathy Through Storytelling

Theatre LILA's newest production infuses a Shakespearean classic with modern tensions around sexual and racial identity.



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JESSICA LANIUS and actors HJ Farr and Kelsey Rodriguez share insights on Theatre LILA's new take on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which brings new perspectives to the rival families when the title lovers are two women and each family is of a different racial background - the Capulets Afro-Latinx and the Montagues white. It premieres March 14-17 at the Overture Center.

JESSICA, WHAT GAVE YOU THE IDEA TO NOT ONLY MAKE A QUEER VERSION OF A WELL-KNOWN PLAY, BUT ROMEO AND JULIET SPECIFICALLY?

I have been daydreaming about adapting this play for over 10 years; in the version in my mind we could use a lot of movement and dance to tell the story. It would be such a beautiful piece with two women, and I not only thought we need this story now but what a

great opportunity to provide iconic roles for more women (Benvolio and Tybalt have also been shifted to be female).

I am not only looking for ideas that incorporate our style of invention and visual storytelling but also seeking ways to bring stories to the stage that are relevant, thought-provoking, and build empathy. We also look at what stories are not being told. We've been focusing on how to represent more voices of color in the stories we tell and on the high school groups we bring to the theater. I imagine them as our audience first. How can we have the greatest impact on this next generation? What do they want to see, or need to experience? We have included stories of same-sex couples in all of our new works but this is the first time where the leading roles are queer.

YOU ALSO EXPLORE RACISM AROUND INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS. DID THAT IDEA COME AT THE SAME TIME AS MAKING THE TITLE CHARACTERS QUEER? WHAT WAS IMPORTANT ABOUT EXPLORING THESE FACETS?

It was hard not to include racial divide in this story. It's been done many times before, but as we see all these instances of hatred for both people of color and also people in the LGBTQ+ community, it seemed the best way to relate to this idea of feuding families. It was almost simultaneously that I thought it had to be two women as well—coming out of working on a play with all women and immersed in the question of representation.

The more we create an authentic story for people to either see themselves in the experience or to experience other people's love, sorrow, joy, pain—perhaps we can play a part in either validating or shifting perspectives, and activate people to take action. Janelle Monáe recently talked about storytelling and she said it so perfectly, about how if you can create empathy through storytelling, you might get people to like the people in the story, then they might start to love them and see themselves in them and then they might want to protect them. I think this is exactly why I want to tell stories like this and bring them to our stage here.

WHAT, TO YOU, IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THIS VERSION OF ROMEO AND JULIET?

Kelsey: It forces the audience to hold up a mirror to themselves and really look at what they see. Oftentimes prejudice is inherited, either by familial biases, cultural conditioning, or even generational gaps. The way we have been taught to treat people stems from our upbringing. Jessica's choice to show two differing cultures feuding as well as incorporating a same-sex relationship is going to make it difficult for the audience not to view this in the lens of 2019 and our current climate (immigration, LGBTQ rights, etc.).

I also think the fact that I am 100% Puerto Rican but also white-passing is going to add tension. It's one thing to be prejudiced

LGBTQ Reading List

A current LGBTQ reading list at the Madison Public Library, compiled by Madison librarians **Tyler Furo** and **Beth McIntyre**. Library cards are free, and you can check out books or view their availability online at madisonpubliclibrary.org/linkcat



Black Leopard, Red Wolf. Marlon James. Riverhead, 2019.

It's being called the new *Game of Thrones*. Expect fantastical violence and big time sensuality.

I.M.: A Memoir. Isaac Mizrahi. Flat Iron Books, 2019.

The fashion icon finally spills the tea on his life story.

Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls. T Kira Madden. Bloomsbury, 2019.

A true story from Boca Raton about privilege, addiction, and ultimate redemption.

The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali. Sabina Khan. Scholastic, 2019.

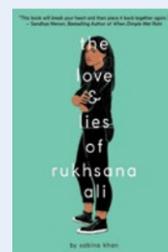
A young woman's strict parents whisk her to Bangladesh after they catch her kissing a girl.

Sugar Run. Mesha Maren. Algonquin, 2019.

In this hard-boiled, southern noir, a woman fresh out of an 18-year stint in prison tries to make amends and move forward. It's harder than it looks.

Willa and Hesper. Amy Feltman. Grand Central, 2019.

A literary and lyrical exploration of love, religion, and when and how to approach the past.



toward someone who looks different than you, but what happens when they don't? What happens when the person you've been raised to hate actually looks like you? HJ and I have fairly the same complexion yet we come from two different cultures. I'm excited to dispel the presumption that anyone who is Latinx has to have darker skin but also to see how that informs the audience's experience.

WHAT WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU TO PORTRAY IN YOUR ROLE AS A QUEER PERSON FROM A WHITE FAMILY WHO HAS ISSUES WITH BOTH THE RACE AND THE GENDER OF THE PERSON YOU LOVE?

HJ: The most important part for me is portraying it with honesty. When I was discovering my sexuality, I remember doing whatever felt right, and then helping my family catch up later. I feel like that's a little bit of what happens to Juliet. Romeo and Juliet are both young, and sometimes that's best for society—to have the younger generation love however feels right, and have their families catch up. ■

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March & April

Spring is nearly sprung, and there are lots of opportunities to splash in the puddles and hang out with friends new and old, get informed, get active, and more. Check out some of the highlights below!

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



MARCH

14-17

ROMEO & JULIET: LOVE IS LOVE
Overture Center

An LGBTQ twist on the Shakespearean classic, exploring love across boundaries. The production uses movement and music to create an unforgettable, immersive theater experience.
theatrelila.com

MARCH

6

FIRST LOOK AT THE FEST
AMC Madison 6

Get a sneak-peek at the line-up for this year's Wisconsin Film Festival the day before it appears in print in *Isthmus*. The event also features snacks, drinks, pro-tips on the fest by staff and programmers, and a first-look at a specially curated WFF 2019 trailer reel.
wifilmfest.org

8

SAFE SCHOOLS, SAFE COMMUNITIES STATEWIDE CONFERENCE ON LGBTQ+ YOUTH
Parker High School, Janesville

GSAFE and Janesville Mobilizing 4 Change host the annual conference focused on creating more inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth across the state. The day features training, workshops, and speakers, and is aimed at teachers and students.
gsafevi.org

8-10

CANOECOPIA
Alliant Energy Center

Rutabaga presents its annual bonanza for paddlesport and outdoor enthusiasts, with dozens of vendors, exhibitions, seminars, clinics, and more.
canoecopia.com

ORCHESTRAL BRILLIANCE: THREE VIRTUOSI

Overture Center for the Arts
Madison Symphony Orchestra celebrates three of its own artists—concertmaster Naha Greenholtz, Clarinetist JJ Koh, and Tubist Joshua Biere—via the medium of George Gershwin's classic tone poem, "An American In Paris."
madisonsymphony.org

9

LGBTQIA+ INTERGENERATIONAL CONFERENCE: "CONNECTIONS IV: CHANGING TIMES"

First United Methodist Church
Proud Theater, PFLAG Madison, Trinity United Methodist Church, and FUMC join forces

to put on this conference for building bonds between the generations of our community, with a focus on communication and collaboration across lines of age and identity.
proutheater.org

11

SONYA RENEE TAYLOR
Mitby Theater at Madison College

The Madison College Speaking Series welcomes poet, educator, and social justice activist Sonya Renee Taylor to speak on her work and new book, *The Body Is Not An Apology*. The event is free and open to the public, though RSVP is requested.
madisoncollege.edu



Sonya Renee Taylor

15

OPEN ANNUAL DINNER
Monona Terrace & Convention Center

The Out Professional Engagement Network presents its annual dinner and scholarship award presentation, with lots of opportunity for LGBTQ networking and connection. Congressman Mark Pocan will keynote this historic 10th annual dinner.
openmadison.org

23-24

HERLARIOUS: COMEDY FOR A CAUSE
Next Act Theatre, Milwaukee & High Noon Saloon, Madison

Comedian Dina Nina Martinez brings together an all-women lineup of stand-up comics for two nights, all to benefit the Human Rights Campaign's pro-equality work. The Madison show features Dina, Allie Lindsay, Vanessa Tortolano, and Tulin Waters.
ladylaughscomedy.com

24

CAMP BINGO: UNDER THE SEA
Madison Concourse Hotel

The most fabulous bingo fundraiser around returns with a deep-sea theme! Host Cass Marie Domino and emcee Karizma Mirage will guide you through the games, with celebrity ball caller Aaron Rogers of MIX 105.1 & 99.1 The Mix. Proceeds benefit ARCW.
madcampbingo.org

28

(THROUGH APRIL 14)

"LIFE SUCKS"

Overture Center for the Arts

Forward Theater presents this bold and funny reworking of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," about a group of old friends, ex-lovers, estranged in-laws, and lifelong enemies that lurches between love and lust, laughter and longing, and the many ways in which life does, and doesn't...suck. Both brash and warm-hearted, Madison native Aaron Posner's romp of a play reminds its seven hapless characters—and us—that to feel deeply is the price of a life well-lived. Wisconsin premiere.
forwardtheater.com

APRIL

4-11

WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

The cinematic celebration returns with hundreds of titles spanning genres and the globe, including the "Wisconsin's Own" showcase of local talent. Films are shown at a variety of locations across Madison and include appearances and talks by many of the filmmakers.
wifilmfest.org

5-7

UDDER CHAOS ROLLER DERBY INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT
Hartmeyer Ice Arena

Madison Roller Derby hosts the second-annual tournament, with the Dairyland Dolls competing against other top teams from across the country. The event also features food carts, local beer, vendors, and halftime entertainment from local groups.
madisonrollerderby.org

27-28

MGHA CLASSIC HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
Capitol Ice Arena

MGHA's annual no-check hockey tournament welcomes members of its own league as well as players from gay hockey associations across the country. Skate, or spectate, all weekend!
madisongayhockey.org/tournament

26 & 28

RUSALKA

Overture Center for the Arts

Madison Opera explores Dvořák's luxurious 1901 masterpiece based on The Little Mermaid. This is the Madison Opera premiere of their first opera ever sung in Czech.
madisonopera.org

27

GSAFE'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP & AWARDS BANQUET
Monona Terrace

Celebrate the year's accomplishments by some of the state's most hard working LGBTQ+ youth and education professionals, and raise money for the organization that supports both. Details and registration at GSAFE's website.
gsafevi.org

ROMEO + JULIET

A Theatre LILA Invention

An adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet



LOVE IS LOVE



Overture Center for the Arts
March 14, 15, 16 at 7:30pm • March 16 & 17 at 2:30pm
TICKETS: TheatreLILA.com or call (608) 258-4141



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2019.WIFILMFEST.ORG

The Wisconsin Film Festival is presented by the University of Wisconsin—Madison Division of the Arts in association with the Department of Communication Arts.



JANUARY 27 AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin's Camp Bingo at the Madison Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club



PHOTOS BY SPENCER MICKA.



FEBRUARY 24 AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin's Camp Bingo at the Madison Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club



PHOTOS BY SPENCER MICKA.



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BY ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

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The Island Retreat

Michael Childers and Glenn Carlson built a beautiful and simple retreat that became a home on Madeline Island.

DREAM HOMES DESIGN APOSTLE ISLANDS NORTHERN WISCONSIN

As we stood looking at sandstone bluffs along the water, we realized we could live there. Right there.

WE NEVER EXPECTED to end up living on an island, but here we are. To explain how that came to be—how we moved to a place we didn't even know existed until our first visit there—we'll have to go back and explain a few things.

Who are the "we" of this tale? Glenn Carlson and Michael Childers—together for 27 years and married for four. We were both raised in the Midwest, and so our migration from corporate life in Los Angeles back to the Madison area in 1997 felt like coming home.

We own a small business on the island, Madeline Island Candles, that helps to keep us engaged with the business community. We've been given the gift of serving on various nonprofit boards, as well as the Bayfield School District Board (Glenn) and the Town of LaPointe Board of Supervisors (Michael). These various involvements, our shared worldview, the gift of visiting family and friends, as well as the enjoyment of the island's year-round and summer residents, all keeps us active and a part of island life.

WHEN VACATION BECOMES LOCATION SCOUTING

Our lives changed dramatically in the fall of 2003 when we took a weeklong vacation with two friends. After a beautiful road trip north from the Madison area, through the woods until we caught a ferry in Bayfield, we settled in for the ride across the water.

Madeline is the largest of the Apostle Islands, part of an archipelago in Lake Superior. While the island is slightly larger than Manhattan, the year-round population is approximately just 265 people (no one really knows for sure). During the





summer, around Memorial Day, families with summer cottages start to arrive, along with a steady stream of other folks renting cabins, and day-trip visitors streaming off the ferries that run every 30 minutes.

We came in late summer. It was a Northwoods August that seemed perfect that year: warm, sunny days made for hiking in the parks or bicycling around town. Our walking tours included a visit to the museum, various small shops and galleries, and the wildly popular Tom's Burned Down Café for an occasional adult beverage.

Someone—I can't remember who—came up with the idea that we should look at real estate. I've been told that the worst thing you can do after an amazing vacation is spend your last day looking at homes for sale. We did it anyway—and at the end of our tour we walked onto a vacant property that faced south onto the lake. As we stood looking at sandstone bluffs along the water, we realized we could live there. Right there.

A TWIST ON TRADITIONAL

The drive home led to the decision to make an offer on the property and hope for the best. Lightning struck, and our initial thought was that we would wait to build a summer cabin—but plans changed.

That Christmas, Glenn's sister gave us a book called *The Cabin*, by Dale Mulfinger and Susan E. Davis. Dale is a founder of the Minneapolis Architectural firm, SALA, and is considered a "cabinologist." We met, chatted about our project, and agreed to meet on Madeline during winter so that Dale could see and get a feel for the site.

With snow on the ground, Dale stomped out his first idea—and then we drove to the Bell Street Tavern where he drew a series of dots on a napkin. Those dots eventually became the plan that we executed. The house was built from 2004 to 2006.

Glenn thought that we were going to build a traditional log cabin, but Michael pushed hard for a more contemporary structure built around an idea.

That idea was the challenge that we presented to Dale as the architect, and the idea that we had in mind was transformation.

Taking the ferry from the Bayfield side and across the water is a transformational experience. Leaving the mainland behind, heading onto the lake toward a distant island shore always makes the muscles in my neck and shoulders relax.

After landing on Madeline and then weaving through forested roads, paved or gravel, to a remote and quiet spot in the woods, the feeling of change extends. The world left behind drifts away.

We wanted our new place to represent that transformational feeling. During the design process Dale created a wall, a visual blockade that is an impediment to seeing and understanding the world on the other side.

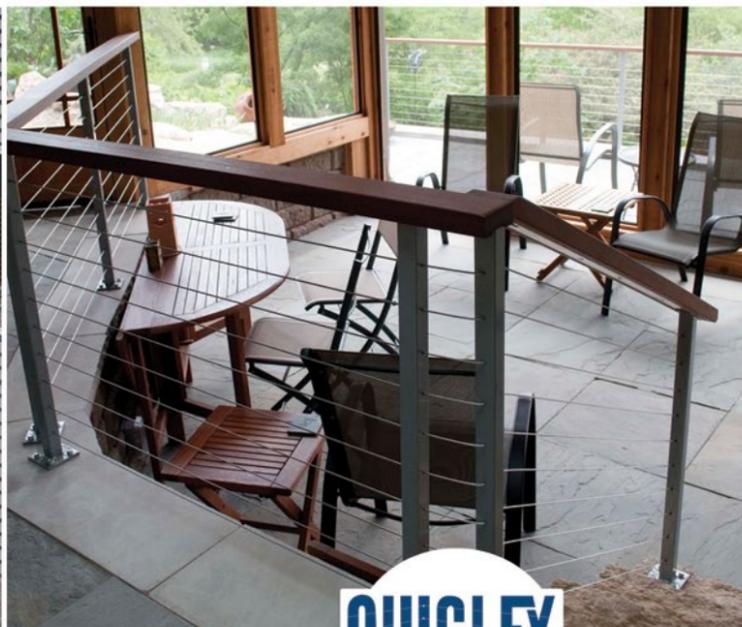
Passing through the wall brings you home, with a sweeping vista through the woods to the lake beyond. The living space—a glass-enclosed pavilion—creates an area surrounded by ever-changing light and color. There's a riot of green in the spring and summer while autumn reds and yellows give way to winter white. When the snow falls it feels like we live in a snow globe—protected from harsh, cold elements, and still enveloped by the quiet beauty of drifting white flakes.

A SIMPLIFIED SPACE

The house is small, with a couple of sleeping areas and bathrooms, a study up a flight of skip-step stairs, and a kitchen/dining area that is part of the living pavilion.

The basic design is a grouping of three simple geometric forms: a long, rectangular wall, a cantilevered box, and the pavilion roof formed by an inverted truss.

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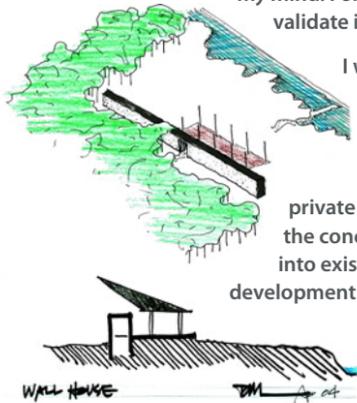
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Dale Mullfinger, Architect



In 2008 I completed a second home for clients on a Wisconsin island overlooking Lake Superior. The clients asked for something special, and upon my first visit to the site in early spring, I conceptualized a beginning concept by sketching with a twig in the snow. It defined a 100-foot wall slicing the site in half with a portal in the middle to the "other" world of respite and escape. The roof was an upside-down truss sheltering a place at the wall on the retreat side and framing the expansive view at the horizon. Just a sketch, in the snow, ethereal, transient to the upcoming snow melt, but anchored in my mind. Fortunately, a friend was with me to validate it.



I would later transfer that sketch to paper and, over time, develop and transform it into the reality of a program and materiality. But other than the addition of a private space in the form of a blue box, the concept stayed intact and was coaxed into existence through the skilled design development of colleague Dan Wallace.

It indeed was like no other design I had created, just pure, raw, instantaneous invention. Upon completion of the construction many months later, I had the opportunity to stay there with my wife for a weekend by ourselves, to photograph, contemplate, and get her critique as she put the kitchen to use. I have often been able to secure such reflection of my projects, to assess my achievements, and agonize its shortcomings. What I found most compelling was the search for the design's origins; where had it come from? What recesses of my vocabulary were called upon to invent this creation?

As a design instructor at the University of Minnesota's Department of Agriculture, I had been teaching that design was a product of hard work and deliberate process that take in a significant number of forces. I taught my students to not rely on the myth of the "big idea," but that ideas could be revealed through design methods. But in the Lake Superior retreat house I felt otherwise; that the drawing in the snow came from somewhere deep inside me, from a place I didn't know existed. ■

The floor is a poured concrete slab with in-floor radiant heat powered by a propane boiler. Given that the window wall faces directly south, the roofline was designed to allow passive solar gain in the winter when the sun is low on the horizon, and to shade the floor in the summer when the sun is high in the sky. A highly efficient wood-burning stove can raise temperatures quickly, and we have recently installed a solar system on the roof as part of working toward a carbon-neutral footprint for the house.

It's a simple structure, easy to maintain, and intentionally constructed to exclude extra closets and places to store "stuff." As a result, our environment is less cluttered. We are more organized when required trips for supplies take us to the mainland—especially in winter when the last ferry runs at 5:30 and there is no way to jump into the car and run to the store.

What was intended to be a summer retreat turned into a home that we couldn't leave. Michael moved to the island in 2007, with Glenn following in 2008.

What is it like to live here? On Madeline Island, the rhythm of life is slower and closely tied to seasons. The rush of summer tourism and all its activity gives way to the quiet peace of winter.

We relish living in this small home, watching eagles fly along the shore as the days drift from spring to winter and back again. Sunrise gives way to sunset and surrounding colors constantly change.

Living on an island in Lake Superior might not be for everyone. For us, though unexpected, it never gets old.

If you find your way to Madeline Island, please stop by the candle shop and say hello. You might find the space to breathe and leave everyday cares on the mainland. Maybe someday, you, too, might find yourself drawn to island life. It happened to us. ■



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The Color Whisperer

Barry Avery of Fontaine Home talks about the secret to his long-running success in the evolving world of interior design.

INTERIOR DESIGN | SMALL BUSINESS



Barry grew up in Two Rivers in northern Wisconsin, a place he describes as a cute and quaint area, though the region struggles for economic stability. Barry always had an instinct for color. He says while students can learn drafting and CAD, color and a sense of design is something that's innate.

"I don't know if there was any sort of time where it clicked and I figured it out," he said. "I'm a firm believer that it isn't something you can teach: the knack, the sense for color. But it's what sets me apart. I have a group of clients who refer their friends to me. They say, 'Call Barry. He's the Color Whisperer.'"

DESIGNING LOYALTY

When he begins a relationship with a new client, he assigns an easy homework project by asking the homeowner to pick up a home decor magazine and think about their wish list and mark the things they like and don't like.

"I always tell a new client that a good designer can meld their skills and talent into helping the client achieve the look they want," he said. "I look at things from a new-traditional point of view, but we don't have things like off-limits living rooms any more. I tell clients that we design for you, we don't design for us."

He built his business one client at a time, and repeat business was not uncommon once people experienced Barry's passion. As his design business grew, the step to retail helped him reach a new audience, too.

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FONTAINE HOME was a landmark business on East Johnson Street before the retail and interior design shop closed in 2018. Owner Barry Avery's company isn't gone though. He opened a new location in Middleton last fall.

Before Fontaine was a retail space for 11 years on Madison's east side, Barry worked as a designer from his home for years with customers who found him from word of mouth and referrals from friends.

"I always enjoyed doing it for myself," explains Avery. "About 20 years ago, a friend came to one of my holiday parties and he said I should be doing for others what I do for myself. That's when I decided to do it on my own. I'm one of the lucky ones who get to do for a living what I love."

“Clients have stayed with me over multiple projects, years, even multiple states,” said Barry. “It’s really staying on top of what’s current, what’s trendy, and how to interpret those trends into what’s best for my clients.”

Home remodel projects he remembers fondly include fully gutted homes to long-distance design work.

“We did a full-house remodel where the homeowner was taking the house down to the exterior studs. That client had a very modern edge to her aesthetic. It was wonderful to help her bring that project to life and to help her work her vision into the project.

“We are still seeing lots of white, but with organic finishes that give a space warmth and make white less sterile,” said Barry. “But another trend is serious jewel tones. Emerald green, royal blue, and the majestic peacock tones are playing a big role in what’s going to happen in the next year.”

“We also took a really old Frank Riley house that had an outdated bad-traditional, but we funkyed it up by giving it a fun mix of new color and a really wonderful take on traditional furniture that we thought about in brand new ways. They liked my sense of color and my sense of style and were so happy with the outcome they are still with me today, four years later, to do a remodel of their home in Florida.”

AN EYE FOR TRENDS

When he closed his showroom last year, he thought he would focus his work with the Designers Studio, a design cooperative in which



five designers share an office space and a commingled library of resources. The cooperative design model is financially beneficial for its members’ bottom line, and there is the comradery of others who can be a sounding board for ideas.

Ending a retail establishment, and the costly overhead that comes with it, was one thing. But he missed the hands-on experience of selecting merchandise and “the hunting and shopping for that exclusive and unique find that people had come to know that Fontaine’s had.”

The new space opened on September 21, 2018 in Middleton. “It’s been going really well, I’ve gotten a wonderful reception and people are happy to find us again. They love the new space.”

Fontaine Home is a place to go for handpicked home accents from candles to lamps, art to holiday decorations. It’s also a place to ask about what’s trending in color and design.

“We are still seeing lots of white, but with organic finishes that give a space warmth and make white less sterile,” said Barry. “Furniture is getting more and more casual and more neutral. But another trend is serious jewel tones. Emerald green, royal blue, and the majestic peacock tones are playing a big role in what’s going to happen in the next year.”

OUT, PROUD, AND ADAPTING

As an out, gay business owner, Barry has experienced the benefits of having a home in Dane County.

“I’ve been open with my identity ever since opening the business,” he said. “I’ve never been met with any hurdles, any opposition. I am who I am, I do my work. I think we live in a city, in a state that historically has been very accepting of others. Wisconsin has always been a leader. We can just go about our business as our business.”

Barry’s advice for up-and-coming designers is as honest as a service-based entrepreneur can be.

“The times are changing really fast. Just look at the last 10 years. Social media wasn’t that big when I started. But you need to get on top of social media from the start.”

“I also tell young designers that they should be prepared for the fact that it’s going to take four to five years to get established. I didn’t ‘pay myself’ for the first few years because all the money I made went right back into investing into the business. I tell the baby designers that they have to be able to sell, meld their interests and tastes and personality into that of your client. Each client is going to have different needs, and you’ll learn to respond and work with them differently.” ■

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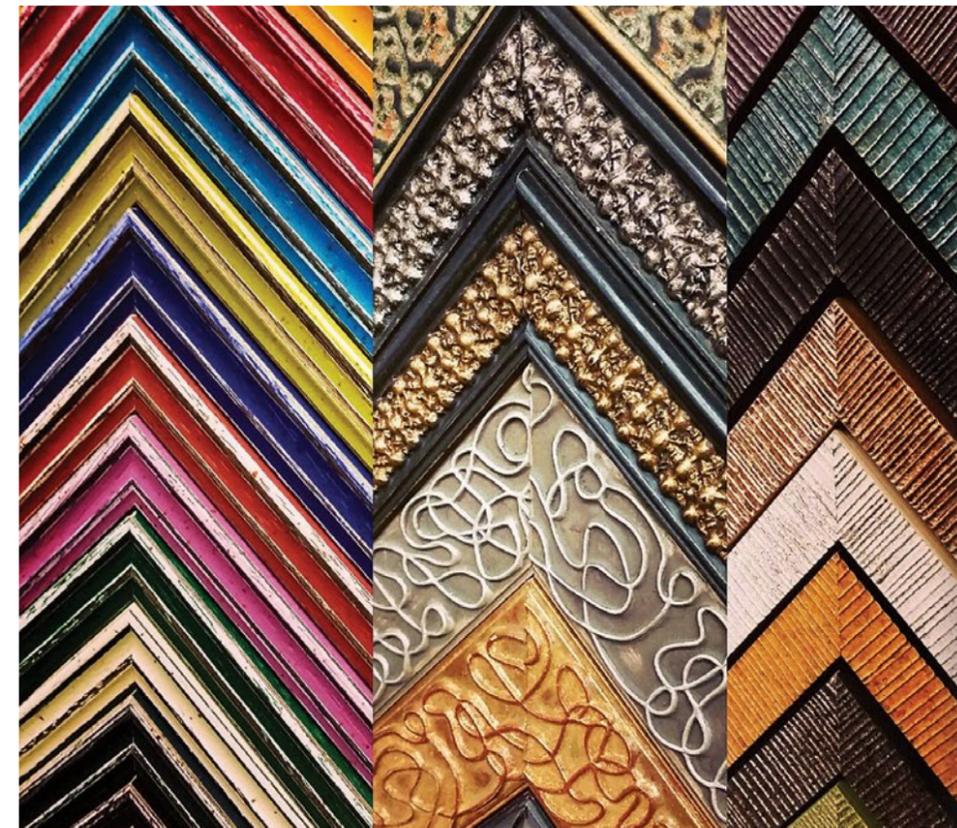


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The Radical

How local activist and fundraiser **Jenny Pressman** has spent her life pushing for positive, equitable, social change from behind the scenes.

ACTIVISM | JEWISH | LESBIAN | RACIAL JUSTICE

ANYONE WHO'S SPENT TIME in Madison's activist circles will likely have encountered Jenny Pressman. Her commitment to and hard work on behalf of any number of causes—from LGBTQ rights to racial justice—make it almost a sure thing that most residents have at least seen her dark, curly hair and smiling (or serious) face.

Pressman does not seek the limelight. She's made a conscious decision to expend her time and energies in support of people and causes in which she believes, rather than running for elected office or other leadership positions. She's a longtime supporter of and fundraiser for GSAFE, board member at *The Progressive* magazine and at the Arts + Literature Lab, and a frequent participant at Black Lives Matter and other racial justice-oriented protests and events.

In her day job with the UW-affiliated Odyssey Project, Pressman has found a way to put her knowledge of development toward helping people who are facing economic barriers gain access to a college education.

"I'd love to have conversations with people who find that term [queer] really hard and dismissive of their identity, or that it's traumatizing, and with those who don't understand why that might be," Pressman says. "Some of that's generational, some of it's situational. Some lesbians feel ripped out of both history and their present lives and that's a disquieting, distressing feeling, especially for some lesbians who fought hard for visibility."

She's also opened her near east side home to a series of intergenerational and intersectional community meetings and fundraisers, largely focused on communities and leaders of color in Madison. It's in this house that we meet for a lengthy conversation over tea about her life and work. She emphasizes that most everything she does, especially the hard work of being in community to make radical change, comes from a place of love: "Love of myself, my family, friends, and the community."

BOTH / AND

A self-described Jewish, first-generation, New York City-born, middle-aged lesbian, Pressman embraces the term "radical" to describe her approach to issues. She says, contrary to tired assumptions about becoming more conservative as you grow older, time has only made her more impatient with the need for major societal change.

"I do call myself radical, although now 'radical feminism' has a sort of unsavory connotation," she says frankly. "I want to reclaim radicalism. To me, that's based on my understanding that there are systems and structures in place—and I'm going to talk about this country in particular

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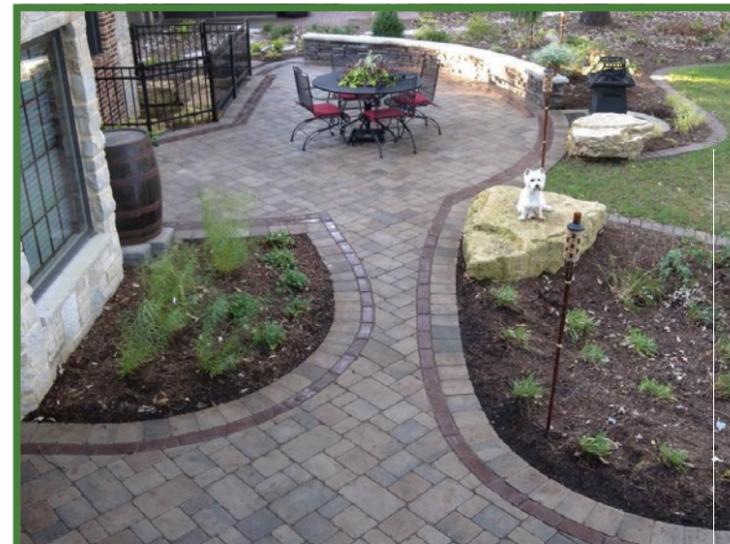
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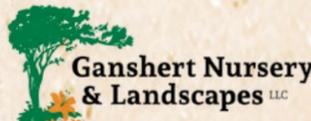
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In her Marquette Neighborhood home near Orton Park.

because that's where I live—that are founded on and perpetuate racism and sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and a lot of them are based on the economic system, on capitalism.”

Throughout our long conversation, Pressman frequently touched on her belief that there are no binaries in either identities or issues. Painting anything in hard black and white, she says, is where humans run into trouble and limit our ability to grow and progress.

“The first thing for me is just understanding the connections,” she explains. “All of it is fraught and very complicated, and I’m always perplexed by why everyone wants to reduce these things to very simple terms—either/or. It’s not a binary that works for me! Most binaries don’t work for me! Both/and is a great starting place.”

A POWERFUL LEGACY

Pressman credits her commitment to activism and justice to her upbringing. Both of her parents were Holocaust survivors who shared what they experienced with their daughter.

“From an early age I have been an activist,” she says. “Part of it goes back to my parents’ experience and understanding that there is great injustice in the world...and there are ways in which I perpetuate injustice through my own experiences and there are ways that I try to disrupt that. I work on that all the time. When I say work I don’t mean in a burdensome way, I welcome that opportunity. Especially now at this point in my life when I recognize that I have more time behind me than I do in front of me, it feels more urgent to me. It’s an imperative, and one that I embrace.”

The story of how her parents met, courted, married, and then survived the Holocaust is an incredible one. Pressman grew up knowing many other children of survivors, though, until moving to Madison—and she chuckles ruefully while relating—that she just assumed everyone’s parents went through a similar ordeal.

The elder Pressmans met while living in Warsaw, Poland, and both courted and married while living under Nazi occupation in the inhumane conditions of the Warsaw Ghetto. They bonded, among other things, over having lost their fathers to factors related to Nazi persecution (one to the typhus then rampant in the ghetto, the other from a vicious beating for daring to own a profitable business). After the uprising, in which both participated,



Jenny with her mother, Alina Kaplan Pressman, in 1963.

The elder Pressmans met while living under Nazi occupation in Warsaw, Poland. They bonded over having lost their fathers to factors related to Nazi persecution. After the uprising, they were separated while escaping certain death. Most of their family members died in concentration camps.

they were separated while escaping certain death. Most of their family members died in concentration camps. After the war, a chance meeting brought them back together in Vienna, followed by narrowly escaping imprisonment by the Russians, fleeing across the Alps into Italy, and eventually settling in the U.S.

Pressman sees chilling truths and parallels to the modern day in their story. “There were people who risked their lives to save Jews,” she says. “And then there were so many who just turned away. Those are the circumstances that we find ourselves in, particularly it feels like that right now, but generally in the course of history you’ll see that there are opportunities for people to stand up for one another...and then times when, for whatever reason, people don’t.”

It wasn’t until moving to Madison in the early 1980s that Pressman encountered much serious anti-Semitism, or simple ignorance about being Jewish. It was—and remains—present in her life here.

“‘Where are your horns?’ someone asked me, and I was like, ‘what?’” she laughs. “I didn’t realize this was something you might have read and assumed was true.”

Pressman says she’s since come to have a better understanding of why and how folks, particularly in the Upper Midwest, might have those ignorances. She still encounters people for whom she’s the first Jewish person they’ve met, for instance.

“I came to understand and appreciate it as a statement of fact, not as a judgment,” she says. It’s been a learning process for both Pressman and the people around her. Everyday language became a point of constant study. She’d never heard slurs like “jew’d me down” in New York, but she encounters it somewhat regularly in Madison. When she questions people for using a term like that, however, she says most folks stop and realize they’d never thought about where it came from or what it meant.

“Everything is a reference to something or someone,” Pressman says. “The way that we move through the world is a reflection of our experiences. The broader our experiences, usually the more helpful that is. I mean there are people who grow up in small towns and are very aware of the issues, and then there are people who grow up in NYC and—let’s just say for example the POTUS—who didn’t manage to find a way to expand his worldview.”

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LEFT: A recent fundraiser held in her home for local school board candidates Ali Muldrow and Ananda Mirilli. **BELOW:** Senator Tammy Baldwin attending a fundraiser for her 2018 campaign in Jenny's home.



“Showing up for others, showing up for communities. Going to different kinds of events than I would have in the past, really thinking about where I want to put my time and my resources. Getting more local. More grassroots. For me, that feels like the best place for me to put my time and my energy now.”

A HEADY TIME

Madison also brought Pressman into the then-newly emerging field of Women's History (now Gender and Women's History). It was an ad in the back of *Ms.* magazine that alerted her to the fact that the UW-Madison was just starting up its pioneering program under the guidance of Gerda Lerner. Between that and the allure of a particular woman (“Truth be told, I also followed a girl here. It's a constant theme in my life.”), Pressman uprooted for a career, she thought, in academia.

She says that she and Lerner butted heads almost immediately. Where Pressman was more interested in viewing history through a radical and

queer lens, Lerner was busy trying to legitimize the study of women's history, but it came mostly at the exclusion of queer people.

“She thought the labels [“lesbian” and “gay”] politically problematic and possibly historically inaccurate,” Pressman explains. “That's why we clashed so much. She labeled as ahistorical my calling certain women ‘lesbian’ or ‘queer’ if they didn't use that label themselves—knowing full well that language and times had evolved. It's somewhat like the quest you see these days over whether to label people in the past who were born women and lived or dressed as men identified as butch lesbian, transgender men, or just women who wanted the freedom to travel and work without hassle.”

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Pressman concedes that her methods may have been somewhat ahistorical, and realized at the time that she had a more political agenda to her studies. It's part of what drove her to eventually leave academia entirely.

There are a lot of fond memories from the era for Pressman, too. She credits “some really great professors” who were at the UW then, including Judy Leavitt, a professor in the history of medicine, and Evi Beck, who taught a first-of-its kind lesbian studies course.

“If you talk to a number of—and I'm gonna put this in a frame—white, middle class academics in that era, it was a really heady time,” Pressman explains. “What can I say? It was fabulous. We were finding each other and exploring our sexuality, our power; women's music was an anchor.”

Looking at the work she does now particularly to lift up the voices and leadership of women of color, Pressman recognizes that the movement was often beset by racial fissures. Still, she stresses that women of color were very much present and a part of those earlier efforts.

“I try and make sure that I'm not remembering a revisionist history, but it was a fairly diverse community,” she notes. “There were women of color in all of those settings—Take Back the Night marches and rallies. No, they were not centered. That much I know in terms of numbers. But I sometimes am concerned that we're erasing some people's history and that we paint with too broad a brush in saying that it was just white and just middle class.”

There were people and several books that helped her better understand the struggles and work of women of color at the time. Pressman highlights the 1981 feminist essay collection, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, as well as *Yours In Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith, which centered the experiences of queer/women of color.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

These days, Pressman finds herself wanting to bring more people together for “courageous conversations,” particularly across racial and generational lines. Those are the divides she sees having the most negative impact within the LGBTQ community in particular.

We talk about the differences in preferred terminology: younger folks seeming more comfortable with umbrella terms like “queer,” for instance, whereas some folks from previous generations still resist using the word to describe themselves.

“I'd love to have conversations with people who find that term [queer] really hard and dismissive of their identity, or that it's traumatizing, and with those who don't understand why that might be,” Pressman says. “Some of that's generational, some of it's situational. Some lesbians feel ripped out of both history and their present lives and that's a disquieting, distressing feeling, especially for some lesbians who fought hard for visibility.”

She worries that those divides only benefit those who are already against LGBTQ people and “who don't give an ish about all of us.” Pressman points to the divide between Jewish women and women of color at the Women's March as another example of this.

“There were some fabulous Jewish women of color who stood up and said, “You can't make this an either/or, this is my identity, all of this!”

We're back to the idea of both/and, which underpins so much of Pressman's approach to her life and activism. This very much applies to how she thinks about the ever-expanding conversations and ideas around gender identity.

When it comes down to it, she says, “I think the conversations we're having now, far from erasing my identity [as lesbian and queer], it's giving me the opportunity to expand it more and not to be so pigeonholed. Those are conversations that I welcome. I think it's a great thing to feel

more and more comfortable with who you are and the possibilities, and it doesn't threaten me. I see that it threatens other people, and I'd like to sit down with people and see if there are ways that we can understand one another that don't seem threatening to someone's existence.”

Pressman brings up the now-defunct Michigan Women's Music Festival as an example of something she says was a net positive for the community that was brought down by fear and misunderstanding.

“To jump into this fray, MichFest, and how that all went down, I never understood why,” she says. “I believe that trans women belonged there because it's a women's music festival! There's something very deep there, and I'm not dismissing it. But the focus on body parts that you're born with, or hormones that you have or don't have, as opposed to the identity that one has within yourself, that's where I really am struggling to understand. When people say trans women aren't women, I don't understand that. Trans women are women. I mean, period, full stop. So that whole controversy, which I think in large part brought down what was a very beautiful and diverse community of women and girls, not only did it end up being a loss for everybody...it's a conversation that is fraught, but I think we need to jump in there and really let people hear one another. We don't do that enough.”

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY YOU WANT

The conversation turns to Pressman's seemingly tireless work on behalf of intersectionality and racial justice. A recent fundraiser held in her home for local school board candidates Ali Muldrow and Ananda Mirilli also brought together local luminaries like Sabrina Madison (founder of the Progress Center for Black Women), Lisa Peyton-Caire (founder and president of the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness in Madison), and Angela Russell (Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at CUNA Mutual Group), among others.

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"I looked around and [the gathering] was diverse in age, race, gender, gender identity, sexuality," Pressman recalls. "That's the community that I want to be part of."

She's quick to note that cultivating such community takes intentional and continuous work. Especially in Madison, which struggles with serious divides on lines of race in particular. Pressman stresses that it's imperative for white folks to step outside of what might be their comfort zones to cultivate real friendships and connections outside of their usual spheres.

"It's intentional, and it's messy, and it's very rewarding," she adds. "This is not about self-sacrifice. This is about creating something to me that feels right."

The rewards, Pressman emphasizes, are always worth the effort. She talks about engaging in small group discussions that bring together people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to begin to tackle some of the thornier issues that often divide us as a community. Even there, she says, it's crucial to be aware that those conversations are more difficult for folks from minority groups.

"Generally speaking, people of marginalized communities are going to bear more of the burden, whether they're turned to as the 'experts' or whether they're being asked to do more, explain more," she says. "I'm grateful that I have friends in my life who are willing to engage in that work. They are always enriching, always challenging."

Pressman is intensely introspective about her place in the world and what her own role is when it comes to challenging ideas and systems that oppress others. She's the first to admit that her appearance alone can and does open doors for her that are not available to others.

"It is not always easy for me to face the areas in which I've been able to move through the world pretty easily, and without worrying about my personal safety for one, or my opportunities for work, for love, for what-ever...because I'm white," she notes.

As she does for herself, Pressman encourages others to make fewer excuses and to instead really listen to what different people are saying. Then, it's especially important to center the leadership of those people who've been on the front lines of an issue all along.

"This country has not dealt with the history of slavery and racism, and it's only making more pathological the divide," says Pressman. "There are people who say, 'Enough time has passed, can't we get over this,' without acknowledging what we did, what white people did as a country. For awhile I remember thinking to myself, 'this is barely my country, my people weren't here then'...but that's just an excuse. If they had been lucky enough to come to this country several generations before the Holocaust, that's who I would be."

ONE PERSON'S RADICAL...

A theme arises as Pressman comes back to the idea of radical politics all throughout our talk: who or what defines what constitutes a radical idea? She points out the Gillette ad that caused such a stir at the beginning of the year. The message was a simple one: as a society, we should raise our boys with emotional intelligence and depth, so that they become men who respect the humanity of each other and of the different genders.

"Some people saw that and felt that it was too radical because it asked men to be decent human beings," she says. "If that is a radical concept, then we are truly in trouble."

Pressman felt like another, just as important issue was missed entirely in the debate over the message of the ad, too: "What I had trouble with is the fact that you have a multimillion global corporation trying to make money essentially off saying we should be decent human beings."

She feels similarly about the debate that surrounded marriage equality, and now concerning whether transgender people should be allowed to serve openly in the military. For Pressman, as always, the debate isn't an



LEFT: Jenny and GSAFE Board Co-Chair Bernie Hoes at the 2014 Celebration of Leadership. RIGHT: Jenny in costume at GSAFE's 2016 Trick of Trot 5k fall fundraiser.

either/or, though, but yet another instance of both/and:

"On the one hand, that's clearly an injustice and it's discrimination," she says of Trump's proposed ban. "Trans people serve with distinction and should not have their benefits or opportunities cut." On the other hand, though, "We should really look at how much money goes into the military industrial complex and who ultimately benefits and who is harmed [by promoting economic opportunities in the military]. Again, that is not an either/or conversation."

For marriage equality, she feels much the same. Pressman was there celebrating on the steps of the City County Building when same-sex marriage was legalized. She also wonders aloud what it says about our priorities and values as a community when we decide to throw so much weight behind an issue that may only really impact a select few, already more privileged people, and then struggle to find sustainable funding for programs that directly benefit the most marginalized among us.

"I've never been a fan of marriage. I studied the cultural and contractual history of marriage in grad and law school, and see it as a racist, patriarchal institution with deep economic roots in the whole notion of people as property in which one party benefits from the labor of others," she muses.

Although her approach is far more focused on the hyper-local and in creating personal connections, Pressman never loses sight of the bigger picture, either. It's the desire to redesign—rather than reform—systems overall that, she says, often earns her the "radical" label.

"The systems are operating the way they were designed and built to operate," she says. "I think that, as the issues come more and more to flash points, there might be the possibility of addressing those systemic inequities. In my mind, that's not so radical, but I understand that anything that shakes up particularly the economic status quo—capitalism, the school system, the prisons, and how they were designed to function—anything to change that will frighten people because we're frightened of change, generally speaking."

EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES

Pressman still has a lot of energy and drive to do her part to build a better, more equitable community, though she admits she doesn't think the big, revolutionary changes she sees as needed will come in her lifetime. She encourages others to seek whatever ways they can to lend their support to people and causes that are doing the work, particularly when it comes to getting behind women of color, queer women of color, and trans women of color.

"Their own identities compelled them to say, 'Is this not obvious that you can have all of these identities? We do have all of these identities in one body and person and this is who we are,'" she says. "That idea has always resonated for me. Maybe because I have always felt that sense of being other and so it's made me think about identity and seeing how, even

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within what I can think of as a community, there are these distinctions that are used in some ways to divide us. I don't want to overlook them. I don't want people to say there's no difference between us, and we're all just people. We are people. But in my case I am a queer, Jewish, middle-aged woman with children. Those are various parts of my identity and some people share those identities and I don't want to blur those distinctions. I really want to uplift the idea."

The seemingly endless barrage of assaults on rights and on people outside what's considered "normal" or "default" also lends itself to burnout and defeatism, she acknowledges. Pressman sees no option but to continue to fight the good fight, however—another bit of perspective instilled in her by her parents. The alternative is simply unconscionable.

"I live in this beautiful house, I participate in the economic system, but that doesn't mean I can't question it or wouldn't embrace different ways of looking at things," she says. "I think we're capable of changing how we look at relationships, how we look at identity, and how we approach one another as human beings."

It's the continuous work to build the kind of community Pressman says she wants to be in that helps sustain her, too. "Whatever that looks like for anyone, I think showing up is really important for all of us," she adds. "Showing up for others, showing up for communities. Going to different kinds of events than I would have in the past, really thinking about where I want to put my time and my resources. Getting more local. More grassroots. For me, that feels like the best place for me to put my time and my energy now."

In the end, it comes down to embracing change, and allowing each generation to work with those who came before to push the needle further and further—on what's acceptable socially, and what's possible personally.

"I do think that when you expand the possibilities for being a human," Pressman says, "that that will ultimately benefit everyone." ■

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GAY HISTORY | WORLD WAR II | NAZISM

The Nazis and Homosexuals

Historian **Dick Wagner** traces some of the history of the persecution of sexual minorities and those who dared to advocate for them.

COMING FROM GERMAN-AMERICAN stock I have been a reader of some German history and, being gay, the early German gay liberation movement sparked by physician and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld and others has been a particular interest.

Here in Madison I have been blessed to know James Steakley, whose 1982 work, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany*, pioneered much of the English language scholarship in the field. Steakley's work included his last chapter, "The Final Solution, 1933–1945."

Such interest sparked continued reading in more than a dozen works, including Robert Beachy's *Gay Berlin*, Charlotte von Mahlsdorf's *I Am My Own Wife*, and Richard Plant's *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals*. Most recently I've read Martin Duberman's *Jews, Queers, Germans*. Thus, I considered myself well-versed in the overall tragic story and many of the details of a Twentieth Century sexual liberation movement flourishing and then being snuffed out by an autocratic, fascist regime.

By chance, though, I recently picked up *Hidden Holocaust* by Gunter Grau. It is a work translated from German by a scholar who lived most of his life in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The book is a compilation of Nazi-era documents with some limited commentary.

While I do not support the application of the word "holocaust" to Nazi anti-homosexual efforts, believing it should be reserved for the Shoah, nevertheless the Grau book is illuminating. In the book it shows Nazi leaders estimated there were 1–2 million homosexual men in Germany out of "20 million sexually capable men." Their police efforts to create lists of homosexuals only turned up somewhat more than 50,000. So much for that vaunted efficiency.

Reading the documents, however, not only recaps the history learned from the above works but lets one see the machinations of the autocratic state on its own numbing terms and in its own words. The effect is chilling.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

To anyone who could read, the Nazi's position was blatant. Their 1928 electoral party platform was clear: "We therefore reject any sexual deviation particularly between man and man, because it robs us of the last possibility of

He went on to cite an older German medieval practice that lowered such men to their deaths in the marshes. This he called, "Simply the snuffing out of an abnormal life. It had to be removed much as we pull up nettles, put them in a heap and set fire to them."



Homosexual prisoners



Magnus Hirschfeld

freeing our people from the slave-chains."

One prominent Nazi theorist developed a key idea on the alleged political danger of homosexuals. It was "in the reversal of man's nature-given position in relation to woman and the total destruction of all character values." Further supposed danger came in the form of the homosexual "in the threat it brings of moral and behavioral destruction of national communities and their central institutions."

The only measurement of benefit for the Nazis was the national state and its goals, as defined by them. This nationalist valuing subordinated any individual character or minority status to the Volk's (people's) needs. Another theorist claimed homosexuality was virtually unknown among the Teutons until contact with Rome and Christianity (which is demonstrably untrue).

While not as vigorously attacked, lesbians were not safe either. The same Nazi theorist as above believed that "Female homosexuality... is likely to undermine blood values and to draw women away from their duties to the Volk." A lesbian Luftwaffe assistant in occupied Norway was arrested and court-martialed for homosexuality. She was sent to a concentration camp in Mecklenburg and put in special block with six other lesbians. The German guards thought it a good idea to set male Russian prisoners on them for sex "good and proper" (i.e. rape).

On May 6, 1933, the Sexual Science Institute established by Hirschfeld was destroyed. The Institute was the first in the world to openly and scientifically study human sexuality in an inclusive way, where Hirschfeld is credited with carrying out the first advocacy for homosexual and transgender rights. In old newsreels of young Nazi students throwing books on bonfires. The most famous one happened on the Opernplatz and used the Institute's books. Hirschfeld was out of the country at the time and sick with malaria. One of the book burners was heard to say, "Well, then hopefully he'll snuff it without our doing anything; we won't even need to string him up or beat his brains out."

TOTAL PERSECUTION OF HOMOSEXUALS

As with some other aspects of the regime the Nazi anti-homosexual efforts were not so public. On October 10, 1936 Heinrich Himmler sent a secret directive on the combating of homosexuality and abortion, which created a police bureau with that charge. The memo had a note not to be printed in government documents. Himmler in 1937 observed, "Our nation will fall to pieces because of that plague. A

nation will not for long bear such a destruction of its sexual economy." He went on to cite an older German medieval practice that lowered such men to their deaths in the marshes. This he called, "Simply the snuffing out of an abnormal life. It had to be removed much as we pull up nettles, put them in a heap and set fire to them."

In August, 1941 Hitler urged "ruthless severity" in the Wehrmacht's and the party's treating of homosexuality. "If this is done the state apparatus will remain clean." Military court martial convictions surged. A decree over the Fuhrer's signature in November, 1941 stated, "A member of the SS and Police who commits unnatural acts with another man or lets himself be abused for unnatural acts shall be punished with death." This bypassed all legal procedures. Thus the autocrat's judgment stood higher than that of any court. A Nazi theorist claimed, "The Fuhrer safeguards the law from the worst abuse when, at the moment of danger, he uses his leadership as supreme judge to make law directly." Himmler directed that SS homosexuals should be taken to a "concentration camp and there shot while attempting to escape."

Printed among the documents is a Form B for registering homosexuals. The effort was implemented by many police offices. Kassel Criminal police headquarters in Hesse wrote

to have their local guidelines on pursuing "the struggle against homosexuality and abortions with all permissible means." The Kassel office saw that the national orders "enjoin a ruthless and far-reaching struggle against male homosexuality" as part of "the preservation and boosting of the strength of the German Volk."

Thuringia SS-Sturmabfuhrer sought from Himmler a list of 100 classified homosexuals of his area for research to determine hereditary factors. Another psychological institute in Berlin sought reports on treatments for homosexuals. The Weimar prosecutor felt "the scourge is being successfully combated, at least in this district." Actual prosecutions for criminal acts of homosexuality rose from about 800 a year at the end of the Weimar period to 8,000 a year under the Nazis.

For Nazi Germany, politics had become all encompassing, with the nationalistic goals of the Volk paramount and with the state wielding coercive authority. This was done through executive directives, propaganda, and willing local officials. The Nazis sought to "align" (understand as abolish) all private social institutions, like the many unions, multiple youth groups, and associations that had buffered private space from the state. Gays and lesbians had also to be "aligned" with nationalistic Nazi goals and would suffer accordingly for failing to do so.

BRINGING IT HOME

The house in which I live in Madison used to be the home of Keith McCutcheon and Joe Koberstein. Joe's niece preserved a stash of Keith's writings and returned them to Jenifer Street where they have aided my research. One of the most amazing things I found was that, in the late 1930s, McCutcheon wrote about a young German by the name of Karl, with a "handsome face; the blue eyes like the Danube river, and the hair blonde as the sunset gold."

Karl was not a Nazi but like many of the early gay rights campaigners, he was a socialist. Karl with his fellows "had to meet in out-of-the-way places, to play music, to sing, to write, and to talk about life and love." Then McCutcheon wrote about Karl being taken to a camp. "I have only horrible rumors of what they did to young men in the camp."

Thanks to modern scholarship, we know more than just rumors of what an autocratic state did—and can do—to those it deems unworthy or unnatural. ■



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

GAY HISTORY

Activism, Outreach & Art: Collecting Jimi Reinke

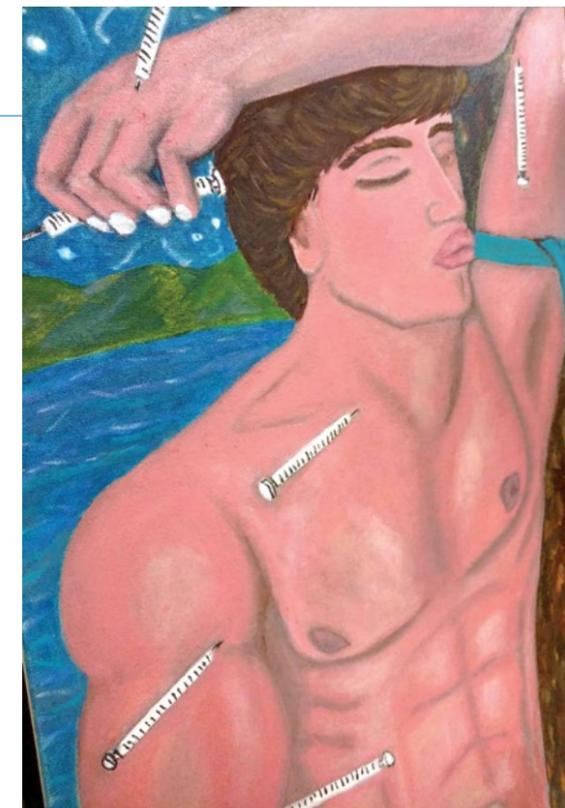
Submitted by Katie Nash, University Archivist and Head of UW Archives

The Madison LGBTQ Archive recently acquired a collection of poetry, art work, artifacts, newspaper articles, exhibit panels, and other biographical documents related to the life and work of Jimi Reinke.

Reinke was an artist, activist, and long-time AIDS Prevention Specialist for the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin. He is probably most well known for his efforts with ARC's Lifepoint Needle Exchange program, working to prevent the spread of AIDS and Hepatitis C through shared needles, and preventing opiate overdose through the first Narcan distribution system in the state. Providing outreach where it was needed, Reinke drove a van daily, meeting users at their preferred location to swap out dirty needles for free clean needles and other supplies. He would make over 2,500 stops a year, swapping out over 300,000 syringes.

The LGBTQ Archive is delighted to have Reinke's work, art, and activism represented in the collection. The Madison LGBTQ Archive is a community archive maintained and accessible through UW Archives at Steenbock Library, UW-Madison. We are always looking for new donations of material. If you have something you're interested in donating, please contact us by sending an email to uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu, or calling us at 608-262-5629. ■

Photo credit: Artwork by Jimi Reinke, undated. Image courtesy of University Archives LGBTQ Archive, University of Wisconsin-Madison.





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QTPOC OPPRESSION SOLIDARITY

Oppression Analogies

This is the third in a series of advice columns aimed at answering questions to help white LGBTQ people become more knowledgeable comrades to queer and trans people of color. **Dr. Sami Schalk** tackles the comparisons between types of oppression.

Dear Sami,

Sometimes white queer people try to bond(?) with me by saying that because they've experienced homophobia, they understand racism. Can you please tell them to stop?

Sincerely, No More Analogies

DEAR QUEER WHITE PEOPLE,

When you compare your experiences with homophobia to a person of color's experience with racism, you're probably trying to say, "We both experience oppression. This society harms and rejects people like you in ways that are similar to how it harms and rejects people like me, so I want you to know that I see our struggles as connected."

What comes across in these comparisons, however, is sometimes something more like, "Hey person of color, our oppressions are basically the exact same thing so I understand your experiences and don't need to learn anything; I already get it because I'm queer."

Let's break down some reasons why comparing oppressions can be problematic:

The first problem with these oppression analogies is that they often erase the experiences of those of us who are multiply marginalized by both systems of oppression being compared. If being queer is just like being Black, then what about Black LGBTQ people (I would bring up this same issue to straight people of color who compare their experiences with racism to our experiences with homophobia as well)? Oppressions aren't the same even if the ways different oppressions manifest are sometimes similar. People of color and queer people may all be under-represented in mainstream media, but the reasons for this invisibility differ. People

Feedback & Questions Wanted

Do you or someone you know have a question that could be addressed in a future column, or if you or someone you know might be interested in providing the response to a future question, please email: DearQueerWhitePeople@gmail.com.



Discussing the similarities and differences between types of oppression can be a way of building solidarity, but the emphasis must be on understanding and coalition building, not displaying one's wokeness.

of color and queer people may all be subjected to state violence, but what that violence looks like and how it is justified in the eyes of the nation are different.

This brings us to the second problem with oppression analogies: oppressions take shape differently based on our multiple identities, historical moment, and geographic and cultural locations. Your experience with homophobia/transphobia/biphobia is shaped not only by your sexuality and gender, but also your race, your class, your disability status, and all the particularities of where you grew up and when. While racism, homophobia, (cis)sexism, and ableism have existed in various ways throughout U.S. history, these discriminatory ideologies have been built into social, political, and economic systems in different ways over time.

So when you tell a person of color, especially a QTPOC, that you understand racism because you've experienced homophobia/transphobia/biphobia, what manifestation of racism are you talking about? The one you learned about in high school history books? The one you saw in a documentary last

year? Oppression is not static. Discussing the similarities and differences between types of oppression can be a way of building solidarity, but the emphasis must be on understanding and coalition building, not displaying one's wokeness. If you're trying to demonstrate solidarity, first think about what you're trying to communicate.

Are you trying to tell a person of color that you relate to something they have just shared with you? If so, you could say, "I can relate to that because of this similar-but-different experience I've had," and then share the details of that specific experience. Make clear that what you want this person to know is that you empathize with them, not that you're trying to make the conversation about you or about queerness instead of race.

Are you using this oppression analogy as a way of letting a person of color know that you, too, have a marginalized identity? In this case, I recommend that you don't. Rather than using your LGBTQ identity as a stand-in for ally (because let's be clear, plenty of white queer people are not allies)—just be an ally. Listen to that person, support them, try to figure out what they want and need out of the conversation with you. Or just come out to them without the analogy.

Are you using an oppression analogy because you're still learning about racism? Remember, people of color do not exist to teach you. If you are trying to learn, don't ask a stranger or acquaintance to be part of your learning unless that's literally what the person is there to do (like the facilitator of a workshop on race). If the person you're speaking with is your friend or partner, ask if you can talk to them about race (privately, in a situation where they are safe to say no). If they say yes, make sure your question is not something that can be answered by Google and always thank them for their time and energy.

In the end, oppression analogies are rarely the best way to communicate solidarity or empathy between marginalized groups. It's better to avoid them and instead work to communicate clearly with people of color as individuals rather than as representatives of their race.

Your local fierce Black femme,
Sami ■



DR. SAMI SCHALK is an Assistant Professor of Gender & Women's Studies at UW-Madison. Her research focuses on disability, race, and gender in contemporary American literature and culture, especially African American literature, speculative fiction, and feminist literature.

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TRANSGENDER MILITARY POLITICS

The Right to Serve

Attorney **Abby Churchill** breaks down the recent legal battles over the right of transgender people to serve openly in the U.S. military.

IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE that most cases take years before they are heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. However, since Trump's initial tweets about banning transgender individuals from serving in the military, there have been a number of procedural moves made by the Trump Administration in order to move quickly toward reinstating the ban.

In order to better understand how this decision got into the courts and in front of the U.S. Supreme Court so quickly, let's break it down:

In June 2016, the Obama Administration ended a ban on transgender individuals serving openly in the military. However, the policy was still under final review one year later, which allowed for the Trump Administration to delay the implementation of the Obama-era plan. Then, in July of 2017, Trump tweeted his decision to reinstate the ban. This was followed shortly by a Presidential Memorandum affirming the reversal of the previous policy and reinstating the ban as of early 2018.

On behalf of numerous transgender servicemembers, complaints were filed in four federal district courts around the country that challenge the decision to reverse the policy. The complaints asserted that this ban would specifically and directly harm the servicemembers, some of whom had been serving in the military for decades, and that it would violate their constitutional rights. They all requested that the Administration be prevented from enforcing the ban on them.

If the Supreme Court had ruled on the merits of the cases, it would have answered the ultimate question: whether the ban on transgender individuals serving openly in the military is a violation of one's constitutional rights.

In response to this complaint, the judge in each case blocked the ban from being implemented (i.e. granted a preliminary injunction), pending further review. The judges determined in each case that the ban likely violated the constitutional rights of all transgender individuals nationwide who are willing to and/or currently serving in the military.

After Trump followed Secretary of Defense James Mattis' recommendation, the Administration brought a revised policy to those same four courts, arguing, amongst other claims, that the circumstances had changed so dramatically in the case because of the revised policy that the rationale for implementing the preliminary injunction was no longer valid. The courts disagreed, stating that the revised policy was the same in substance and, as such, had the same impact as the initial policy. Because of this, the injunctions remained intact despite multiple attempts by the Administration to dissolve them.

On January 22, 2019, in a 5-4 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled two of the three remaining preliminary injunctions. The

Administration did not request the Court to review one of the decisions; because of this, as of February 2, there is still a nationwide prohibition on the ban being implemented. It is expected that the judge in this matter will dissolve the injunction because of the Supreme Court ruling.

While the Court did allow for the revised policy to be implemented pending further litigation in the lower courts, the Court did not rule on the merits of the cases. If the Supreme Court had ruled on the merits of the cases, it would have answered the ultimate question: whether the ban on transgender individuals serving openly in the military is a violation of one's constitutional rights.

The strategy to "skip over" the Court of Appeals and have the lower court's ruling reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court has been increasingly used by the Administration despite it being a rare procedural move. U.S. Supreme Court Rule 11 specifically allows to request that the Court review a case while it's still pending in a federal court of appeals. This request will only be granted upon a showing that the matter is of imperative public importance. Since this matter was taken up by the Supreme Court, it means that the Court considered the question of whether the preliminary injunctions were improper of imperative

public importance. Some have suggested that this, combined with the Court's actual decision on the preliminary matter, could be indicative of how the conservative majority will rule if the case comes back on appeal for a decision on the merits.

There are many complications with the general trajectory of the litigation, and you can expect to see more as it continues. While these issues continue to get sorted out by the courts, what is clear is that, barring some extraordinary circumstances, the ban will be implemented in the very near future. After that, I have to hope that the Administration will continue to harness the same momentum as the cases continue. Moreover, I have to hope that despite the 5-4 conservative majority on the Supreme Court, the ban will be found unconstitutional. ■



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



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Baker, Heal Thyself

Musician **Shawn Bolduc** of **Fork'n Cake** is finding a new sense of purpose—and a potential new career—in the world baked goods.



THERE SHE WAS, unlike any woman I had ever seen in my short life: tall, strong, and striking, with impeccable taste in décor and fashion. My very own patron saint. As she walked across my TV screen, I sat in awe of her presence. It was an image I would not soon forget.

Growing up in Southeastern Massachusetts I never quite fit into a conventional mold. From my obsession with playing dress up, to my life in the theater, I was born with a flare for the dramatic.

The second of two boys from a much larger Catholic family, my parents were forced to reexamine what it meant to raise a son in a world overrun by strict gender norms. Though sports had been on the docket for my older brother, there was very little ball-throwing in my future. From the second I could walk and talk I was producing my very own elaborate living-room productions. From Broadway to magic shows, you never knew what would be on the bill on a given night.

When Martha Stewart appeared on TV that morning, I remember feeling an intense attraction but I didn't know why. Who was this woman? She surely had something to teach me but I wouldn't discover this quiet yet.

Around the age of eight I discovered the piano. I begged my parents for one. Most kids my age were pleading for a dog or a cat, but no, I needed a piano, promised I would treat it with respect and appreciation it deserved.

PHOTO BY THOMAS YONASH.

In the end, they relented. I'm certain that, at times, my parents regretted the offer to acquire the family piano. I must have driven them mad teaching myself this instrument for hours on end. The piano, little did I realize, would play a large role in my early childhood through my mid-20s.

Shortly following my undergraduate career studying music, I moved into the most difficult stretch of time in my early adulthood. Through a series of incredible encounters I had found my way from Massachusetts to St. Louis, and to Broadway. I had just finished working on the Broadway revival of "Ragtime" when I found myself back at my parents house working at a local coffee shop. I felt defeated. I was struggling to navigate my career in the arts.

It was during that time that I rediscovered Martha Stewart. I was perusing a bookstore when I ran across one of her cookbooks. There she was: Poised and confident while holding the neatest stacked cake. She would, unexpectedly, help me through this difficult chapter in life.

With the acquisition of *Martha Stewart's Baking Handbook*, I spent endless hours making tart doughs and puff pastry from scratch. I learned to make delectable pastry cream, and how to stack and frost layer cakes. It was as if every word on those pages had been written for me. She kept me calm, focused, and through these recipes I found purpose again. Through my explorations in the kitchen, I ended up reigniting my passion for the arts and for learning generally that would propel me to seek more from my professional career.

About two years ago when I rediscovered my passion for baking, I had earned a Masters degree in Arts Administration and I had entered the next chapter of my professional career. Perhaps I was beginning a new journey in the kitchen, or picking up where I left off with an old one. I can say for sure that I never could have imagined the amount of joy baking would bring to my life.

In the kitchen I have the opportunity to unleash my creative side. The rules that structure my life are nonexistent there. I create new ones. In the end I have something to share with friends and family, building relationships and bonds that reach beyond all things that make us individuals.

Sharing my passions for food, community, and arts through hand-made baked goods has been therapeutic. It provides an opportunity for me to wash away the stress caused by any number things. Through baking I've discovered the importance of work/life balance. It's healing. When I bake, I'm not expected to live up to impossible or unnecessary expectations. In these moments I am my most authentic self, and through these experiences I become a more complete person.

Martha Stewart once said, "Our passion is and always should be to make life better." Through baking and the community I've found within it, I've come to believe that's absolutely the truth.

See more of Shawn's creations at [instagram.com/forkncake](https://www.instagram.com/forkncake). ■



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Rewriting the Story

Growing up as a Black child of two white moms, **Sarah Stouffer-Lerch** struggled to understand why the world didn't understand or often accept her family. Now she's rewriting the narrative that was imposed on her into one of love and resilience.

MY ACTIVISM began in the cradle. As a baby, I was adopted by two wonderful, loving women. Although the situation was perfectly normal for me, growing up, the world was not used to a Black toddler doted on by two white ladies, and who, when asked, referred to those two white ladies as “my mommies.” When people inevitably asked what it was like to have two moms, I just shrugged and smiled.

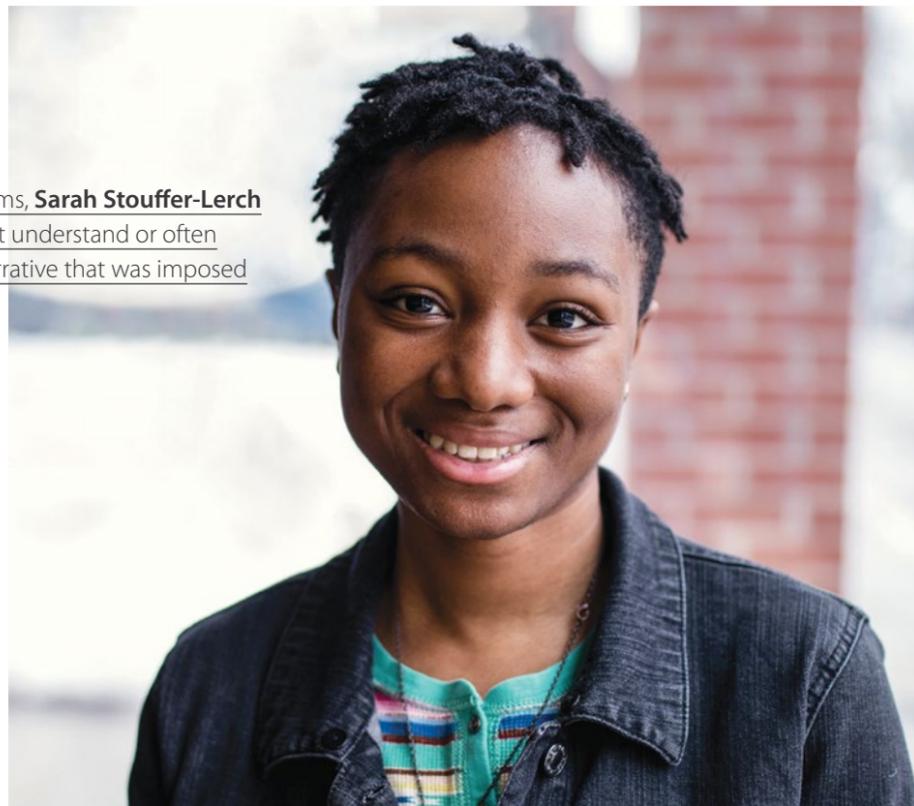
I was a quiet kid. A shrug and a smile are not sufficient to tell people how *average* it is to have two moms (average being meant in the best sense of the word).

To properly explain what it is like to have two moms, I have to go back to the first time I remember realizing how hard the world makes it for members of the LGBTQ community to forget that they are the minority.

It was 2014. Wisconsin had finally made same-sex marriage legal! All across the state and the nation Pride flags were being flung out windows or wrapped around joyful couples. News stations showed same-sex couples kissing passionately and said it was a great day for America, a great day for equality. And it was; my parents were married that day.

As a child of a same-sex couple, however, I could not help feeling sad amidst all that jubilation. I could not understand all the celebration when my parents had been together for over 20 years, and in those 20 years had seen straight friends elope, renew their vows, celebrate wedding anniversaries—and yet they were only just being allowed to marry. Not only had marriage, a basic right and a tangible expression of love, been withheld from them, but their love and obvious commitment to the other had gone legally unprotected. The worst part was they were not the only ones that dealt with that.

The entire struggle of the LGBTQ+ rights movement has been a fight to achieve equality. *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and the subsequent legalization of gay marriage, are monumental events, but they do not change the fact that too many LGBTQ+ individuals are living lives



where they perpetually feel “othered.” Even as a toddler, I knew the difference between people genuinely interested in my gay parents and those who weren't. The latter wanted an answer to feed a narrative that I call “The Story.” The Story is the very same story that caused Stonewall, shamed HIV-positive individuals, perpetuates trans and homophobia, and kept me in the closet.

The Story tells us, told me, that we are not entitled to and do not own our own feelings. The Story says the reason why the history of the gay rights movement is so painful is because it is shameful to be queer. And despite my deep-rooted love and appreciation for my parents, I believed The Story, and so I hid my bisexuality from myself and those I loved.

But there is another side to The Story, and it is the one that queer folks get to tell for themselves. For 16 years, I thought I had to internalize all the hurt of the past, even hurt that was not my own. Once I realized that was not the case, I was able to realize the true significance of the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Since last year, I've been heavily involved with GSAFE after volunteering at their annual Celebration of Leadership. There, I found an incredible network of supportive, welcoming people who encouraged me to share my story. After that, I attended GSAFE's Leadership Training Institute where I met other outspoken

activists my age, and learned ways to support the LGBTQ+ community in my own school. I am forever grateful to all the mentors and friends I met at LTI, who showed me living a life of honesty and staying true to yourself is the best way to be out and queer.

Along with volunteering at GSAFE, I stay true to myself by being active in multiple facets of the community. By sharing my poetry at open mic nights, joining writing clubs, helping out at pet shelters, and marching in the Pride Parade, I have come a long way from the girl who used to just shrug and smile when people asked what it is like to have two moms.

Hearing my moms describe their friends who died from AIDs-related diseases in the 1990s, and how hard the state of Wisconsin fought the legality of me and my brother's adoption, also helps me stay true and focused. It is also having two strong women role models who are comfortable with their “otherness” and still go about being perfectly average. It is knowing things have been worse, but will get better. It is carrying the history of the LGBTQ+ rights movement inside me every day. It is living our lives the best way we know how.

Most importantly, it is knowing that every time someone asks you what having two moms is like, you have the opportunity to rewrite The Story into one that shows the resilience, uniqueness, and pride of the queer community. ■

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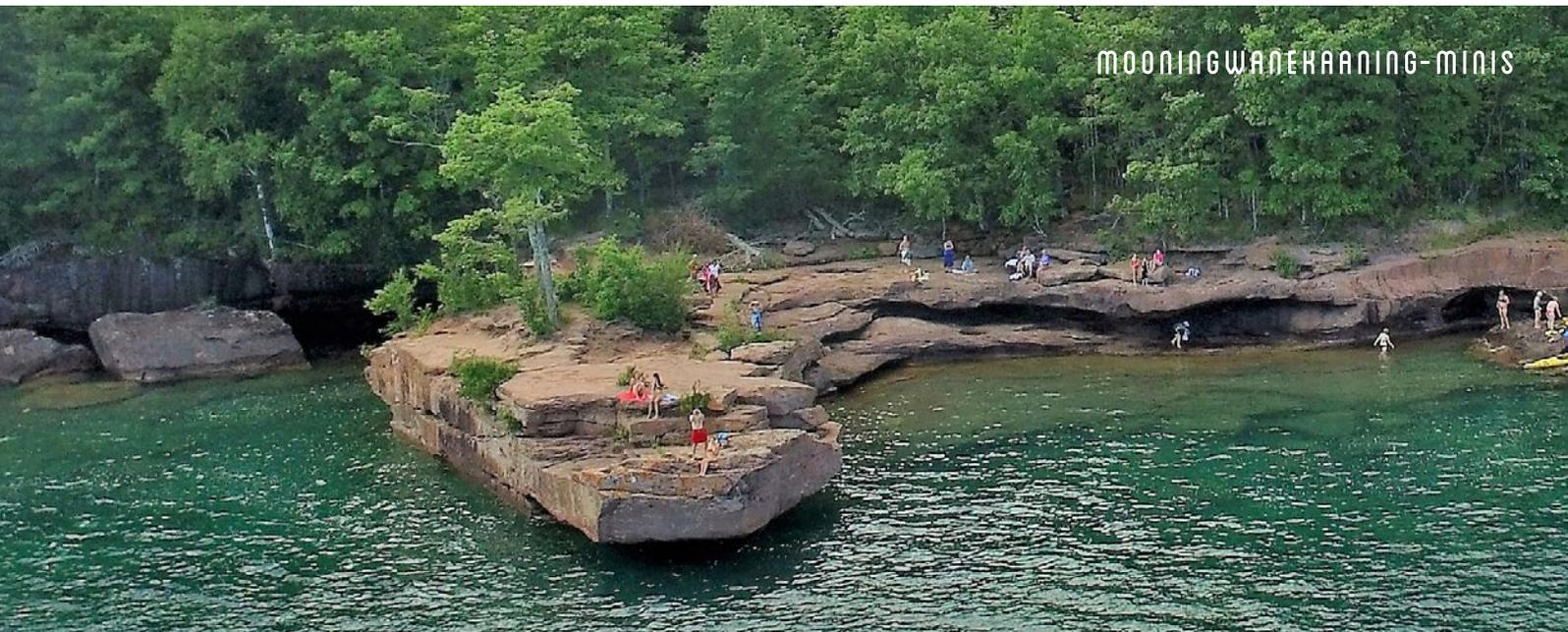
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