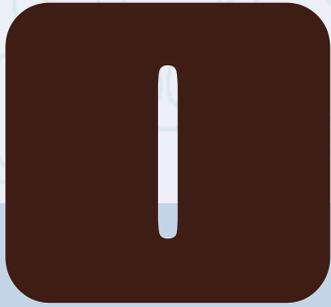


our lives



24

Raine Stern



22

Travis Lynch



50

Antonio Wu & Maggie Di Sanza

# FOOD & DINING

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

**DIRECTORY:** LGBTQ-owned & operated restaurant list



## THE ATTACK ON TRANS ATHLETES

An in-depth look at the legislation the Wisconsin GOP are advancing against transgender athletes.

p.9

# SIP, SAVOR, REPEAT

Andrea Hillsey

After years of success on Capitol Square, Square Wine Co. grows into its new space.

May/June 2021

# Fix Up Your Fixer-Upper.

**Have home projects you've been putting off?** Then it's time for a home equity line of credit, from UW Credit Union. It's a flexible, affordable way to finance all your big plans — whether you need ongoing access to cash, or a lump sum at once. Visit us online to apply today.



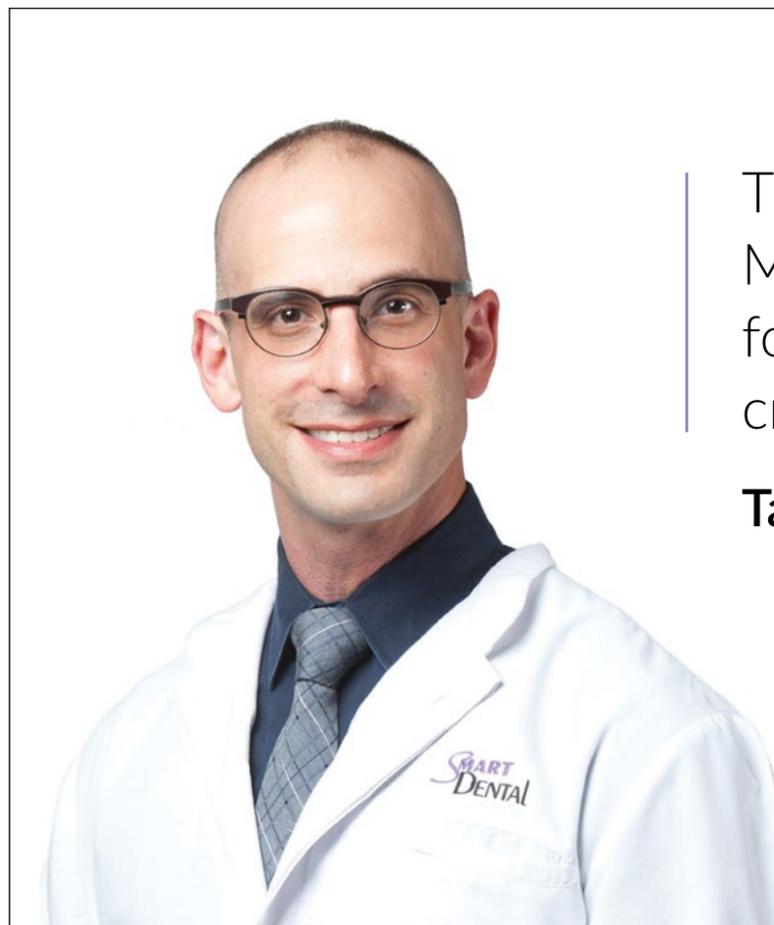
Open A Heloc Today | [uwcu.org](http://uwcu.org)



TAKE A SMART STEP TO  
A HEALTHY SMILE

**SMART DENTAL**

**CALL TODAY (608) 241-8782**



Thank you to our  
Madison community  
for 10 amazing years of  
creating healthy smiles.

**Tamim Sifri, DDS**

Learn more at  
[smardentalmadison.com](http://smardentalmadison.com)

“dear 14 year old montero, i wrote a song with our name in it. it’s about a guy i met last summer. i know we promised to never come out publicly, i know we promised to never be ‘that’ type of gay person, i know we promised to die with the secret, but this will open doors for many other queer people to simply exist. you see this is very scary for me, people will be angry, they will say i’m pushing an agenda. but the truth is, i am. the agenda to make people stay the fuck out of other people’s lives and stop dictating who they should be. sending you love from the future.”

- Lil Nas X

TABLE OF CONTENTS  **FOOD & DINING**  MAY / JUNE 2021

## DEPARTMENTS

- 5 **ADVERTISER DIRECTORY**
- 6 **PUBLISHER'S NOTE & CONTRIBUTORS**
- 7 **OUR READERS**

## FEATURES

- 32 **UNCORKING HAPPINESS**  
Andrea Hillsey runs the successful Square Wine Co. on the Capitol Square.
- 36 **WE'RE STILL HERE**  
**DIRECTORY:** Queer third spaces and other food-related businesses led by members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- 44 **YUMMY, YUMMY**  
R. Richard Wagner takes us on a culinary tour of gay mid-Century cooks.

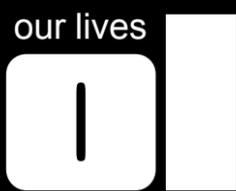
## CONNECT

- 9 **LET US PLAY**  
Wisconsin's anti-transgender sports bills strike at a fragile moment in LGBTQ politics.
- 15 **NEWS BRIEFS**
- 20 **OUR ADVOCATES**  
OutReach LGBT Community Center Executive Director Steve Starkey.
- 22 **OUR ENTERTAINERS**  
Bisexual Milwaukee entertainer Travis Lynch.
- 24 **OUR ENTERTAINERS**  
Local musical prodigy Raine Stern.
- 28 **OUR LOSSES**  
Sami Schalk unpacks the process of pandemic grief.

## IMPROVE

- 46 **OUR INTERSECTIONS**  
Each year the US reports thousands of cases of missing Indigenous women and girls, with barely any media attention.
- 48 **OUR ISSUES**  
Tips for combating pandemic fatigue.
- 50 **OUR YOUTH**  
Maggie Di Sanza and Antonio Wu explore queer friendship.

Cover photo by **Ian DeGraff**



### Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Patrick Farabaugh  
**Publisher / Editor-in-Chief**

Virginia Harrison  
**Features & Copy Editor**

Stacy Harbaugh  
**Contributing News Editor**

Doug Rowe  
**Online Jobs & Events Curator**

#### Contributing Writers

Amber Ault  
Maggie Di Sanza  
Stacy Harbaugh  
Andrea Hillsey  
Travis Lynch  
Arvina Martin  
Emily Mills  
Sami Schalk  
Richard Wagner  
Antonio Wu

#### Contributing Artists

Dupree Armon  
Ian DeGraff  
Melanie Jones  
Donna Miller  
Glenda Mitchell  
Thomas Yonash

#### Social Media Team

Jill Nagler  
Doug Rowe

#### Webmasters

design.garden

#### National Advertising Sales

Rivendell Media Inc.

**Subscribers in  
450+ Wisconsin  
cities & towns**

©2021 All Rights Reserved.  
May / June 2021, Volume 14, Issue 6  
Life in the Middle Publishing, LLC  
Patrick Farabaugh, Publisher.  
PO Box 1202, Madison, WI 53701

Any reproduction of OL: Our Lives Magazine in part or in full without the written permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. OL: Our Lives Magazine shall not be held responsible for any claims made by our advertisers. Submission of photographs or other images to OL: Our Lives Magazine may be published without providing image credit. Appearance of any person, business or organization within photographs, advertisements, or editorial content neither implies nor infers any indication of their sexual orientation.

## ADVERTISER DIRECTORY



**Our Lives is a 100% ad-supported publication. We are able to exist because you support our dedicated advertising partners. To help us thank them for their support of LGBTQ people and our stories, check out their businesses whenever you need them—and specifically thank them for advertising with us. A little bit of love goes a long way!**

### A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Amidst the extraordinary strain on small businesses, these advertisers are helping to keep us publishing. If the opportunity arises, please join us in thanking them.

#### ARTS

p. 23 Forward Theater

#### ART / ARTISTS / ART SUPPLIES

p. 26 Monroe Street Framing

#### ATTORNEYS

p. 35 Balisle Family Law

#### AUTOMOBILES

p. 27 MINI of Madison

#### BANKING / FINANCIAL ADVISING

p. 25 Shannon M. Anderson  
*Ameriprise Financial*

p. 42 Dane County Credit Union

p. 45 Mike Fumelle, *Associated Bank*

p. 2 UW Credit Union

#### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

p. 19 Diverse & Resilient

p. 12 GSAFE

p. 10 New Harvest Foundation

p. 13 OPEN

p. 15 Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce

#### COUNSELING / SUPPORT

p. 49 David Lacocque, PsyD

p. 48 Alexander Einsman, MS MFT

#### FASHION

p. 7 Ulla Eyewear

#### FOOD & BEVERAGE

p. 21 Capitol Centre Market

p. 17 Delta Beer Lab

p. 33 D'Vino

p. 33 Fromagination

p. 29 The Sow's Ear

p. 37 Willy Street Co-op

#### FUNERAL SERVICE

p. 47 Ryan Funeral Home & Cremation Services

#### HEALTH/WELLNESS

p. 7 Barefoot Hands

p. 40 Dental Health Associates

p. 46 Forward Fertility, LLC

p. 21 New Health Chiropractic

p. 11 Out Health

p. 3 Smart Dental

p. 52 UW Health

p. 31 UW School of Medicine and Public Health

p. 6 Vivent Health

p. 30 Wildwood Family Clinic

p. 35 Wisconsin Fertility Institute

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

p. 51 Madison College

#### INSURANCE

p. 5 Colleen Frentzel Agency  
*American Family Insurance*

p. 5 David Ryan-Sukup  
*American Family Insurance*

p. 41 Jim Hartman, *State Farm*

p. 49 Quartz Health Solutions

#### INTERIOR DESIGN / HOME

p. 43 Bethke Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.

p. 17 Chad's Design Build

p. 38 Ganshert Nursery

p. 43 Kool View

p. 34 MaraLee Olson Design Studio

p. 29 Quigley Decks & Cable Rails

p. 41 Time 2 Remodel

#### I.T. / INTERNET / WEB SERVICES

p. 44 5 Nines

#### JEWELERS

p. 14 Goodman's Jewelers

p. 6 Jewelers Workshop

#### MEDIA

p. 47 Towns & Associates, Inc

#### PAPER SUPPLIES & CARDS

p. 29 Anthology

#### PETS

p. 34 Angel's Wish

p. 28 Bad Dog Frida

p. 39 EarthWise Pet Supply

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

p. 46 Dutcher Photography

p. 48 Dulcy Dog Photography

p. 18 Melanie Renee Photography

#### REALTY

p. 4 Vivienne Anderson

p. 39 Lauer Realty Group

#### SPIRITUAL

p. 48 First United Methodist Church

#### UTILITIES

p. 8 Madison Gas & Electric

#### WEDDINGS

p. 25 Brandi's Bridal Galleria



## AS YOUR DREAMS EVOLVE, WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

Whether you're buying your first car or your retirement home, American Family Insurance is with you every step of the way, ensuring that your dreams are always protected.



**Colleen Frentzel, Agent**  
4407 Milton Ave Ste 110  
Janesville, WI 53546  
cfrentze@amfam.com  
(608) 302-4101



**David Ryan-Sukup, Agent**  
514 Grand Canyon Dr  
Madison, WI 53719  
dryansu1@amfam.com  
(608) 833-1717



American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies,  
American Family Insurance Company,  
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783  
008747 - Rev. 12/15 ©2015 - 11827798



**VIVIENNE ANDERSEN  
REALTOR®**

V@VIVIENNEANDERSEN.COM  
608 425 0929



# ALL CAUSES HAVE **ADVOCATES.** BUT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV ONLY **A CHAMPION** WILL DO.

Introducing **Vivent Health**, founded on the combined expertise of AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, Rocky Mountain CARES and St. Louis Effort for AIDS. And steadfastly dedicated to serving anyone and everyone affected by HIV through our comprehensive prevention, care and treatment programs. **Learn more at [ViventHealth.org](http://ViventHealth.org)**



## PUBLISHER'S LETTER PATRICK FARABAUGH



### ONE YEAR LATER

**ONE YEAR AGO** while beginning work on this issue, I started getting email after email from advertisers either suspending or canceling their campaigns with us. The lockdown had hit and businesses were either shutting down or significantly scaling back. I had just signed contracts worth tens of thousands of dollars for an aggressive statewide expansion, and all of a sudden everything



started contracting. Beyond that, fate dealt us the added misfortune of our next issue being our Food & Dining annual. Normally it's one of our biggest, but under the circumstances, it was now centering the industries perhaps the most financially impacted by the onsetting pandemic.

Looking back, I'm incredibly proud of pulling off that issue. Other media were either suspending publishing, or going under. Our revenue fell over 50%. I think the only thing that saved *Our Lives* at the time was that we're a skeletal operation at

best, and able to quickly expand or contract on demand. Even so, that issue set the tone for what's probably been our most volatile year.

One year later, you're holding our Food & Dining issue in your hands again. Our community has lost some of the queer-owned restaurants that were in this issue a year ago. Revenue is still significantly down. But it's slowly coming back. Our expansion has transitioned into phases. We've adapted, become more resilient, and I would argue that surviving 2020 has made us even bolder in our commitment to be a radical agent of equity and change. Thank you for coming along on this bumpy ride and growing with us. ■

## CONTRIBUTORS



**STACY HARBAUGH** is a freelance writer and marketing specialist with over a decade and a half of experience in nonprofit communications and advocacy. She is the Social Media and Community Specialist for designCraft Advertising where she supports the marketing and public relations efforts of local businesses and nonprofits. In her free time she hones her DJ skills by playing polka and vintage soul and pop records, and celebrates the cozier side of our community @DaneCozy on Instagram. Professional connections are welcome on LinkedIn.

**DOUG ROWE** is a creative freelancer and holds an MS in Accountancy from the Wisconsin School of Business. They were introduced to peer-to-peer storytelling-based activism after coming out at a young age and carried that experience into several years of service with Proud Theater. Doug has continued to use art and storytelling to humanize conversations about topics like incarceration, the harm of drug prohibition, depression, and being transgender.

## OUR READERS

[OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM](http://OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM)



## MILWAUKEE, WI

### Daniel Koplitz & Joseph Krohlow

**TOGETHER SINCE:** December 6, 2017

**DANIEL:** Breakfast is the time of day we can always count on seeing one another, and with that consistency, it can be easy to take for granted. Most days, Joey gets up about 20 minutes before me to start cooking, and by the time I've gotten out of bed, made it up, and got dressed, he's plated a delicious meal that we enjoy together at my great-grandparents' dining table. (If I'm up earlier, I'm notorious for giving him little shoulder nibbles and tight hugs from behind, playfully distracting him from his cooking.) This is our dedicated time to connect with one another before going our separate ways for work each day. It's not always connection through words—sometimes it's just our eyes, our body language, our energy saying, "I love you, and I'm so glad I got to wake up to you another day."

**JOSEPH:** I'm never bored with Danny. They're constantly curating, disciplining, and sifting through themselves (as well as the apartment's décor). It's a gift to be in love with someone who embodies passion, someone who takes hours to comb through every single item at the thrift store, someone who always takes the extra step past satisfactory towards extraordinary. Danny is someone who cares—and cares deeply. I marvel at the human I've fallen in love with every time they stop and greet the birds, or try to coax the houseplants out of their depression. It's a blessing to start and end each day with this pair of puppy dog eyes that I have come to call "babe." I can't wait to discover more of you in our days to come.



## Escape the Ordinary!

Experience Barefoot Hands Difference.

Barefoot Hands Bodywork is Madison's provider of the original Ashiatsu and Sarga Bodywork. Now offering MediCupping Therapy.

### Al Poliarco

Licensed Bodywork & Massage Therapist

Certified:

- Ashiatsu - Deepfeet™ Therapist
- Sarga Bodywork™ Practitioner
- MediCupping™ Therapist

Ashi-Thai Bodywork Practitioner  
Instructor | Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga

[barefoothands.com](http://barefoothands.com)

(608) 770-1022  
[barefoothands@gmail.com](mailto:barefoothands@gmail.com)

"I love working at Ulla Eyewear, because I get to interact with people from all walks of life, helping them pick out the perfect pair of glasses fitting their personality, lifestyle, and above all, needs."

Mitch Roberts  
Optician



**ULLA**  
EYEWEAR

HILDALE SHOPPING CENTER  
562 N Midvale Blvd  
MON-SAT 10a-6p : SUN 11a-4p  
[www.ullaeyewear.com](http://www.ullaeyewear.com)



## JEWELERS WORKSHOP



**YOU DREAM IT  
WE MAKE IT!**

EXPERTS IN CUSTOM DESIGN & REPAIRS

ACT TODAY  
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Living in  
**BALANCE**  
POWERED BY MGE



Watch Now  
[www.livinginbalancemadison.com](http://www.livinginbalancemadison.com)



OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



OUR NEWS

Leading News & Top Stories



Protesting the bills outside the Capitol.



Hockey player Randi Hagen.



A billboard in Milwaukee funded by Women's Liberation Radio News.



Dittrich introducing the bills at the Capitol.

## Let Us Play

Wisconsin's anti-transgender sports bills strike at a fragile moment in LGBTQ politics. The legislation builds on specious narratives about transgender people invading women's spaces.

GENDER IDENTITY | LAWS & POLITICS | SPORTS | FALSE FLAGS

**WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS** recently introduced two bills that would force schools to ban transgender and non-binary students from participating in sports according to their gender identity.

The bills, jointly and misleadingly called the "Protecting Women in Sports Act," would impact all schools that receive federal aid, including public K-12 schools, independent charters, private choice institutions, the University of Wisconsin System, and technical colleges. They would prohibit transgender students from participating in organized sports, unless a team or program is specifically designated as "co-ed."

Introduced in early March by lead author Rep. Barbara Dittrich (R-Oconomowoc), the bills align with almost identical legislation currently being pushed in dozens of state houses across the country. According to the ACLU, so far this year some 28 states have introduced legislation that would prohibit transgender students from participating in sports. There are dozens of anti-LGBTQ bills now pending across the country, including many that go so far as to seek to make it a felony to provide gender-affirming medical care to transgender youth.

In an April interview on WISN's "Upfront," Assembly Speaker Robin Vos voiced his clear support.



**NEW HARVEST**  
FOUNDATION

funding wisconsin's LGBTQ+ communities since 1984

## EMERGENCY FUNDING

need-based, micro-grant funding for LGBTQ+ nonprofits impacted by COVID-19

apply online  
[bit.ly/NHFCovidGrant](http://bit.ly/NHFCovidGrant)

## DONATE

tax-deductible donations, workplace contributions, and planned giving during a time of need

contact us for questions

[info@newharvestfoundation.org](mailto:info@newharvestfoundation.org)  
[www.newharvestfoundation.org](http://www.newharvestfoundation.org)

PO Box 1786  
Madison, WI 53701-1786



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

[OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM](http://OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM)



"We're going to have a hearing on it, we're going to move that legislation forward," Vos said. "I think it's something that is broadly supported by the public that we want to ensure that folks have a right to compete but they don't have an unfair advantage just because of a choice they're making."

New polling commissioned by the Human Rights Council and released in March, however, paints a starkly different picture, with 73% of people saying they believe trans kids should be able to play on teams where they feel most comfortable, including 56% of Republicans. The poll also showed support for the Equality Act, federal legislation to provide equal protections for LGBTQ people and women, at 70%.

The legislative push comes in tandem with attempts to spread a false narrative that transgender people are dangerous and seeking to invade women's spaces, including everything from public restrooms to sports.

As in many cases, proponents of the bills are attempting to cast themselves as advocates for women and girls, and their opponents as somehow anti-woman, which Rep. Ditttrich explicitly did during a March 2 press conference.

"I think if the governor really cares about women, he absolutely should advance this legislation and there should be no reason why it doesn't go anywhere, unless he's a sexist," she said.

Randi Hagen, a Madison resident, transgender woman, and hockey athlete who plays with the Madison Dread Pirates, was clear in her rebuttal: "I am a woman, and this bill does not protect me. I am a woman, and this bill will harm me."

Gov. Tony Evers released his own statement as soon as the bills were introduced. "My message to Wisconsin's transgender kids and students today is simple: You are welcome, you are wanted, and you belong." It's a clear sign that Evers would veto the bills if they make it to his desk, though the Republican majority in the Legislature could override the veto, as recently happened in Arkansas.

At a small, pro-trans rally held outside the Capitol to counter Ditttrich's press conference, the message was unequivocal. Brian Juchems, Co-Executive Director of GSAFE, a statewide group that advocates for LGBTQ students, put it plainly: "Trans girls are girls. Trans boys are boys. Trans athletes benefit from participation in sports just in the same ways that cisgender students do, and they deserve to have that access and experience."

"I was cautiously optimistic that we

wouldn't get bills like this in Wisconsin, knowing that we have a governor who would not stand for it," said Fair Wisconsin Executive Director Megin McDonell, who is also the parent of a transgender teenager. "Obviously, there are people in the Legislature who decided that this is their priority anyway, in spite of the pandemic and the fact that the bill will ultimately be defeated."

McDonell points out that, just by introducing legislation like this, Republicans will further marginalize and harm transgender and

It also poisons the well of public opinion, she said, because while transgender people are suddenly more visible than ever, knowledge about and exposure to actual transgender people is, by and large, lacking.

non-binary people in the state.

"The impact on the trans community is terrible. It sends a terrible message that makes people feel unvalued, unloved, and unwelcome," she said.

Hagen echoed that sentiment in an interview later that day: "Bills like this make me think politicians like Rep. Ditttrich are actively trying to harm people like me. [For] a younger trans woman trying to find a community, or trying to use sports as a healthy outlet, [these bills] are going to demonstrably harm her."

Cathy Kimport is a transgender roller derby athlete who plays under the name Topsy Velvet. She further made the point that misleading public statements and the "separate but equal" legislation harms transgender people—those out and those not yet able to be open about who they are. It also poisons the well of public opinion, she said, because while transgender people are suddenly more visible than ever, knowledge about and exposure to actual transgender people is, by and large, lacking.

"What's so insidious about these bills is their ability to hook into people with honest questions and drag them down a path towards some dangerous conclusions," Cathy said. "In our present situation, in 2021 America, familiarity with trans people and trans issues just hasn't quite permeated through our mainstream cultural consciousness yet. And one consequence of this is that if you're a parent, you don't need to have any hate in your heart for a question like, 'Is it safe for my daughter to compete against a transgender student?' to pop into your mind. For years, online hate groups have been taking advantage of this,

using the honest questions of those unfamiliar with trans issues as an open window to throw hateful rhetoric into."

GSAFE, Fair Wisconsin, and Diverse & Resilient are working together to organize a coalition of other LGBTQ and like-minded organizations and individuals to help stand up against the legislation and speak out in support of transgender youth. So far, dozens of groups and individuals have signed on to a joint statement, with more organizing ongoing to rally youth and adult testimony against the bills.

Democrats in the Legislature released a statement in opposition immediately following Ditttrich's press conference. In a joint statement from Reps. Lee Snodgrass, Marisabel Cabrera, Greta Neubauer, Mark Spreitzer, and Sen. Tim Carpenter, they said, "Today's Republican attacks on transgender youth and children in Wisconsin continue a deeply disturbing trend of legislators seeking to limit the rights and opportunities of LGBTQ+ youth in their schools. All young people, including transgender or intersex athletes, should have the right and the opportunity to participate in organized, school-sponsored athletics consistent with their gender identity."

"Instead of attacking kids who just want to play, our Republican colleagues should get to work on COVID-19 relief for struggling Wisconsinites," the statement continued.

### PART OF A LARGER EFFORT

Nationally, as the transgender-inclusive Equality Act makes its way through Congress, anti-transgender activists are increasing their campaign to either amend the act to remove transgender protections, or defeat it entirely. Many of the bills and the campaigns behind them are being pushed and/or funded by the usual, anti-LGBTQ right-wing groups like ALEC, Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Heritage Foundation.

"Bills like this make me think politicians like Rep. Ditttrich are actively trying to harm people like me. [For] a younger trans woman trying to find a community, or trying to use sports as a healthy outlet, [these bills] are going to demonstrably harm her."

In a case of strange bedfellows, groups that claim to be in favor of women's rights often find themselves in alignment (and sometimes direct partnership) with those right-wing organizations when it comes to attacking transgender rights. An ad airing on WKOW features two well-known anti-trans activists from Madison and Milwaukee and pushes the narrative that the Equality Act needs to be amended to remove its inclusion of trans and non-binary

people from protections. The group behind the ad, Women's Liberation Radio News, has also funded a series of billboards across the country (including one in Milwaukee) that specifically targets trans participation in sports.

"This unprecedented surge of anti-transgender legislation is not being demanded by constituents," said Human Rights Campaign State Legislative Director and Senior Counsel Cathryn Oakley in a statement. "Legislators in several states have openly admitted that there is no problem happening in their states that needs addressing. We know this because trans-inclusive policies have been in place for the NCAA and the Olympics for years. Lawmakers' suggestion that student athletes are trying to game the system for competitive advantage is nonsensical and impractical. It simply does not happen. Their goal is to use these states to advance their hateful agenda, and this legislative push is being made without much care for the economic, legal, and reputational consequences these states might face in the wake of their passage."

The policies Oakley references are instructive. The NCAA has allowed transgender people to participate since 2011, with the stipulation that trans women undergo one year of hormone replacement therapy before they can join. There are no requirements of trans men. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Associ-

**OUTHEALTH**  
CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY-ONE HUMAN AT A TIME

**1st ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26TH**

**9 HOLES/4-PERSON SCRAMBLE**

**SIGN UP TODAY!**  
OUTHEALTH.ORG/UPCOMING-EVENTS ~ FACEBOOK.COM/OUTHEALTH

Don't Golf? We will have other fun activities at the After Celebration



ation's current rules differ slightly, in that they require one year of HRT for both trans men and women, as well as written certification from both a parent or guardian and a medical professional.

The International Olympic Committee has similarly allowed transgender people to compete since 2004, though with similar restrictions around hormone levels. Despite that, no transgender person has competed at the Olympics. Within the NCAA, no transgender athletes have yet risen to the top levels. Both examples, with over 15 years worth of case study, flatly disprove the current fear mongering around trans athletes somehow taking away opportunities and medals from cisgender competitors.

That didn't stop Rep. Dittrich, in a Twitter thread, from attempting to use two instances of transgender people doing well at private sporting events as justification for her bills. The Associated Press reached out to dozens of lawmakers and conservative organizations supporting similar bills across the country to ask if they had specific examples of why the legislation was needed, and "found only a few times it's been an issue among the hundreds of thousands of American teenagers who play

high school sports."

A few prominent cases of transgender youth fighting for their right to compete have come up in recent years, though, part of a larger wave toward greater visibility for transgender people. But the fact remains that transgender students, and LGBTQ youth generally, have far lower participation rates in organized sports generally, let alone the time and training to become dominant in their sport.

According to a 2018 report from the Human Rights Campaign, while 68% of straight-identified youth participate in school sports, just 24% of LGBTQ-identified students do. That same report showed that 82% of transgender youth athletes were not out to their coaches. Research from GLSEN showed that 11.3% of students reported being steered away from sports by teachers and staff specifically because of their LGBTQ identity.

Despite recent increased visibility, the existence of trans people is not new. Evidence across centuries and cultures shows people whose lived experience fits within the trans spectrum. Having common language for and understanding of that experience, as well as greater public awareness, is what's new.

"We've seen progress...and greater aware-

ness, greater exposure to trans people generally and this is the backlash" Juchems observed. "Just like the pushback around racial justice and immigrants' rights. It's this predictable pushback against any progress that actually makes improvements in people's lives." ■

## In Their Own Words

**IN TALKING WITH** several transgender athletes, similar themes emerged: the mental and physical health benefits that playing sports provide, how important it was to find a feeling of community and belonging in team sports, and how, more often than not, transgender athletes have to work just as hard—if not more so—to compete at higher levels.

Below are their interviews, reprinted in full (with minor editing for clarity):



**Cathy Kimport, aka Tippy Velvet**  
Skater and coach with Madison Roller Derby

### WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THESE BILLS (AND OTHERS LIKE THEM) BEING INTRODUCED IN WISCONSIN?

What's so insidious about these bills is their ability to hook into people with honest questions and drag them down a path towards some dangerous conclusions.

In our present situation, in 2021 America, familiarity with trans people and trans issues just hasn't quite permeated through our mainstream cultural consciousness yet. And one consequence of this is that if you're a parent, you don't need to have any hate in your heart for a question like "is it safe for my daughter to compete against a transgender student?" to pop into your mind. And for years, online hate groups have been taking advantage of this, using the honest questions of those unfamiliar with trans issues as an open window to throw hateful rhetoric into.

And make no mistake, the decision to go after sports is a calculated move. It's not about

young women in sports—in fact, a significant contingent of the people nodding their support these anti-trans bills have a history of decidedly not caring about the opportunities women and girls have to play sports. No. By formalizing this in a bill, they're using it as a vehicle to get more people asking these questions, so they can rush in and be the first to write hateful comments onto the blank slates many people have on the matter of trans people in sport. It's about pouring gasoline over their own trash fire and wafting the fumes over the entire country.

### WHY IS ACCESS TO SPORTS IMPORTANT TO YOU, PARTICULARLY IN A SPACE THAT ALIGNS WITH YOUR GENDER IDENTITY, ETC.?

It's been an all-around affirming experience. My journey with sports (and with exercise and fitness in general) is one that I can not separate from my transition journey. Prior to transitioning, I had a severe disinclination to participate in sports—the idea of being a male-presenting person who did "jock stuff" like sports or weightlifting just felt like a betrayal to my core self. But then, after transition, it was something that I saw in an entirely new light.

Transition—contrary to some of the unflattering caricatures you might see in mainstream media or, worse, on transphobic twitter feeds—is not one of an automatic affinity for all things dainty and befitting a 1950's housewife. The reality of transition is that it's a multi-faceted process of establishing a rapport with your true gender. And in my case, one facet of that was being the kind of woman eager to jump into the fray of a fast-paced full-contact sport. Things that were once anathema were now empowering, simply by approaching them from a new direction. Having roller derby leagues that accepted me, that welcomed me, that encouraged me to thrive and reach for the next level, that played a huge role in my journey to being comfortable with who I am.

Of course, it's not just what gender-affirming spaces in sports can do for trans people, it's also about what trans people bring to the sports that welcome us. You bring people into your team or your organization that have a wider range of experiences, you're strengthening the scope of the whole organization. That's what being part of a team is.

### WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE WHEN FOLKS ARGUE THAT TRANS PEOPLE HAVE AN ALLEGED "COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE" IN SPORTS?

I mean... it's an argument made in bad faith, and there's so much wrong with it, it's hard to know where to begin unpacking. Statistically speaking, science should have laid that to rest years ago. But anecdotes seem to have more power in our culture than hard science, so let

me put forth my own career arc as evidence.

My first time trying out for a team, I didn't even make the cut. The first couple years I was on a team, I was struggling to keep up. I had to put in countless hours on and off the track over four years before I was even a contender for our internationally ranked team, and even then I spent the first couple years on the fringes of that roster... it wasn't until seven years into my skating career that I really would have counted as a "notable" skater. Is that a respectable height? Something I can be proud of? Sure. But many of my cis teammates reached higher heights, in less time, and stayed there longer.

I happen to fit the stereotypical archetype that transphobic detractors inaccurately paint as the default for all trans people: I'm tall, I'm heavy, and I have a booming voice. But, of course...not all trans women are tall, or heavy, or have booming voices, nor are those things the exclusive province of transwomen. Was I able to turn these things into advantages on the track? Yeah, sure. With work. With training. That's what competitive sports are all about. We're not all robots or clones, built to the same set of specifications. We don't need to be for sports to be a fair competition.

It's easy for detractors to point out the peaks, but peaks alone are not a mountain range. Someone could cut together a reel of all my biggest hits, leaving out the myriad times I was humbled, and spin it into a false narrative that I was some kind of intractable monster on the track. It's easy to point out the trans people who have championship titles to their name, and leave out the hundreds of trans people scattered throughout the middle and bottom of the rankings.



**Tasha Lawksley**  
Roller derby athlete

### WHAT IMPACT DOES THE INTRODUCTION OF THESE BILLS HAVE ON YOU PERSONALLY?

I personally find the bills very targeting, specifically of trans women. They're discriminatory and lacking any knowledge of what actually happens to someone on puberty blockers or other hormone replacement therapy. It shows that we are not wanted, and that they want to regulate us out of participation in any physical sports or opportunities related to sports.



# IMPACT REPORT

## IN 2020, WE ACCOMPLISHED

**2,600+**  
**COMMUNITY**  
members & friends hearing  
our news via email &  
social media



**11 EVENTS**  
6 mix & mingles, 3 educational  
webinars, 2 virtual fundraisers,  
& drag queen bingo!

**\$6,600**  
**SUPPORT**  
provided to community  
organizations focused on  
social & racial justice



**10**  
**ADVOCACY**  
initiatives & partnerships  
in support of our diverse  
LGBTQ+ community

### ABOUT OPEN

OPEN provides education and information resources regarding issues of gender and sexual diversity and other issues of professional concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBTQ) individuals who live in the Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin area.

### WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN 2021?

Join as a member or become a sponsor!  
Visit [openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

## GSAFE's 25th Annual Celebration of Leadership

June 26, 2021

*A night to be among the stars*

Tickets on sale soon @  
[Gsafe2021.givesmart.com](http://Gsafe2021.givesmart.com)





WHAT DO SPORTS MEAN TO YOU? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN/HAVE ACCESS TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS GENERALLY, AND SPECIFICALLY THOSE THAT ALIGN WITH YOUR GENDER IDENTITY?

Sports haven't been the most positive space for me. I grew up presenting as male, playing in small town sports, and I didn't like most of them at all. Finding a sport like roller derby, that was inclusive, after starting transition felt wonderful. I was generally welcomed in a space where I also felt encouraged to grow. I'm enjoying sports again as who I really am and knowing that I'm not going to be bothered because of how I grew up.



Emma Cameron
Runner, member of Madison Trail Runners and November Project-Madison

WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THESE BILLS (AND OTHERS LIKE THEM) BEING INTRODUCED IN WISCONSIN?

The introduction of two anti-trans bills to the state legislature has given me a dreadful, existentially overwhelming feeling of despair for my community, especially trans youth. As a proud transgender athlete, running and participation in outdoor activity and sport are, for me, crucial aspects of my very existence. When you propose legislation that suggests that schools and sporting bodies should ban people like me from participating, you send a dark message. Your message sent to children and teens in schools, trans athletes of all ages, and the transgender community more broadly,

is that we would be better off not existing. Based on the misinformed idea that we are eroding your cisgender-given rights, you attack our very existence.

Trans people are people. Trans kids are kids. Have you ever even met a trans youth? You can listen to @chasestrangio interview Kai on Friday at Noon Central. Have you ever met a trans adult athlete? You probably have, and maybe you've never known. I'm one. Transgender and intersex people have existed for centuries, and we have participated and competed in sport as long as races and competitions have existed. And yet, trans women are not dominating in sports. Young girls who are trans are not overwhelming their cisgender counterparts.

Moreover, what is the purpose of sport? Why do we do it? I would argue that mainly, its purpose serves to spark joy for our existence, relish in the opportunity for friendly competition, pursue adventure, and explore our bodies' boundaries and limitations. Where did this notion come from of trans athletes competing with some ulterior, disingenuous motive? This question goes doubly so for children! We just want to play. Let us play.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ORGANIZED SPORTS?

Growing up, I had a lot of difficulties fitting in with any organized sports team. As a trans kid who didn't know anything about what it meant to be transgender, I felt a deep sense of discomfort with being around boys, men, and everything that entailed in terms of the attempts at male socialization. I have a memory of my dad trying to instill "traditional" beliefs about sports into me, which would have had me playing sports like football, baseball, etc. I wasn't about any of that and ended up playing mostly on soccer teams out of the sense that I had to play on some team.

As time went on, I drifted away from organized sports and found myself preferring solo activity or being outdoors with just one or two close friends. I spent a lot of time running around in the woods, honing my future love for trail and ultrarunning, and biking around the neighborhood and city with my best friend. It wasn't until I moved to Madison in 2015 that I began to find any sort of organized sports community that I felt truly included within, and that community was November Project-Madison. Honestly, I think it was the feeling of radical inclusion and acceptance within that community that prompted my comfort with being able to come out, both to myself and then

eventually my friends, family, and the wider community. Feeling accepted in an organized sports community was what prompted my ability to feel accepted within myself, my body, and my gender.

That specific feeling is why the introduction of these bills strike me with such a foreboding sense of dread and sadness. Participation in sports and access to activity outdoors is a crucial aspect to my very existence, and this feels like an existential threat to that.

WHY IS ACCESS TO SPORTS IMPORTANT TO YOU, PARTICULARLY IN A SPACE THAT ALIGNS WITH YOUR GENDER IDENTITY, ETC.?

I think access to sport is important because it's a space where we can find joy for ourselves, meaning in adventure, friendly competition, in pushing our bodies and their limitations, exploration, and more. As I described in my last answer, for me at least, it just felt fundamentally wrong to be on a team where my gender was assumed incorrectly and not affirmed.

While I think there are plenty of opportunities for "co-ed" sports where gender is less of a concern (or even community groups like November Project where there is no limitation set on gender), I do think that something about playing sports and competing in sports \*as\* my correct gender is a crucial affirmation that cisgender people are able to access without hesitation. It's something that I truly believe trans people should be provided as a matter of true respect and inclusion. We often talk about going beyond the "easy" stuff for true trans liberation, like recognizing pronouns, into the territory of things like access to affirming health care, housing, and other systemic issues. I think granting access to the correct spaces for trans people in sports is a similar notion.

If cis people are to truly, fully accept who we are, they have to go inside their heads and go beyond simply "flicking the switch" from he/him to she/her, she/her to they/them, etc. They must fundamentally recognize that the trans person in question is the gender that they say they are. If that's the case, then let us play! Let us play sports in the ways that we want to, and in the ways that align with our minds, our bodies, our genders, and our very existence.

WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE WHEN FOLKS ARGUE THAT TRANS PEOPLE HAVE AN ALLEGED "COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE" IN SPORTS?

This one is tough for me, as someone who has always been somewhat towards "the front of the pack" when it comes to running.

Pre-transition, I outright won races overall or placed in the top several people. Throughout my medical transition, I experienced how, over the years, my body wasn't able to do the same things it used to. I was slower, by a significant margin. This happened fairly rapidly, and I remember being able to compare my pre-HRT times at the Eau Claire Marathon in 2017 to the Boston Marathon in 2018 and see how they matched the "appropriate" age-graded, gendered times. In other words, my time that I used to qualify for the Boston Marathon in 2017 was 17 minutes faster than the "male" qualifying time for my age bracket. After approaching about a year on HRT, I raced at Boston in 2018 and my time was exactly 17 minutes faster than the female qualifying time for my age bracket.

All of this goes to say that I do care about whether it's "fair" for me to be competing with cisgender women. I think that it fundamentally is. All of my times are 10-15%+ slower than they used to be 5+ years ago. But ultimately, that's not what it's all about!

What it's really about, is the joy of sport. The joy of adventure, of being outdoors with like-minded people, taking our bodies to new places, to new goals, to new frontiers. When all is said and done, I can scrutinize myself

as much as I want in terms of whether it's "fair" for me to compete, but on the whole, I don't think this is the question we should be trying to answer for ourselves. The question we should instead be asking is why it feels so important for us to place limitations on fellow humans in their access to participating in the sports that give them joy, meaning, and structure to their lives.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO SEE HAPPEN AROUND THIS ISSUE IN THE FUTURE? ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

I'd like to see a future where bodies can be bodies, people can be people, and sports can be joyful. That's all I really want! Maybe there's some utopian future in which we classify participants in sports in ways other than by gender, or maybe there are times we can do away with gender classification altogether.

But for the time being, I know that gender is important to a lot of people, and it is to me in many ways as well. I hope that cis people can come to truly accept and include trans people in their spheres of understanding. Understanding that fully and completely, trans people are the genders that we say we are. We're not taking away anyone's rights by existing, by seeking out adventure and competition, by playing. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

WRITTEN BY STACY HARBAUGH

GAY MILWAUKEE JUDGE BRETT BLOMME CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

IN MARCH MILWAUKEE County Court Judge Brett Blomme, 38, was charged with seven counts of possession of child pornography. The charges are a Class D Felony, punishable by a fine of up to \$100,000 and/or a sentence of up to 25 years in prison and supervised release. Each charge also requires a mandatory minimum prison sentence of three years initial confinement.

Blomme was arrested and made an appearance before a court commissioner who determined he was a low flight risk and set a \$500 signature bond that included an order that Blomme cannot use social media or file sharing services, and cannot have unsupervised contact with children other than his own two adopted children.

Blomme was elected to the circuit court in 2020 to replace a judge who was appointed by Gov. Scott Walker. Before becoming a judge, Blomme served as CEO of the Cream City Foundation in Milwaukee. Blomme served in the juvenile justice division of the courts. After news of his arrest and criminal



Blomme

complaint, the Milwaukee court issued a statement that his cases would be conducted by another judge, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court put a temporary prohibition on his judicial salary and powers.

Reuters news service published a fact check in response to social media posts that suggested—based on right-wing news and opinion website posts—that Blomme was the president of a Drag Queen Story Hour. Reuters wrote that it was misleading to connect Blomme with DQSH when the Cream City Foundation was only the fiscal sponsor of the DQSH chapter.

VIVENT HEALTH DISCONTINUES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR 2021 WISCONSIN AIDS RIDE

AIDS RIDE WISCONSIN won't take place in the summer of 2021. Vivent Health encourages supporters to get active by participating in the AIDS Walk and 5K on May 16. Walkers and runners can fundraise in



At Goodman's, love is the most important thing!



GOODMAN'S Jewelers
The Diamond Store of Madison Since 1933



Supporting LGBTQ and Allied Businesses

Join us at our upcoming event



Virtual Coffee Connection

May 18 - 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.
Online via Remo

Free to attend. All welcome.
Find details on WisLGBTChamber.com

Get Certified



Is your business 51% or more LGBT-owned?

If yes, contact us to learn about how you can get certified as an LGBT Business Enterprise by the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

Join the Chamber

Join more than 675 businesses as a member of the LGBT Chamber

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



Join online today.
Memberships start at just \$175 a year

WisLGBTChamber.com

YOUR  
**Connection**  
TO LGBTQ WISCONSIN

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



PEOPLE



EVENTS



BUSINESSES



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



support of Vivent Health, pledge an individual walk or run, and tune into a live broadcast of celebrity performances and talks by leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Due to the COVID crisis, Vivent Health encouraged riders to donate and take solo rides throughout the summer of 2021.

WILLMA'S FUND CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH VIRTUAL EVENT

**ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY** of Willma's Fund, Outreach LGBT Center held a virtual event to raise money for their homeless services fund. Started by Director Steve Starkey's partner, Donald Haar, the fund



Haar

serves LGBTQ+ identified adults in Dane County who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. Funds can cover a wider variety of needs than other service providers, including money for rent, health care, phone bills, short-term hotel stays, food, glasses, and bus passes.



Starkey

"We help them with whatever they need now to improve their situation," said Starkey. "Clients we have helped have gotten apartments where they stayed for years. Winter hotel stays have helped people to regroup and find other resources."

The fund began when Donald held a drag show on his birthday to raise money to help those facing homelessness. He had been homeless before, had worked for the Salvation Army, and knew firsthand the struggles lesbian, gay, bisexual and particularly transgender and non-binary people face in shelters, including being victims of harassment and violence, or feeling like they have to downplay their sexual orientation or gender identity to stay safe.

"A few years ago, UW Health became a major sponsor with a \$15,000 grant," said Starkey. "Their sponsorship gave us money for the whole year. That was a big help for our fundraising. Over time it's gotten to where Outreach staff can focus on case management so we can be responsive and provide continuity for services to people when they need it."

When the COVID crisis hit, the demands for Willma's Fund services skyrocketed. To help meet the needs of those facing job and home losses, the Boys and Girls Club

of Dane County gave a grant of \$10,000, New Harvest Foundation gave \$5000, and UW Health increased their support with a \$25,000 grant. These grants, plus gifts from local donors, were quickly distributed to local community members.

The needs for services aren't as severe this spring as they were in 2020. Warmer weather, the easing of public health restrictions, and the return of jobs are signs of relief. Still, Outreach struggles to keep pace with fundraising needs to meet the demand. The organization applied for a significant grant from the City of Madison's anti-violence program. If approved, the funds would help cover basic needs for low-income individuals from June through the rest of 2021.

To make a donation to Willma's Fund in honor of Donald's birthday and the anniversary of the program, visit [outreachmadisonlgbt.org/willma-s-fund](http://outreachmadisonlgbt.org/willma-s-fund).

LOCAL BEEKEEPER JORDAN WEGNER LAUNCHES NONPROFIT HUMBLE BUMBLE BEE

**THOUGH HIS BACKGROUND** is in accounting and marketing, Jordan Wegner's passion



Wegner



for beekeeping and baking inspired him to launch Humble Bumble Bee.

"I remember eating honey cookies at my great grandmother's," says Wegner. "I started experimenting with the family recipe last Thanksgiving, and now I make cookies that are made with local, non-GMO and organic ingredients. Everything is handmade, freshly baked, and has clean ingredients."

The social entrepreneurial project offers cookies as a tool to raise awareness of the decline of the bee population across the world. Pollinators are essential to the global food system and many of our foods depend on a healthy bee population. While Wegner currently sources his honey from local beekeepers, he will be managing his own hives this year and expects to have a first harvest this fall.

"The easiest thing we can do to help save the bees is to plant more flowers," he says. "But we can also use clean, local ingredients, and eat more honey cookies."

Find Humble Bumble Bee honey cookies at Metcalfe's Hilldale location, HyVee east, or connect with the nonprofit on Facebook.



ELECTRONIC SIGN INTENTIONALLY DISPLAYS HOMOPHOBIC SLUR IN APPLETON

**IN APRIL A PRIVATELY** owned building in the City of Appleton displayed an electronic sign featuring a homophobic slur and an image of Joe McCarthy. The *Appleton Post-Crescent* reported that the sign which read "Where did the f-----s ... Put My Head?" ... "I'm Joe McCarthy (sic)" ... "I was right" prompted multiple complaints from the public.



Woodford

Appleton Mayor Jake Woodford told the *Post-Crescent* that the City could not take action against the building's owner, and the sign was protected speech. However, the Mayor and City Police parked a mobile traffic sign with the message, "Hate has no home here" in the parking lot of the Good Company restaurant next door.

WBAY-TV reporter Jason Zimmerman reported that the building is owned by Jamie Boyce. Zimmerman spoke with Boyce who claims he was quoting a Saturday Night Live sketch. Boyce owns Krieger Jewelers. Management staff of the jewelry store issued a statement distancing itself from the company's ownership.

"Public messages and statements that make any community member feel threatened or disrespected is not acceptable and we are proud of our city's community statement," Appleton Police Chief Todd Thomas said in a statement. "First Amendment rights apply to all of us, and with that right we believe there is also a responsibility (to) take ownership of your words. We are proud of ours." ■

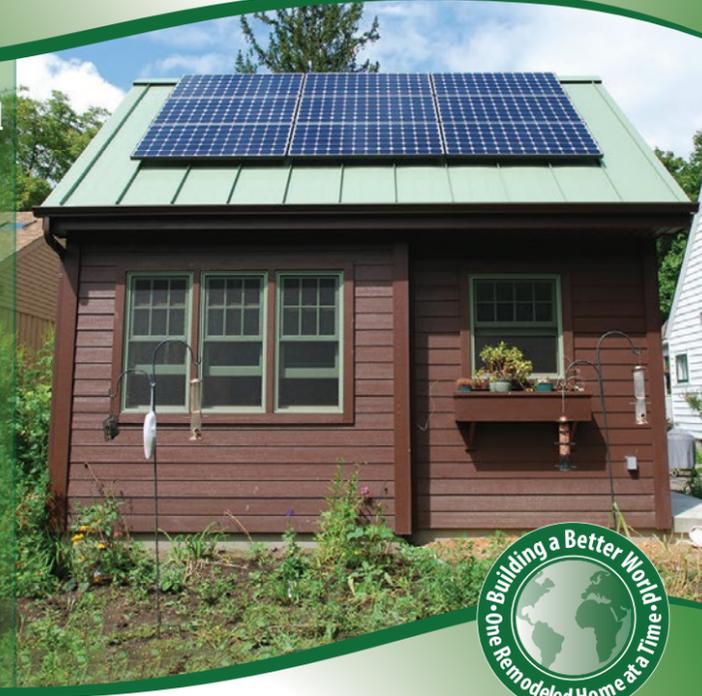


Transform Your Home Your Way with Unique Renewable Energy Ideas

Award-winning Projects

- Additions
- Bathrooms
- Kitchens
- Screen Porches
- Whole Home Remodels

Call Today!  
608-221-1799



Innovative Sustainable Solutions • [ChadsDesignBuild.com](http://ChadsDesignBuild.com)

Crafting Beer ~ Crafting Change



DELTA  
BEER LAB



WWW.MELANIEREENEEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



CONNECT → OUR EVENTS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



MARCH 27 The Black Rose Initiative's Black Trans Visibility Celebration March



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

"We loved working with Curt and Janean. The results are enjoyed aesthetically and functionally every day!" PAULA & ANN

Looks like it's...

**TIME 2 REMODEL**

time2remodel.com



YOU DESERVE

# ROOM TO BE SAFE

IN YOUR...

RELATIONSHIPS. HOOK-UPS. HOME. SCHOOL. SHELTER. COMMUNITY. EVERYWHERE.



Room to Be Safe is a program of Diverse & Resilient, providing statewide advocacy with offices in Milwaukee and Appleton.

Connect with one of our advocates for support, resources, and safety planning.

**CALL OR TEXT OUR WARMLINE:**  
**414-856-LGBT(5428)**

En Español: 414-389-6510  
 Milwaukee Latina Resource Center  
 1-800-510-9195  
 Wisconsin Unidos La Red





LAW & POLITICS LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA COLLECTION LOCAL LGBTQ POPULATION

## Building Strength in Numbers

After years of pressuring city and county government, Outreach LGBT Community Center Executive Director **Steve Starkey** has finally made progress towards representative data collection at the county level, and hopes the city will follow.

**FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT** in decades of nonprofit work, Steve Starkey is clear about one thing: data drives the money needed to solve social problems.

He can point to the trends he sees in his work as the director of the Outreach LGBT Center in Madison and in partnerships with other nonprofits that address the homelessness, substance abuse, or disparities in health care that members of the LGBTQ+ community face in Dane County. Those who identify as anything other than white cisgender heterosexuals are more likely to face challenges in housing and health care.

However, when grants for social services depend on demographic information, nonprofits can't demonstrate local problems with data that isn't being collected.

"Without local government collecting demographic data, we're left guessing about the sexual orientation or gender identity of members in our community," said Starkey. "Without data, you can't know, for instance, what health issues people have or what kinds of medical resources should be made available to them. There's a real lack of knowledge, and we can't prove the need. We can only extrapolate some estimates based on other research like through the Williams Institute at UCLA or by local companies or colleges."

Steve started thinking about this over a decade ago when outgoing Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney gathered a group of local civil rights leaders to discuss diversity and inclusion in County law enforcement. Starkey was the only person there representing the LGBTQ

community. The Sheriff's office could point to improvements in diversifying its workforce based on race because they collected that data, but not sexual orientation or gender identity. Later Steve met with Sheriff Mahoney individually to point out the importance of collecting this data for his department.

This discussion led to more meetings where Starkey ran into a common theme: government entities resisted collecting demographic data on sexual orientation or gender identity because of a fear of "outing" employees. There was also a hesitation about risks of lawsuits.

"Years ago, I had meetings with former Mayor Paul Soglin and explained why having homeless shelters for male individuals and female individuals left out transgender people, and how even if there are city and county ordinances that bar discrimination against gender identity, the shelters are discriminatory," Starkey said. "I explained that if the city doesn't collect information about sexual orientation or gender identity like they do with race, disability or age, it sends the message that our community and the issues we face aren't important. He said he'd work on it, but nothing happened."

Starkey felt some hope with the election of Satya Rhodes-Conway to the Mayor's office, and he met with her in 2019 to reiterate the importance of data collection. He explained the history of the issue with the city and pointed out that Outreach is the only LGBTQ-centered organization the city funds. There are nonprofits with strong LGBTQ programs and leaders like Freedom, Inc. and Briarpatch, but a disconnect remains in connecting the dots between data, funding, and the strategic efforts to help members of the LGBTQ community overcome the systemic barriers they face.

After the conservative-majority U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the summer of 2020 that the 1964 Civil Rights Act does extend nondiscrimination protections to sexual orientation and gender identity, Starkey was able to point to the decision as a reason for local government to change its data collection practices.

A pivotal moment came when the Dane County Department of Human Services sent a letter to its grantees in November 2020 with routine requests for compliance reports from nonprofits and vendors. The County asked for the demographics of for-profit and nonprofit vendors' staff and board. When that request didn't include tracking sexual orientation or gender identity, Starkey emailed Shawn Tessman, Director of Dane County Human Services

and copied County Executive Joe Parisi and local nonprofit leaders.

"I said this wasn't okay," said Starkey. "I pointed to the Supreme Court ruling to say that we are a protected class and it's important to us that this data is collected. Tessman agreed and said she would work on it. Many of the same questions came up about whether the data collection would be like outing people, but the next letter from the County in January 2021 included some options for sexual orientation and gender identity. They are starting small, but the roll out process is starting."

With more pressure on local leaders, including the Mayor and the civil rights department, data collection by the city could mirror what Dane County is already putting in place.

The January 11 letter from the County states that "as an extension to Dane County's commitment to equity and diversity, effective with the 2021 contract year, DCDHS will begin a consistent and comprehensive methodology of requesting and evaluating diversity data.... Data will be collected that allows quantitative analyses designed to evaluate the percentage of women, racial and ethnic minorities, senior citizens, disabled, non-binary gender or gender non-conforming, transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and peers/consumers among an agency's staff, board, and volunteers."

The letter also makes it clear that while filing the data collection form is mandatory, "information being sought is sensitive and as such, employee disclosure of this information is not mandatory. If the demographics are not readily or voluntarily available, no additional efforts should be made to obtain this information."

This leaves more work for the City of Madison to do. Steve says he is glad this issue is gaining some traction, but he doesn't believe anything will change on the City's administrative end soon. With more pressure on local leaders, including the Mayor and the civil rights department, data collection by the city could mirror what Dane County is already putting in place.

Entities like Public Health Madison & Dane County support and depend on efforts for greater communication and cooperation between the city and county. Rachel Goldberg works for Public Health Madison & Dane County as the COVID School & Child Care Liaison. She stresses that comprehensive data collection is essential for LGBTQ+ equality. It informs decisions made at all levels of government, from policy making to funding decisions that ultimately impact social determinants of health.

"Without representative data collection methods, these decisions are incomplete at best and exclusionary at worst," Goldberg explains. "Since data identifies gaps and needs of a particular community, it becomes a tool to promote health outcomes and improve systems that inequitably impact certain groups. Health care access and benefits, employment opportunities, housing, nondiscrimination, and education are examples of systems that rely on data-driven funding and resource allocation. Without data that identifies the needs of the LGBTQ+ community in these systems, this group remains unseen in the eyes of essential programs and policies."

He points out that the Human Rights Campaign conducts an annual municipal index to assess the policies and benefits of government as employers and service providers. The City of Madison has some deficiencies in the area of youth homelessness and transgender services, yet achieves a 100-level score.

"Things have improved over the years," says Starkey. "But we're still at the point where there are few doctors who are competent to work with transgender people and their medical or mental health needs. Transgender people already have few resources to get health care, let alone competent service. We need empirical data to drive the funding that leads to systemic change." ■

## Chiropractic Care for our LGBTQ+ Community



Fix the CAUSE of your symptoms!!

Specializing in:  
Chiropractic  
Physical Rehabilitation  
Sports Injuries  
Extremity Adjusting  
Nutrition & Supplementation



Dr. Richard Merriam

608-273-2222

newhealthmadison.com

2690 Research Park Dr., Ste A  
Fitchburg, WI 53711



- OPEN 24 HOURS
- Locally owned since 1983
- Shop Online 24/7
- Free delivery available!

PROUD TO SUPPORT AIDS NETWORK COMMUNITY SHARES

111 N. BROOM ST. • CAPCENTREMARKET.COM • 608-255-2616



QTBIPOC NIGHTLIFE ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT HOMELESSNESS

## Speaking Life into Existence

Not waiting for opportunity to knock, bisexual Milwaukee entertainer **Travis Lynch** has found that through both adversity and positivity he's finding the best version of himself.

**FROM BEING HOMELESS** in Milwaukee to hitting home theaters, Travis Lynch (better known as Travvy Trav) is an American actor, DJ, and model that's breaking local barriers on what it means to be a Black bisexual entertainer.

### A TRIPLE THREAT

For me, well I never believed I was capable of anything that's remotely close to being a triple threat, in fact, I never believed in myself due my circumstances of living in impoverished neighborhoods my entire life. I come from humble beginnings without many influential people that I could learn from, so any idea I might've had about being where I am today was null and void. I will say a few men in my life told me what I was capable of: one being my 8th grade gym teacher who told me that I was gonna be an actor one day and the other was another DJ whom I met at a bowling alley. I also believed I was capable of having this for myself due to the simple fact that I was told NO by so many people while growing up and even until this day. I owed this to myself to turn all the negativity that I was given and turn it into inspiration; at least I am trying to. As a geek that loves playing the Japanese card game Yugioh, I wanted to show everyone that even someone as nerdy as me can go out to become an entertainer without conforming. I've seen many talented people do that and they ended up losing themselves in the process. It's sad.

### LOVE FOR BEING A DISC JOCKEY

I never wanted to be a disc jockey growing up. In fact, I honestly believed that a DJ only presses play and jumps on stage. Little did I know how all that would change. Back in 2013 I would go to a bowling alley after playing Yugioh with friends. Every time there was a DJ playing music on Saturday nights. I typically would look at the crowd and kindly ask the DJ if they would be able to play the song I requested. Like clockwork any song I asked the DJ to play would get everyone dancing. One night at the bowling alley the DJ pulled me aside and suggested that I have a natural talent for making people dance, and that I should do something with it. I laughed because I did not believe a single word nor did I want to be responsible for making sure another person's night was made due to the music I played.

### DJING IN THE MILWAUKEE CLUBS

I would tell any up and coming DJ that if they can make it through the Milwaukee club scene then they can make it anywhere. The Milwau-



kee club scene is highly competitive with some of the best DJs in the Midwest. As a member of the LGBTQ community I can't count on my hands and toes the number of LGBTQ clubs that have told me NO because I wasn't "one of the main DJs." By "main," I mean part of the cliques of DJs that are considered popular. I was deeply hurt for years by this because I knew what I was capable of; if given the chance. It's very tough to get into the club scene here. Without having any connection you're more than likely not going to see yourself getting booked at all. While there will be a lot of NOs, I still tell anyone to get excited because the NOs will bring you closer to a Yes.

There's an old saying, "When we hit the lowest point, we are open to the greatest change." At my lowest, most broken down, homeless, low self-esteem, damaged, and everything in between was the time when This Is It! (the oldest gay bar in Wisconsin) told me about the new renovations being made to their place and that they wanted me as a resident DJ.

Once I was booked as their main DJ, my life slowly began to change in a spectacular way that I could never have imagined. This Is It! was the club that changed my life. It helped me show the world what I was capable of if given the opportunity. When they gave me full control of the music to play whatever I wanted, that feeling was better than breathing.

### BECOMING AN ACTOR

I grew up in areas where I didn't have an imagination to believe I could do anything. I went to St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy in Milwaukee for middle school, and it's where I experienced my worst bullying. It's also where my gym teacher expressed what he saw in me. In 8th grade my teacher pulled me to the side and told me that I had an interesting personality, that he'll see me in a movie one day. I laughed it off because I never thought anything like that would happen to me. He glared at me until I stopped laughing. He replied, "I'm being serious right now. You may not see it yet, but you will be in a movie, Travis. I will be seeing you on a red carpet at a premier. Just you watch."

Fast forward to 2019, and I was online trolling to see how to become an Andrew Christian model. I am not the standard type of model you'd see in their campaigns, but I applied anyway just to troll because I was bored. I ended up getting a call from a modeling and acting agency called John Casablancas. I was shocked! I took a chance on myself, ended up completing the program, made a one-minute video performing a monologue, and I took that monologue video to a director who was casting for

a movie called *Circumstances 2*. Even though my role in the movie was small, I felt I made a humongous impact because that film turned out to be a popular film on Amazon Prime and TubiTV! After that I got asked to be in more movies. All of this happened because I took a chance on myself. I spoke my goals into existence, just like the gym teacher did for me. That teacher spoke existence into life without me even knowing it.

I say this to anyone reading this article: You owe it to yourself, take the leap of faith.

### HOMELESSNESS, AND A CHANGE OF COURSE

Before I became homeless I lived in a duplex apartment. My downstairs neighbor decided to start a fire. I have no idea why. I was asleep and woke up just in time to get out. Until this day, I cry just thinking that my life could've ended in an instant. The red cross provided me with a hotel stay and free food after my home burned down. Shortly after I had no way of paying for the hotel, so then it hit me I was homeless. I'm sure people would ask why I didn't just go live with relatives. Homeless people are not homeless for the fun of it. Not all have alcohol or drug issues. No one wakes up and says, "I want to live on the streets." They literally have no place to go, and that includes family. After being homeless, I truly understand that life is so fragile. And when I say fragile, I mean the people you thought loved you, your comfort, and even money can be taken away with a snap of a finger. Being homeless would humble any person. This is part of why I take life seriously. I try to create opportunities for myself everyday. I know it takes a great deal of courage to rise out of homelessness, and if I can do that, I can do anything.

### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BLACK BISEXUAL ENTERTAINER

Being a Black man in America causes a long list of negative things to come to mind. We talk about the everyday struggles we go through, because our skin color is something we can't control.

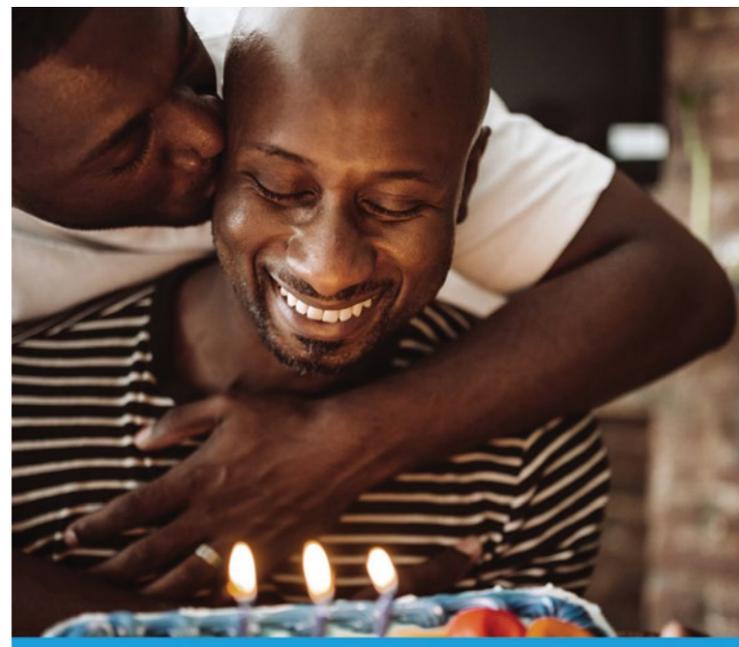
Now being bisexual, well, I feel like we're an afterthought in the community. If we want to talk about the mental health of the LGBTQ community, look no further the bisexual community as we have some of the highest rates of depression and anxiety. It's not uncommon to hear about a bisexual person committing suicide; I know because I tried three times.

Imagine being Black and bisexual at the same time. The ill-fated assumptions that I carry HIV, which I don't, are commonplace. The assumptions of me being attracted to every person; which I assure you I'm not. The world sees bisexual men as promiscuous or unworthy of a relationship. We all are worthy.

The truth of the matter is that I'm just a guy who happens to be bi. I don't feel obligated to express to anyone what my sexuality is, however, knowing what it's like to be an introverted Black teen in America I would be foolish to believe that my voice isn't strong. I use it to encourage and empower other Black teens. As a bisexual Black entertainer I don't get a second chance to make first impression, so I have to give my best first impression to everyone.

### PARTING THOUGHTS

Let my skinny, nerdy, awkward butt be an example that although life's situations can and will get in your way, that you can lose everything with a snap of a finger—and yes you can go through all the negative things—and still become the best version of yourself. I encourage you to get excited about failing because all the adversity will shape you into the best version of yourself. When your back is against the wall, you only have one place to go: forward. Do not get discouraged by the NOs that will come because those NOs bring you closer to your YES. I am walking this path openly so that you can run and exceed all of our expectations. You are special. You are strong. And one day we will see you in this magazine, and trust when I say that I will get inspired by your story. ■



Stay **PREP**'d Up  
It's Worth It

#StayPrEPdUp / [viventhealth.org/prep](http://viventhealth.org/prep)

## 45 Plays for America's First Ladies

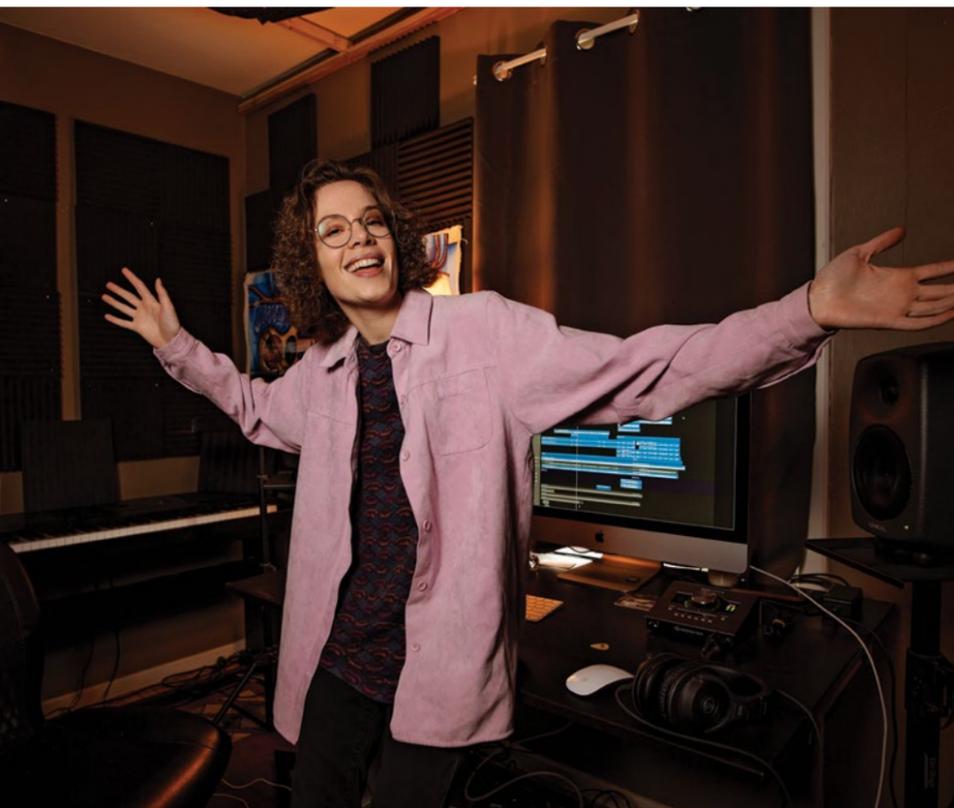
BY CHLOE JOHNSTON,  
SHARON GREENE,  
GENEVRA GALLO-BAYIATES,  
BILAL DARDAI,  
AND ANDY BAYIATES

MAY 8-23

Tickets at [forwardtheater.com](http://forwardtheater.com)



A biographical, meta-theatrical, genre-bending look at gender, race, and everything else your history teacher never taught you about America.



girls?" I got into trouble a lot in school because of my mouth. In history class, my teacher would say something and I would respond with, "Actually, white people came here, raped and pillaged, and wiped out entire nations."

I was always bucking the system because authority doesn't scare me. I think it's created the person that I am today. If it weren't for music, I've gone down some really dark paths with loneliness, depression, anxiety, things like that. Those really heavily coincide with being an artist. And so, you add being a young woman, in a small town, and then being queer on top of that...

DID YOU EVER STRUGGLE WITH GENDER IDENTITY?

Gender is a really interesting topic for me because I definitely am a non-binary, androgynous person. I don't have any problems with being called any pronouns. I recognize the importance of that awareness and those labels. But for me, I'm just like, "Gender is a construct, I don't really care."

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO MADISON?

After I graduated, I spiraled into this super-dark depression. I was having panic attacks on an almost daily basis. It got so bad, I remember sitting with my mom and being like, "Get me out of here. I am losing my mind. I'm sick of writing these songs for no one. I need an audience." I don't think she really understood how bad it was, until I broke down in front of her about it.

After that, she was like, "Let's go." We got an apartment in downtown Madison. I definitely didn't just snap out of my depression though. It was another year and a half or so, of slowly growing out of that.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE MUSIC SCENE HERE?

I was starting to play open mics. That quickly turned into, "Hey, there's this girl, Raine, that can shred the guitar." People started asking me to be in their band or fill in. There was a point when I was 18, in six bands at one time, and trying to go to college at MATC. I was already playing all these different open mics, and making money in all these dif-



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SINGING & SONGWRITING ACTIVISM

Purple Raine

Local musical prodigy Raine Stern is leveraging their time on The Voice to amplify their music and message. Our Lives Publisher Patrick Farabugh chats with Raine to learn how it all began and where she's going.

GROWING UP IN NEW GLARUS, WHEN DID YOU START TO RECOGNIZE THAT YOU HAD TALENT FOR MUSIC?

It was an instantaneous relationship with my guitar, with poetry, and with storytelling. It's therapeutic for me. My soul was cosmically bonded to it, and I don't mean for that to be corny because it's the realest thing in my life. I was 11 when I picked up a guitar. I wrote a song at 15 that's now the first song on my album. And I wouldn't have kept it if I didn't think that it held up with the songs that I'm writing now.

WHAT WERE YOU INTERESTED IN WRITING ABOUT?

A lot of it was the turmoil of my family. My parents divorced when I was 14, but for a long time leading up to that, they were on and off. It was a roller coaster ride for all of us. And it was about observing people that were close to us. It was recognizing that I was different. I was also writing my little unrequited love stories. By the time I was 16, I was already socially aware. Back when I was five I was going home to my mom and saying, "There was a girl in my class wearing tight pants that said, 'Tasty' on her butt. Isn't that exploitation and sexualizing of little

ferent bands. Eventually I said, "I don't want to be in these cover bands anymore. I want to play these songs that I've been writing forever."

HOW DID YOU BEGIN CONNECTING TO THE QUEER COMMUNITY IN MADISON?

Well, part of that was that, I was showing up to some of these gigs with a girl by my side. The first people that I was meeting in Madison's LGBTQ community were all through music. I was at all my shows like, "Hey, this is a song called Lydia. It's dedicated to my beautiful partner."

HOW ABOUT QUEER PEOPLE IN THE LARGER MUSIC INDUSTRY?

I don't really have a lot of female friends or a lot of gay friends, which is just sad. The queer community are my people. I've made a couple of friends while filming The Voice that I adore. But unfortunately, the music community is so male-dominated. It seems to lean in the direction of straight guys that are playing rock & roll to get the girls' attention. I feel like I'm this brightly colored, weird fish, swimming around in that sea. It's that way all the time in the music scene. It's unfortunate because I just read that for the first time ever there were more electric guitars being purchased by women and young girls than men.

WAS THERE ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT LEADING TO YOUR FIRST SHOWS OF YOUR OWN MUSIC?

Definitely. I was playing with the Clyde Stubblefield All-stars, who did a bunch of classics and James Brown covers. I was seeing stuff online about Raine Stern, guitar prodigy. For some people, that might be awesome to see. I was like, "UGH, that's not who I am. I'm not just some girl that can play guitar." So I started telling all these bands that I'm going to play the next two months with you, and then I'm done.

I met Josh Cohen, a six string bass tapping phenom. We'd met at an Ian's Pizza Open Mic. I was like, "Holy heck, who is this guy? He's really good." And then I went up and played one of my original songs, and

Experience Our State-Of-The-Art 12,000 sq ft Salon!

Over 600 Bridal Gowns • Over 1000 Bridesmaids

Just 20-25 minutes from Madison in New Glarus

(608) 527-4436 • brandisbridal.com

Brandi's BRIDAL GALLERIA, ETC.

WISCONSIN BRIDE MAGAZINE BEST 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019



jennifer brindley photography



Your financial needs are unique.

Whether you want to provide for your loved ones, support the organizations that are important to you, or plan for your own comfortable retirement, I can help you plan for your goals. I'll look at all aspects of your finances, then find solutions that are right for your unique needs. I'll be there to adjust your plan as life unfolds. When you have the right advisor, life can be brilliant.



Shannon M. Anderson CFP®, ADPA® Financial Advisor Eventus Wealth Advisors A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.

608.819.0520 2501 West Beltline Hwy, Ste 301 Madison, WI 53713 shannon.m.anderson@ampf.com ameripriseadvisors.com/shannon.m.anderson



Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP (with flame design) in the U.S. Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., a registered investment adviser. © 2019 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved. (08/19)



he had the same reaction to me. He tapped me on the shoulder and was like, "Hey, you're really good. We should get together and play some of your original stuff." Now he's the bass player on my album. I'm super grateful to have him.

I remember the first really big show where everyone was like, "Whoa, did you see that Raine Stern show last night?" I was so excited.



We played, and I just remember people loved it. They were like, "Whoa, we've never seen this before. At least not from someone in Madison."

WHAT DREW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE VOICE?

That's a good question. I didn't initiate that relationship, they actually contacted me. When the pandemic shut everything down I was in the thick of working on my album. I was like, "Oh, no, all these festivals are getting canceled." My girlfriend said, "Let's start a YouTube channel. You could maybe work off commission." So that's what I did. I started a series called "Quarantunes," and I made the first video. I played a little snippet of a song and I said, "Hey world, I need your help. I don't have a source of income right now. I'm trying to supplement my income with some Venmo and PayPal from you guys." I did that for a couple months, and it actually worked. I managed to make enough to pay my expenses. Then I had an email from an NBC talent scout. She'd seen one of my posts.

She was like, "I like your look. I like that you can play guitar. I especially like that you can sing. You should try out for *The Voice*." I didn't really have any excuse not to, so I submitted three videos. They called and said, "You made it. What's your airport? We're going to send you to California in a month."

Between now and then, we'd like you to quarantine, we're going to COVID test you, we're going to make you do a 500+ questionnaire to make sure that you're sane."

ANY FIRST THOUGHTS WHEN YOU GOT ON SET?

It was a lot like Lydia and I had talked about it. She said, "I know you're having some hesitations because you don't want to have your life signed away to a contract. But wouldn't it just be so cool to know how this show works?" She was right. One of the things that surprised me was that all of the props that they had, all these amps and guitars, you couldn't actually use. Our actual performances on TV are real, but they have a lot of behind the scenes interviews and B roll with this stuff.

I get asked a lot, "What was it like to meet Nick Jonas and Kelly Clarkson?" I don't want to sound ungrateful, but at the end of the day, they're just people. I probably talked to all of the coaches for a total of 30 minutes. That's only enough time to get a first impression of somebody. I was like, "Oh, these are my kind of people. They get the kind of obsession I have with this."

WHAT WAS YOUR RESPONSE TO YOUR AUDITION AIRING?

I watched it with my brother, his wife, and their kids. They've got a toddler. So it was a little more hectic than I had imagined it would be, but still wonderful. My dad zoomed in. I remember it was just this moment with my dad, brother, and my girlfriend. I could see the look on their faces. I remember this emotional look on my dad's face, where he was like, "Oh man, you really did it."

The show forewarned us about the audience response. They were like, "You're probably just going to want to shut your phone off for the night." So I definitely just put my phone in another room. I remember the next time I checked it, I already had 1,500 more followers on every platform.

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE EXPOSURE TO TAKE YOU?

I have every intention of using my platform and music as activism. The most important issues to me are climate and sustainability. I have a music video and an album coming out. I have a plan for three albums. I have one song on the first where I use they/them pronouns intentionally. In it, talking about relationships, I said, "You thought it was a genuine kiss when I was really thinking about them." It wasn't me trying to be vague. I was intentionally using non-binary pronouns because you don't really hear "them" in music.

The second album is where everybody's going to kind of see my commentary on the world through a pop commentary on pop culture. That album is going to be called *Pop Cult*. When we get to the third album, that's when I'm basically just going to be no holds barred.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE VOICE HELPING WITH THAT?

For me, going on *The Voice* is getting into the industry. I'm meeting people. I'm making contacts. Right before all of us flew home, the show's band leader Paul ran up to me and said, "Before you leave, I want to give you my personal information. I want to keep in touch with you. I see a lot of potential in you."

He was friends with some of the women in Prince's band back in the day. He was like, "You give me that old school vibe that's missing right now." This is exactly what I was wanting. I'm making all of these business connections.

IF YOU OUTGROW MADISON, WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF GOING?

This has been the topic of the day for my partner and I, because we've had a lot of cool people and opportunities start to come our way. The thing for me is that I'm not going to go anywhere and not already have a foundation. I'm going to continue building my base and reputation. I think I will go on tour first while having my home base here. ■

YOU MAKE THE MEMORIES. WE'LL MAKE THEM LAST.



Our shop features an extensive selection of frames, mats, and glazing, as well as a custom workshop to create designs inspired by your wildest ideas.

Please book an appointment at [monroestreetframing.com](http://monroestreetframing.com).

MONROE STREET FRAMING



ROLL OUT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE.

Whether you choose the iconic MINI Hardtop, the sporty MINI Convertible, the sophisticated MINI Clubman or the adventurous MINI Countryman Sports Activity Vehicle, you'll discover exhilarating performance, premium features and unique accessories that express your personal style. #MINIPRIDE



MINI of Madison

310 West Beltline Highway Madison, WI 53713 608-729-MINI (6464) [MINIofMADISON.COM](http://MINIofMADISON.COM)



Karl Barton Mini Motoring Advisor 608-729-6444



QTBIPOC FAMILY ACCEPTANCE COVID PANDEMIC DEATH

# The Echo Chamber of Pandemic Grief

Loss is already hard enough, but when compounded by isolation and sociopolitical tensions it can be more challenging to find closure. After losing her grandfather early in the pandemic, **Sami Schalk** unpacks the process of pandemic grief.

**APRIL 1, 2021** was the first anniversary of my grandfather's death. He passed not from COVID directly, but perhaps indirectly because he refused to go to a doctor or hospital if my grandma couldn't go in with him. So he didn't go and he died on their porch, his body there for hours because the county coroner was so busy.

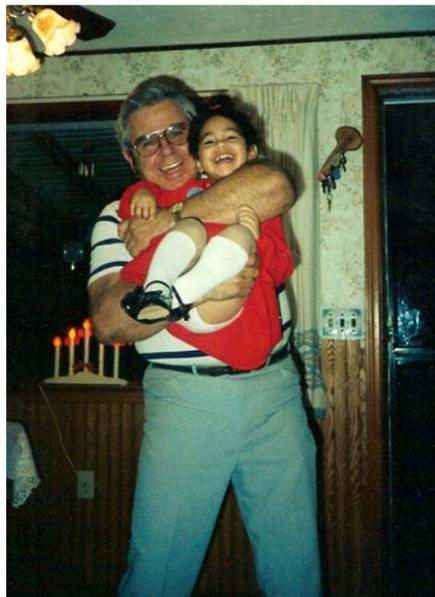
My grandfather did maintenance at the Catholic church and called the bingo in the basement. He was so well-known in my county that even as a little girl I would be asked if I was related to him when certain people heard my last name.

I wasn't the first person I knew to have lost someone since the pandemic had started, and I knew a big Catholic mass was not possible.

Even if the whole family and community could not attend, my grandmother insisted on a church funeral. So they allowed her and her nine living children to have a short service at the church where my grandparents attended every Sunday (and many other days) for more years than I know.

Many of their children were married there, and many grandchildren (including me) were baptized there. All of their children and two of their grandchildren went to the K-8 school attached to the church. Their surprise 50th wedding anniversary party was there with nearly 100 extended family members and friends. My aunt, who died in 2011, is buried there. It was their second home. Of course my grandfather's funeral would be there, pandemic or not—pandemic be damned.

While my grandmother and her children attended the service with masks on inside, the rest of us watched the church's Facebook livestream which they had set up not long before to broadcast masses to people in lockdown in rural Kentucky. Most of my extended family watched my grandfather's Facebook Live funeral on phones and tablets in cars in the church parking lot. I watched on my iPad from 462 miles away in Madison. Those don't feel like real sentences, but they are. And while I was



the first person I knew to participate in mourning rituals virtually and alone, I was not the last.

In the days between my grandfather's death and the funeral, I obsessively processed what it might mean for us culturally to have to adapt our grieving rituals—and what would happen if we did not. What would it mean for people to not process and mourn losses in the context of community and rituals (faith-based or otherwise)? How would we become numb as the numbers grew? And they did grow, beyond anything comprehensible: 554,000 and counting a year after my grandfather died. And those are just the COVID deaths, those don't include the natural cause deaths and the accident deaths and the suicides and the people who died, like my grandfather, simply because they were afraid to go to a doctor or could not be provided a hospital bed or a ventilator.

At this point I don't know anyone who doesn't know someone who died in the last year. We are all grieving or suppressing grief or trying to figure out how to grieve in this new world, this next context. In the absence of in-person grieving, we gather virtually to share stories of our loved ones, we watch funerals in empty rooms and attend digital memorial services as Zoom presentations. We post about those we have lost on social media, sometimes within minutes or hours of learning about someone's death, flooded with condolences and prayers and virtual hugs and wishes of may their memory be a blessing. The COVID-19 global pandemic has created an echo chamber of grief. Our grief reverberates and bounces back against the grief of others, one loss sparking an echoing, fading memory of other losses. It is inescapable. And though I have been thinking about and processing it for a while, only now, a year after I first experienced pandemic grieving, am I able to coherently write about it.

In the days before the funeral, I posted on Facebook asking if anyone could help supply masks for my family. In my mind this was one act of care and support I could provide from afar. Someone I used to babysit when I was in high school said his mom might be able to, he'd ask. His parents still live down the street from my mom, all of them in the houses we grew up in. His mom and her niece rushed to make 20 cloth masks from a design on the internet. This was before any mask mandates or overcrowded hospitals or second waves. This was just a few weeks into something many people thought would be over by summer, fall at the latest. My mom promised me she would wear one. I texted all my cousins who planned to be there—well, the ones I had numbers for at least. I had been out of direct touch with most of them for years, just showing up once or twice a year at Christmas and a random summer Sunday to demonstrate I was still alive and doing ok for myself. I asked

all of them to promise to wear a mask. I kept thinking about the stories of whole families getting sick and worried endlessly about what I would do if more of my family died in the same year, and I had to continue to stay away. How much grief can one person hold?

The day of the funeral I woke up early to account for the time difference and to treat the day as one of mourning—in my own way. I made a "Catholic Shit" playlist on my phone (so much John Michael Talbot), which I played on repeat while I showered, put on a black dress, did my hair and makeup, and poured myself a glass of bourbon in honor of my grandfather who taught me that drinking strong whiskey makes hair grow on your chest. I snapped a photo and posted on Facebook saying: "Hey folks. So I'm gonna be drinking whiskey and listening to some combination of Catholic hymns and 90s/00s country music to remind me of family and home today from quarantine. If you want to 'join' me at any point, please hit me up. Particularly interested in folks who want to talk about mourning during a pandemic, mourning when estranged from family, relationships to religion as non-practicing people raised in faith communities, and developing modern mourning practices outside of religion. Academic queer former Catholics who left home at 18 have to mourn in their own ways, too. Raise a real or virtual glass of Kentucky bourbon today for me please." In retrospect, this post was when I began to make the connections between how grieving during the pandemic was reopening old wounds, echoing other forms of grief I still held: grief for the loss of family connections as a queer person which I felt even more heavily as one of the only people in my family to leave the Kentucky/Ohio area, who now literally could not return because it was (again) unsafe for me to be there; grief for my younger self who suffered so much shame in the context of my religious community, yet as an adult found deep nostalgic comfort in listening to the songs I used to sing in church even as I no longer believed in any of it. Everywhere I turned this new grief found ways to stir up old ones, all of them bouncing around loudly inside my chest.

My grandfather's funeral service was hard to process. I watched in a sort of surreal, out of body way, saying the prayers I had said so many times as a kid along with my aunts and uncles on the screen, crying at moments, but also laughing as random parishioners commented on the Facebook live asking who's funeral it was or confusing this stream with another scheduled for the following week. It was the virtual equivalent of people repeatedly walking into the middle of the funeral and shouting "Who died?!" But the more absurd it got, the easier it was to handle. Nothing felt real and in that moment, I was grateful that the world was already so upside down because I wasn't ready to deal with the reality of this particular loss. I had been alone in my house without any human

Most people declined to wear the masks I had gotten made for them. It felt...personal. Not because I thought they weren't wearing masks because they came from me or because people were specifically rejecting my attempt at care, but because it felt like another clear signal of the way who I am and how I operate in the world does not align with my family of origin.

contact or touch for weeks. I didn't know when I would see anyone in my family again. I still haven't seen any of them a year later. I am sort of afraid, now that the grief has quieted, that when I go back, when I step into my grandparents' home, the grief may meet me there louder than ever, shouting at me from my grandfather's recliner, from his pictures on the walls, from my grandmother's face.

After the funeral my entire extended family, except me in Wisconsin and my youngest cousins, went to the gravesite for the burial. My mom, whom I taught how to FaceTime just a few days before, video-called me into the cemetery. Most people declined to wear the masks I had gotten

## The Sow's Ear



125 S. Main Street • Verona • knitandsip.com

608-848-2755

### CAFE & BAKERY

Fresh, Daily Lunch Menu Items

### ARTISAN COFFEE

From Ancora and Kickapoo

### SMOOTHIES

Fresh Fruit, Chocolate & Espresso

### KNITTING

Yarns, Accessories & Classes

We use local produce and cheese

## Anthology

all the love, all the cards

230 State Street, stop 1  
www.anthologymadison.com  
on FB and IG @Anthology230

## happy barkday!

Celebrate your pup's special day with a personalized Birthday Box. Inside you'll find confections, a party hat, a bow tie, and a toy.

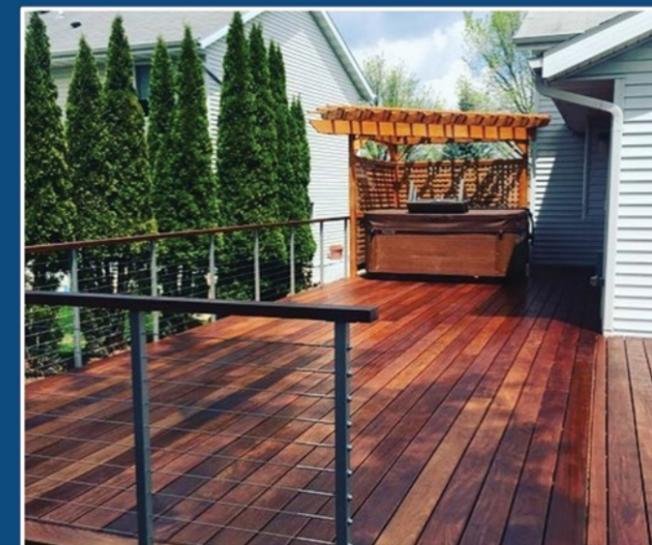
Shop in store, online, by phone, or by email.

bad dog frida

Colors, styles, and sizes of items will vary.

608.442.6868 baddogfrida.com 2094 atwood ave. madison

## WHEN CLEANLINESS, POLITENESS AND TRUST MATTER.



**QUIGLEY** FREE  
Decks Onsite Consultation to readers of OL Magazine!

All quotes guaranteed in writing, no unwelcome surprises at the end of your project.

QuigleyDecks.com // Tim@QuigleyDecks.com // 608.577.4277



Sami with a glass of bourbon in honor of her grandfather on the day of his virtual funeral service.

made for them. It felt...personal. Not because I thought they weren't wearing masks because they came from me or because people were specifically rejecting my attempt at care, but because it felt like another clear signal of the way who I am and how I operate in the world does not align with my family of origin. More grief refracting. Although this was before anyone had uttered the term anti-masker, it was clear most of my family members were not concerned about COVID-19 in the way I was. I'm a fat, Black, queer, disabled woman with many fat, Black and/or disabled friends and loved ones, all of us at high risk for dying from COVID and more likely to be denied care or provided less care because of our identities. I was wearing masks long before it was required, and I knew to get N95s when possible thanks to my disabled friends in California who used them during the wildfires. I wanted to share this crisp knowledge, this disabled survival tactic with them because I wanted us to all survive.

We are all grieving or suppressing grief or trying to figure out how to grieve in this new world, this next context.

While I am Black and queer and believe in the need for radical change for liberation, I was raised by conservative white Catholics and Christians who considered the small town where my single white mother raised me "the city." I want to say I never fit in, but I think for a while I did—when I insisted on being called mixed race or biracial instead of Black and suppressed my same-sex desires and overachieved myself into feeling valuable. I had been pulling away from the homogeneity of my family of origin for years but watching them standing maskless,

marginally distant from each other in a cemetery felt like a new kind of break. For so long I wanted to feel close to them and be one of them, but this experience of pandemic grieving made the loss of that closeness hurt deeply even as I knew in the moment and know even more so now after the uprisings last summer, that it is better for me, emotionally and spiritually, to keep my distance. The grief of realizing as a mixed-race (or transracially adopted) person that your white family who raised you and claims to love you is racist deserves its own essay.

After I hung up the burial site video call with my mom, I drove to a random cemetery here in Madison with a flask of bourbon and wandered around. I stopped at the first tombstone I found with the name Charles. I asked that Charles if he wouldn't mind me honoring my grandfather there, and I said a few words. There wasn't much to say. My grandfather and I weren't close. He wasn't a talker or a feelings person. But he did show up to all the awards dinners and grandparent's day events and theater productions I invited my grandma and him to attend growing up. He taught me to drive when it was clear my mother doing it wasn't going to work for either one of us. That was something. And I often think about how he dropped out of school in eighth grade, joined the Army at 18, spent time in Europe during the Korean War, then came home and married my 19-year-old grandma at age 21, going on to raise 10 kids in a four-bedroom, one-bathroom country home on a modest salary working for Goodyear tire. When I was little and he was still working full time, his fingernails seemed permanently dark with motor oil. So at some other

# Treating the whole you...

By building strong, open and caring relationships with our patients and focusing on the importance of addressing all aspects of an individual's life, Wildwood providers are your partner in the journey towards a healthier you.



**WILDWOOD  
FAMILY CLINIC, S.C.**

"HEALTHCARE FOR ALL AGES"  
www.wildwoodclinic.com



Charles' grave, I talked about these things I knew about my grandpa Charlie and poured out some bourbon for him and sang a Catholic hymn. Then I drove home and ate too much of an edible and cried about feeling so distant from my family yet absolutely, unquestionably happier and freer without them regularly in my life anymore. Then I felt guilty in the way Catholics are trained to do and cried about that too. I don't recommend getting too high after your grandfather's Facebook live funeral while in lockdown during a global pandemic, in case you were considering it.

It's been a year, and his death still doesn't feel real. Maybe it would still feel unreal without a pandemic, but I think that grieving rituals happen for a reason. They help us process the reality of death and to crystalize memories of people we loved. When my aunt died in 2011, the first person in my life I really loved to die, I was with her in hospice for days leading up to her death. I held her son when he cried. I made a photo board for the memorial service and helped my mom clean out her home for weeks after so it could be sold. That death was real and tangible. I lived it and lived in the aftermath of it until it stopped hurting. This time, I didn't even remember that it was the anniversary of my grandfather's death until I saw a Facebook memory about it the next day. Time was such a blur last spring that the date of his death never registered in my head—an April Fool's Day death during a global pandemic lockdown. I certainly won't forget now that I've thought of it that way. When I realized I had missed the anniversary I thought about calling my grandmother, but I don't know what to say. She, too, is sitting in this unfinished mourning, this echo chamber of grief. She's in her 80s, and so many of her friends have died in the last year—seven the last time I asked. Likely more now. When I had talked to my grandma in the late summer, she was hopeful we could hold a memorial service for the whole community around my grandfather's birthday in October. That didn't happen. First family Christmas without him didn't happen either. Now we're a year in, and we still don't know when a memorial will be possible.

If my family does ever organize a memorial service, I'll go back—that is, if I'm welcome; I was neither invited to nor told about one cousin's outdoor, Fall 2020 wedding where (I'm told by one of the few cousins I still talk to) almost no one wore masks. But I would go back if invited, because I think participating in a mourning ritual in the flesh would help quiet the grief, slow the echo. I'd go with my partner of six years whom my mom still calls my friend, and we'd sit with my youngest cousins, the only ones I still talk to for real. And I'd be there in my spectacular queerness and beautiful Blackness, no longer afraid of losing my family because the family I grew up with doesn't exist anymore; not exclusively because of my grandfather's death course, but his passing certainly marked a significant, irrevocable change that we cannot yet know how to repair from, collectively or individually, when we cannot yet come together still. A year later, the multiple griefs opened up by the loss of my grandfather still echo when my students tell me about loved ones they've lost in the last year, when I think about calling my mother, but don't, when I drink a bourbon neat, when I drive down winding country roads like the one you use to get to my grandparents' house. I know that all grief is slow and non-linear, but the pandemic has put a pause on certain kinds of mourning practices while keeping us in an echo chamber of collective grief. It is exhausting. I am exhausted. I feel like I am waiting for something to happen first for me to fully mourn, but I don't know what that something is—the end of the pandemic? Seeing my family again? Going to my grandfather's actual grave? I don't know. I don't know.

This essay is one way I am trying to mourn safely. I started writing it for myself on my phone while in bed the day I realized I had missed the anniversary of his death, but as my reflection on how I had to figure out how to grieve in a pandemic got longer, I thought maybe it would be helpful to others, too. And if my story helps someone else quiet their grief, perhaps that healing will echo among us as well. We could use it. ■



## The future of Wisconsin's health begins with you.

The All of Us Research Program is asking lots of people to join. Participants are from different races and ethnicities, age groups, and regions of the country. They are also diverse in gender identity, sexual orientation, and health status.

Many groups of people have been left out of research in the past. By studying data from a diverse group of people, researchers can learn more about what makes people sick or keeps them healthy.

To learn more, or to enroll:  
Visit: [allofus.wisc.edu/ourlives](http://allofus.wisc.edu/ourlives)  
Call: (888) 294-2881





# Uncorking Happiness

**Andrea Hillsey** has always trusted her instincts, and they have served her well. She excelled at softball, listened to her gut about her future wife, and runs the successful Square Wine Company on the Capitol Square. Here's her story.

WINE | SOFTBALL | SMALL BUSINESS

**I'VE DONE TWO THINGS IN MY LIFE.** I used to play softball and now, I sell wine. In all honesty, I never looked the part for either. Not once. I still don't, and it's a badge I wear with honor.

I grew up in the 'burbs, about 45 minutes northwest of Detroit and was afforded just about every privilege growing up. There are few memories of my childhood not involving playing sports. I grew up playing organized basketball, soccer, and softball. When I was young, I was small. Like, we're talking my nickname was "Squirt" small. I always played up, with kids older than me. I certainly didn't think it was such a big deal at the time. I thought nothing of it, but that experience instilled in me that I belong wherever I want to be. Imposter syndrome, not me, never. I firmly remember being a nine-year-old kid playing with and against 12-year-olds. I was comically small; I remember being laughed at by both the kids and parents of kids I was playing against. I think I was pretty good, but I don't really remember. I would say ask my parents, but they're forever biased, as parents ought to be. I played basketball and softball in high school, even tore my ACL my freshmen year playing varsity basketball back in 1997. I like to say I started the ACL tearing trend. I tore the other one in college, too, just for good measure.

Softball was hands-down the sport where I excelled. Turns out, it's easier for smaller kids. I was recruited by a handful of schools to play softball in college. I worked my face off to be the best athlete I could and truly enjoyed every moment of it. However, a lot of us in the midwest were not taken seriously as quality softball players. Back then, great softball players were thought to only come from California and more broadly, the west coast. I think a lot of us midwestern kids had a collective chip on our shoulders because of it. I went to Purdue University. I played second base for four years, managed to get myself a degree, named an All American and was even invited to try out for the 2004 Olympic team. Ironically, it was after returning from the Olympic trials that I realized softball wasn't what I wanted to do forever. The sport of softball had taken me as far as I could go. It wasn't my one thing. I wanted to prove to myself that I was more than this one thing. So, the search began. I needed to find something I enjoyed as much as softball, something that required a lifetime of learning.

My last semester in college I took a slew of random classes, like any good liberal arts student does. As a midwestern kid that grew up in a conservative household, I took every opportunity to broaden my horizons, sitting in on History of Jazz, Human Sexuality, and Philosophy of Religion—I couldn't get enough. One of the classes I took was Wine Appreciation, and the rest as they say, is history.

Why wine, though? I didn't grow up with wine. As kids, my brother and I always had food on the table. It was 80s and 90s food. Every vegetable that crossed our plates was either frozen or canned at one point. We were a meat and (boxed mashed) potatoes kind of family. Not until college did I discover there was more to food than what I grew up with. My now wife/partner, Ashley and I would go on dates to fancy places for college kids. I remember we went to Spiaggia in Chicago before we could both legally drink! We were both so busy in college that we took advantage of nights and weekends off.

Once I turned 21 and began experimenting with wine and food, my life was forever changed. I love how wine makes us slow down. I love how we can travel through a bottle of wine, both back in time through the vintage and also to the place it was made. Wine is a small victory every single day. There is nothing I love more than being home with Ashley, cooking dinner and sharing a bottle of wine with her. It is one of life's simple pleasures.

I met Ashley at Purdue my freshman year and came out to my parents my sophomore year. Coming out stories are all so personal and unique. I think like a lot of people, mine most certainly could have gone better but it also could have been worse. I doubt my parents even remember how they responded. Ashley is a couple years older than me and galaxies smarter. She got her first real job out of college here at the University of

I love how we can travel through a bottle of wine, both back in time through the vintage and also to the place it was made. Wine is a small victory every single day.

Wisconsin. So, like any love-struck 20-something, I packed up everything I owned and followed. Looking for something new and un-sportsball related, I started working in a restaurant to save money for graduate school. I slowly climbed the corporate restaurant ladder as high as I could before I knew I needed to jump off.

My original plan to attend physical therapy school morphed into graduate school studying Hospitality Management at Florida International University in Miami. I somehow got a job at one of the best wine shops not just in Miami, not just in Florida, but arguably the country. I worked nearly three years for Jeffrey Wolfe at Wolfe's Wine Shoppe while getting my master's degree. Jeffrey is a giant mentor of mine. He is a man who taught me how to follow my heart and that wine is meant to be shared and stories told. I learned about the importance of support-



**D'Vino**  
Al Fresco / indoor Dining

**MONDAY - SATURDAY**  
5:30 - 9:00 PM

**SUNDAY BRUNCH**  
11 - 3 PM

**RESERVATIONS @ OPENTABLE**

116 KING STREET • WWW.DVINOMADISON.COM

Improve your cheese knowledge

VIRTUAL CLASSES

VISIT FROMAGINATION.COM | 608-255-2430



fromag|nation

artisanal cheeses & perfect companions™

See our weekly classes. Private group classes also available.

# make room for love



Mara Lee Olson  
DESIGN STUDIO



(608) 469.6780  
www.maraleeolsondesignstudio.com

ing smaller, family grower producers and the relationships that develop from that support over time.

It was during my time in Miami that my love of wine truly developed. What started as piqued interest had transformed into a full blown passion. I had found my thing. As my time in Miami was coming to a close, I went out to Oregon and worked the 2010 harvest at Chehalem in the Willamette Valley. I was however, always coming back to Madison—remember that’s where the girl is. I’m very good at following my instincts. It might be my greatest skill. I never fought myself. I never fought myself on sports, on Ashley, on wine. If these were the things and the person that unlocked happiness, why fight that?

In January of 2011, I was back in Madison. The Act 10 protests were in full swing, and I had no idea what I was going to do. I was high on that wine life and determined to scream it from the rooftops. I jumped around restaurant and retail wine jobs for about a year, and things were going nowhere. Ashley’s dad, Mike, who ran his own business in Miami, was the first to suggest we open a wine shop. Mind you, I didn’t have student debt, but I by no means had the capital to start a business myself. I drew up a business plan and presented it to Mike, and he was all in. I still remember the first check he wrote me. The adorable attached note said something to the effect of, “Here’s a bunch of money, don’t screw it up.” I’ve always expected a lot out of myself, but when I get someone in my corner that believes in me, come hell or high water, I’m going to do right by them. When I was young it was my parents, as I grew, it was the coaching staff at Purdue, then Jeffrey, and now, Mike. Ashley continues to show up day in and day out for the whole crazy ride.

It sounds crazy saying it out loud: We were going to open a niche wine shop on the Capitol Square in Beertown, USA right after a serious recession in a city I didn’t know a ton about, but knew I loved. And that’s exactly what we did. Square Wine Company opened in June 2012. I was

Andrea and Ashley on vacation in 2019 at Hiyu Wine Farm in Hood River, OR.



29 years old and had much less gray hair at the time. Upon opening, I once again felt like that nine-year-old playing with the older kids. Let’s be honest, there is a certain image that comes to mind when you think of a wine merchant, and it isn’t me.

I like to think I have a knack for speaking simply. Wine can be intimidating, but I take great pride in making it approachable. The shop originated on the idea of changing the wine culture in Madison. I want people to care as much about the wine on their tables as they do about their locally sourced and organic food.

Fast forward to 2021, we’ve survived a pandemic and have moved across the Capitol Square to our new location. I’m proud of what we’ve built this little wine shop into. ■

A team of experienced lawyers committed to the rights of the **LGBT Community**.



**BALISLE FAMILY LAW**  
— LEGAL COUNSEL, S. C. —

Linda S. Balisle, Attorney  
Lindsey E. Cobbe, Attorney | Ashleigh M. Hacker, Attorney

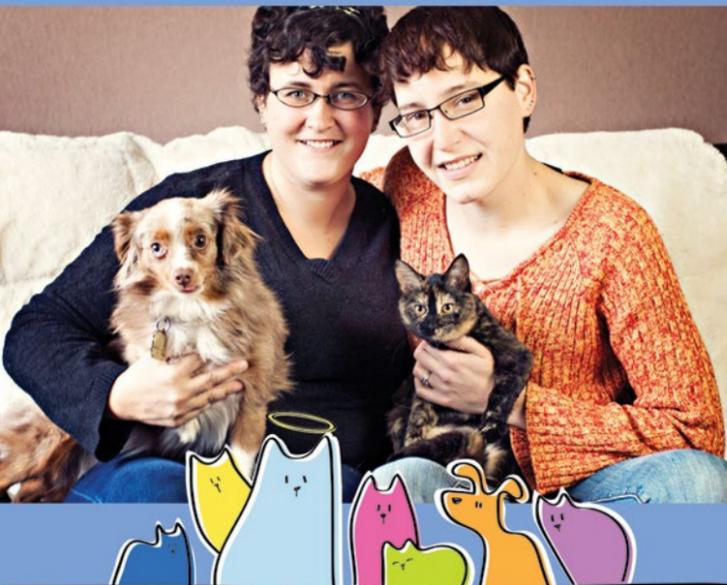
Our mission is to ensure that your rights and best interests are protected as you navigate the complexities of the legal system.

Divorce  
Power of Attorneys  
Partnership Agreements  
Wills

Marital Property Agreements  
Child Custody Disputes  
Non-traditional Families  
Mediation

608-259-8702 | balislefamilylaw.com  
131 West Wilson St., Madison, WI 53703

purrrrsonal matchmaking for every family!



Angel's Wish

WWW.ANGELSWISH.ORG

Pet Adoption • Microchipping • Retail Store  
Educational Resources • Volunteer Opportunities



**GAY, LESBIAN, BI,  
TRANS, STRAIGHT.**  
Honestly, the only label we care about is  
**FAMILY.**

The Wisconsin Fertility Institute is proud to help gay and lesbian couples create the family of their dreams. Schedule your private consultation today, 608.824.0075.

wisc<sup>o</sup>nsin fertility  
INSTITUTE

wisconsinfertility.com  
3146 Deming Way, Middleton

photo: bornarchivalco.com

# WE'RE STILL HERE

RESTAURANTS CAFES BARS FOOD TRUCKS CATERING PROVISIONS BAKERY

These **queer third spaces and other food-related businesses** in south central Wisconsin led by members of the LGBTQ+ community adapted, innovated, and weathered the storm of 2020 and beyond.

## Madison-area LGBTQ-owned Food & Beverage Businesses

### Restaurants & Third Spaces

Betty Lou Cruises  
Cafe Social  
Caracas Empanadas  
Cargo Coffee  
D'Vino  
Daisy Cafe & Cupcakery  
Delta Beer Lab  
Fair Trade Coffee House  
Five Nightclub  
Fromagination  
Giant Jones  
Greenbush Bar

Harvest  
Java Cat  
Mariner's Inn  
Mediterranean Hookah Lounge  
Michael's Frozen Custard  
The Nautigal  
The Old Fashioned  
The Shamrock Bar & Grille  
Square Wine Co.  
Willalby's Cafe  
WOOF's

### Other Businesses

The Baker's Table  
Bee Charmer  
Chef Scotty Catering  
De-Bar Bakery  
The Good Table  
Luna Circle Farm  
Roots Chocolates  
Simply Served Personal Chef  
Stubborn Mule Catering

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** If we missed any new businesses in this print edition, please let us know.

**OUR COMMUNITY SUFFERED DEEP LOSSES** during the COVID crisis. We've mourned the loss of loved ones, the loss of jobs and homes, the deep disruption of our daily routines, and our trust in institutions we thought we could rely on for a safety net.

The COVID crisis and uncertainties about the spread of a respiratory virus shut down our "third spaces," those places where we gather with friends and family that aren't the primary zones of home or work. For the LGBTQ+ community, our queer-friendly third spaces are the places where we can be ourselves, meet, date, dance, and celebrate our art, culture and relationship milestones. It's where we can see ourselves mirrored in the owners, the workers, the patrons, and the artists there.

The crisis challenged our economy at all levels. It revealed the over-policing of our segregated neighborhoods, who was truly an essential worker, and how meaningful the relationship is between small, local businesses and their customers. Rallying to support these businesses came in the form of ordering takeout, participating in virtual events, and contributing to GoFundMe fundraisers to help businesses fill the gap.

Surviving a crisis requires creativity. All of us learned how to get through COVID using the tools we had. We learned how to make banana bread. We learned how to occupy ourselves with new hobbies. We read, we marched, we voted for change. The third spaces we love innovated how they serve their customers. Cafes upgraded their online ordering and payment systems. Restaurants partnered with food and beverage producers for innovative ways to offer foodie gift boxes, collaborative food distribution to families in need, or new ways to steer profits to community groups working on racial justice.

These cafes, bars and food producers did what the LGBTQ+ community has always done with our third spaces. They used their labor, their space, their passion, and their community connections to create

the kind of world we want. A world where we help each other when we have resources to share. A world where people are treated equally and celebrated for who they are. A place where, in a crisis, we come together for mutual support and nourishment in the face of adversity.

## ESTABLISHMENTS

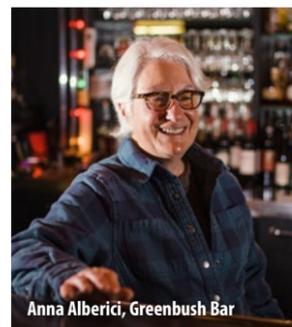
**CAFE SOCIAL** Partners Omar Lopez and Doug Swenson co-own the coffeeshop on the ground floor of the Uncommon building on Bedford Street, just on the edge of UW-Madison's campus. They specialize in single-origin coffee beans sourced from family farms in Armenia, Quindio, Colombia. During the COVID crisis, they temporarily closed their cafe and shifted to delivery of beans before focusing on to-go beverages and food.

**CARACAS EMPANADAS & AREPAS** For over a decade, owner Luis Dom-pablo has shared his passion for Venezuelan cuisine. He offers meat, veggie or cheese-stuffed empanadas and arepas in food trucks commonly found on the capitol square, at farmers markets, and on the UW Library Mall where Luis might urge you to try the guasacaca cilantro sauce. During the COVID crisis, Caracas Empanadas continued to serve outdoor diners, worked with third party delivery companies for online sales, and distributed frozen meals through Christine's Kitchen. Looking ahead, Caracas Empanadas is among the local producers selected as founding members of Madison's future public market.

**CARGO COFFEE & GROUND ZERO COFFEE** Lynn Lee co-owns Cargo Coffee with his twin brother, Lindsey. Their globally sourced coffee beans are locally roasted and the shops' decor reflect a vintage charm with oversized maps and aviation and culinary antiques. During the COVID crisis, the Lees benefitted from having drive-through win-



Lynn Lee, Cargo Coffee & Ground Zero coffeehouses



Anna Alberici, Greenbush Bar



Andrea Hillsey, Square Wine Co.



Tommy Hanna, Mediterranean Hookah Lounge & Cafe



Oscar Villarreal, Migrants

dows in Cargo's Park Street and East Washington locations while dine-in service was closed. However due to uncertainties during the pandemic, they closed the Ground Zero Coffee location on William-son Street in early December.

**DAISY CAFE & CUPCAKERY** Kathy Brooks co-owns the cafe in Madison's Atwood neighborhood whose menu includes many gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options. It's a great place to meet for lunch or brunch where you can get one of their specialty egg stratas – a kind of egg casserole for one with flavors including french toast and chorizo pepper jack. The rotating selections of cupcakes are made from scratch every day and include classic cake flavors and at least one gluten free option. During the COVID crisis, the cafe transformed their parking lot into a patio with outdoor seating for diners. They partnered with EatStreet and GrubHub for delivery, and adapted their takeout service at their front door. A GoFundMe campaign raised over \$16,000 to help the cafe get through the winter. In the spring of 2021, the cafe reopened limited indoor dining and began hiring for the warmer weather.

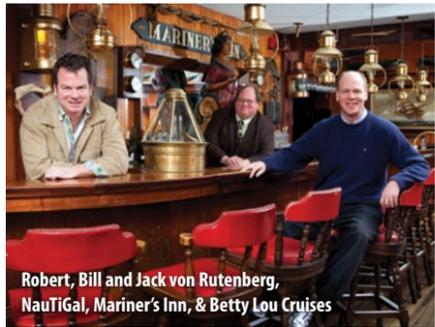
**DELTA BEER LAB** Tim "Pio" Piotrowski was inspired to open his own brewery during a 2019 hike along the Appalachian Trail. His vision includes mixing ingredients as much as mixing people together in a laboratory that celebrates flavor and a commitment to community support. The taproom is a space where patrons are invited to stay, bring food (and pups on select days), play games, and discuss the topics of the day. During the COVID crisis, Delta shifted their production priorities to sell cans, navigated the aluminum scarcity, ramped up distribution plans to local liquor and grocery stores, and kicked off a Kiva loan to raise funds for new counter-pressure canning line and labeling equipment. Their support for public interest causes didn't waver as they continued to contribute "tips" to nonprofits and host virtual events. They continue to offer outdoor seating, physically distanced indoor service, and will launch an outdoor summer movie series in May.

**D'VINO** Traditional Italian fare is on the menu at D'Vino's restaurant next to Woof's bar on Madison's King Street. Open for only two weeks before the Governor's safer-at-home order, owner Dino Ma-



Curbside pickup or delivery available on 





Robert, Bill and Jack von Rutenberg, NauTiGal, Mariner's Inn, & Betty Lou Cruises



Lisa Nelson, Roots Chocolates



Tricia Bross, Luna Circle Farm



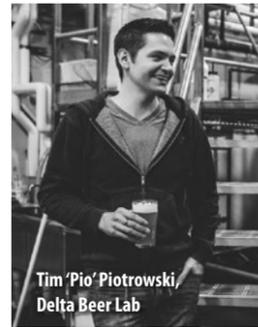
Dino Maniaci, D'Vino & WOOFs



Katie Miller, The Good Table



Michael Dix, Michael's Frozen Custard



Tim 'Pio' Piotrowski, Delta Beer Lab

niaci and chef Jason Hoke had to quickly revamp the menu to dishes Maniaci describes as the meals that sustained their families through tough times: pasta, meatballs and sausages. During the COVID crisis, they focused on curbside pickup or take-and-bake food and took advantage of Madison's streatery program that turned parking spaces into alfresco dining complete with bright red Campari umbrellas and twinkling lights. This spring the restaurant is slowly reopening for dine-in service and is hiring additional staff.

**FAIR TRADE COFFEE HOUSE** The State Street coffee shop was purchased by co-owners Casey Tompson and Thomas Beckwith-Thompson in 2017. It is both a hub for students studying for exams and an evening gathering place that's an alternative to the bar scene. They prioritize serving fair trade certified coffee, baked goods, and light fare. During the COVID crisis, the coffeeshop focused on takeout food and online orders, and used their outdoor patio and large indoor space for safer service. As COVID precautions ease into the summer, they plan to return to normal seating and full capacity.

**FIVE NIGHTCLUB** Since 1998 Five Nightclub has served patrons drinks and entertainment in the club just off of the Beltline and Fish Hatchery Road. A community-supported revival in 2015 rejuvenated the club that remains a central hub of LGBTQ+ celebrations with its huge dance floor and performance stage. During the COVID crisis, Dave Eick's club was among the many that struggled to survive while it had to close its doors to the public. Regular patrons mourned the loss of performer Antonio Lira, aka Vanilla Diamond, who died due to COVID. Drag performers rallied and found ways to partner with Dave to hold virtual events using the Five Nightclub stage. Performers followed COVID safety precautions during outdoor shows and some limited indoor events. Five continues to host indoor events as public health recommendations evolve.

**FROMAGINATION** Fromagination is Madison's downtown cheesemonger, owned by Ken Monteleone. The specialty cheese shop features 60 artisanal cheeses from Wisconsin and more from around the world. During COVID, Fromagination limited store capacity and focused on culinary gifts, curated picnic boxes, and stayed connected with foodie peers, including being a vendor for Around the Farm Table's Inga Witscher's organic farm called St. Isidore's Farmstead Creamery.

**GIANT JONES BREWING COMPANY** Jessica and Erika Jones started their craft brewing company in 2018 to bring big beers to Wisconsin's brewing scene. Their beers are certified organic and the Jones' keep their focus on fair wages and mutual support for other small food producers. During the COVID crisis, Giant Jones had the same challenges and successes as many other brewers: demand for at-home beer went up, but tasting rooms closed and their welcoming approach to serving beer had to change. They kept up production for pick-up and local distribution, brewed a Black is Beautiful pale ale in support of Freedom, Inc., and partnered with local restaurants to offer beer and food pairings to make safer-at-home date nights special. In March the Jones' focused on revamping their space to make room for an expanded bottling line that includes a washing station for returnable bottles.

**GREENBUSH BAR** The basement bar in the Italian Workmen's Club in Madison's Greenbush neighborhood is steeped in Sicilian family history. Owner Anna Alberici has shared her family's recipes in the cozy basement restaurant since 1993 where you can find pizza, pasta, and cocktails. During the COVID crisis, Greenbush remained closed until August when Anna began offering curbside pickup for a more limited menu four days a week. With the help of pandemic relief grants, they hope to reopen with more staff and an expanded menu after public health orders allow in-person dining again.

**HARVEST & THE OLD FASHIONED** Harvest owner Tami Lax focuses on Wisconsin food and seasonal fare in these neighboring restaurants on

Madison's capitol square. The Old Fashioned, managed by Lax's partner Jennifer DeBolt, has a 'Scottie-casual menu that features famous cheese curds. Since 2000, Harvest menus have centered farm-to-table dishes in an upscale atmosphere. During the COVID crisis, both restaurants offered takeout food, but Harvest restructured their service options as Harvest-Go to only offer curbside pickup and delivery of complete bistro-style meals including steak, fish fry, and pasta dinners. Harvest also participated in Dane Buy Local's Soup's On bulk soup sales, and they supported the Cook It Forward initiative to provide meals to local families. The Old Fashioned offers limited indoor dining and meals based on Chef Amelia's food heritage from growing up in Temascalcingo, Mexico. This spring, both restaurants will take advantage of outdoor seating, and Harvest will determine whether to offer indoor seating with more staff if indoor capacity limits are lifted.

**JAVA CAT** The cozy coffee shop owned by Renee Raspiller sits on the edge of Madison and Monona and supports local artists and nonprofits. During the COVID crisis, Java Cat took advantage of its drive-through window and continued to serve coffee and house-made gelato treats to patrons while their cafe's indoor dining remained closed. They also focused on gift card and gift basket sales during the holidays and supported the Black Lives Matter movement with an art supply drive for youth. They are reopening their indoor space as soon as all staff are fully vaccinated.

**LUNA CIRCLE FARM** It's easy to spot the farm stand with the purple awning at the Dane County Farmers Market. Owner Tricia Bross brings more than a quarter century of experience in growing organic vegetables, including the tomatillos found in the tomatillo salsa kits sold at the Willy Street Co-op. Luna Circle's food distribution focuses on two community supported agriculture plans: a traditional CSA box and a market share where you can pay in advance and pick your own box at the market. During the COVID crisis, Tricia and her staff continued to offer their MOSA-certified organic market shares based on emailed orders distributed in drive-through pick-up options.

**MEDITERRANEAN HOOKAH LOUNGE & CAFE** Lebanese food and a chill atmosphere are the core of the culture co-owners Tommy Hanna and brother Simon bring to the Capitol View Heights neighborhood where you can find belly dancers, hookah in assorted flavors, karaoke nights and authentic Lebanese cuisine. During the COVID crisis, the kitchen offered curbside pickup, from falafel to fish fry. Hanna says it's hard to predict what will happen this spring as he works to balance the limits of affordable hours and staff with no outdoor seating and limited indoor seating, but the restaurant is hiring for the spring.

**MICHAEL'S FROZEN CUSTARD** Michael Dix has been making frozen custard for over thirty years. The custard shops on Atwood Avenue

# Local owners Jeff & Tim invite you to TREAT YOURSELF TO A UNIQUE PET STORE

- 🐾 Natural Pet Foods & Treats
- 🐾 Expert Nutrition Advice
- 🐾 Full-Service Grooming
- 🐾 Self-Serve Dog Wash



## NOW WITH 2 MADISON LOCATIONS!

**MADISON EAST**  
6071 Gemini Drive  
Madison, WI 53718  
(608) 230-6210

**MADISON WEST**  
3260 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53705  
(608) 284-9007

SHOP ONLINE at [EarthWisePetMadison.com](http://EarthWisePetMadison.com)

# EARTHWISE Pet

SUPPLY • GROOMING • WASH  
Locally Owned and Operated.

 In these times, having the right home for you and your family to stay safer at home is our priority. We are all in this together, we are here and we care. Be well.  
**Powerful Results. Real People.**



   [www.LauerRealtyGroup.com](http://www.LauerRealtyGroup.com) 608.467.3220



## Sit Back & Enjoy the View

**Full-service design and installation**  
Patios, walkways, and retaining walls  
Renovation of existing landscapes  
Low-voltage landscape lighting  
Drainage correction and grading  
Year-round maintenance and snow removal



5284 Lacy Road Fitchburg, WI 53711  
608-274-2443

[ganshert.com](http://ganshert.com)





Daisy Cafe & Cupcakery



Nate Prince, Willalby's Cafe



Doug Swenson & Omar Lopez, Cafe Social



Bob Mahr, Shamrock Bar & Grille



Mary Celley, Bee Charmer

and Schroeder Road have a vintage soda shop vibe and offer cones, sundaes and shakes as well as burgers, dogs and fries. In September 2019 before the COVID crisis, Michael closed the shop that had been on Monroe Street for 33 years after the government denied his partner, Sergio De La O Hernandez, reentry to the United States due to challenges with US immigration and visa policies. During the COVID crisis, Sergio was able to rejoin his family in Wisconsin by May, and Michael reopened the Monroe Street location to serve outdoor patrons during the summer. The custard shop made the news again when in September, the landlord who owned the building where the flagship restaurant is located declined to renew the lease. Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream announced plans to move into the Monroe Street building, adding to its list of six other locations.

**MIGRANTS** Settling into his new location off the Beltline across from the Arboretum, former Fuegos' owner Oscar Villarreal's menu offers tacos, burritos, vegetarian, vegan and brunch items, and an array of salsas in a variety of textures and heat. A side order of his queso sauce is a flavorful treat that's unlike anything in Dane County. During the COVID crisis, Migrants worked with third-party delivery services,

provided meals to healthcare workers with a customer fund-match program, and participated in Dane Buy Local's Soup's On bulk soup initiative. Their curbside menus often focused on multi-course meals for holidays, and they had an overwhelming demand for orders during Restaurant Week. Oscar's support for longtime employees often extended to making sure they had groceries, rides to work, and will get COVID vaccines. Migrants is hiring for the spring, and they hope to cater for more outdoor events.

**NAUTIGAL, MARINER'S INN, & BETTY LOU CRUISES** In 2000 Robert von Rutenberg joined his brothers Jack and Bill to carry on the family businesses of waterfront dining and boat tours on Lake Mendota. During the COVID crisis, the family announced in June 2020 that they would close Captain Bill's restaurant in Middleton and concentrate on their Westport businesses. Outdoor dining, limited indoor dining, takeout and curbside pick up allowed NauTiGal and Mariner's Inn to continue serving the brunch and fish fry they are known for. Safer-at-home orders led to Betty Lou Cruises getting a later start of the season last year. Boat tour staff wore masks, increased sanitation procedures, reduced boat capacity, and offered fewer boats for booking.



Jessica & Erika Jones, Giant Jones Brewing



Dave Eick, FIVE Nightclub

**SHAMROCK BAR & GRILLE** The Shamrock is technically Madison's oldest gay bar. The original bar began in 1985 and since 2013, owner Bob Mahr has worked to keep his downtown bar's drink specials affordable and the food menu accessible, including a popular brunch menu that features the "Shamosa" that's more turbo-charged than a classic mimosa. During the COVID crisis, Mahr offered take-out and created a GoFundMe to support the bar's operations. Patrons donated over \$25,000 in honor of the Shamrock's role as a supporter of non-profits and LGBTQ+ culture. This spring they hope to have another successful year in the streatery program and will hire more bartenders as indoor capacity limits are lifted.

**SQUARE WINE CO.** Andrea Hillsey's enthusiasm for wine is equal to her depth of knowledge about the vintages she carries from around the world. She's committed to teaching consumers about wine appreciation and pairing, as well as staying connected with the leaders of the local food scene. During the COVID crisis, Square Wine's location on the capitol square became a pick-up hub for a reimagined wine club dubbed "Club Quarantine." Curated selections of bottles became the subject of virtual wine tastings on Instagram Live where Andrea, her partner Ashley Parr, and participants commented on wine flavors and ideal food pairings. This spring Square Wine Co. opened a new location that's still on the square but is now located at 1. East Main Street.

**WILLALBY'S CAFE** Owner Nate Prince took over Willalby's in 2010 after working there for a decade. The diner is a long-time institution on Williamson Street that's known for its vegan-friendly breakfasts and giant buttermilk pancakes that are among the best in town. During the COVID crisis, the cafe closed to inside dining and struggled with a shift to takeout food. Nate says things turned around, especially when the weather was good. He's optimistic about returning to normal as capacity limits are lifted and customers continue to order takeout.

**WOOF'S** Dino Maniaci's King Street bar has served patrons since 2008 and offers something different in Madison's gay bar scene. It's a sports bar that offers a variety of activities and events, from dart or pool leagues, to leather, Levi, and fetish-themed nights and Pride block parties. During the COVID crisis, Woof's closed to the public just days before celebrating their 14-year anniversary so that Maniaci could focus on food service for D'Vino. Woof's offered commemorative retail items—including face masks—and served customers during warmer months on their streatery patio. This spring, Woof's will hire additional staff to take advantage of the outdoor patio beer garden space.

OTHER BUSINESSES

**THE BAKER'S TABLE** Gavin Logan is the baker behind pies and treats you can find at local restaurants like D'Vino or Salvatore's Tomato



It's our differences that make us great.

**Jim Hartman Ins Agcy Inc**  
Jim Hartman, Agent  
5706 US Highway 51  
Bus: 608-838-4171  
Cell: 608-345-4885  
jim@jimhartman.com

No matter what you value, I'm here to protect it with respect and professionalism. **Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®** CALL ME TODAY.



1101010.1

State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

## New American Center Clinic

(Just outside of Sun Prairie)

Now Accepting New Patients



**ORTHODONTISTS**  
Dr. Alsamawi & Dr. Schasker

**FAMILY DENTISTS**  
Dr. Schwitters & Dr. Kolker



Sun Prairie • East • Downtown  
Fitchburg • West • University

Supporting the Madison Community since 1969

## Momentum DENTAL PLANS

Personalized insurance plans for individuals and families.

Expansive network of dental clinics.



Call 608.729.6500 today!  
MomentumPlans.com  
Locally owned and operated in Madison

2016 National & Regional award winner NARI basement under 30k  
2017 Regional award winner NARI kitchen under 50k  
2016 Angie's List Super service award



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

"It has been great to know that I could refer to my husband without fearing that weird look people get on their faces when they aren't expecting that." **CHAD & DALE**

Looks like it's...

**TIME 2 REMODEL**  
time2remodel.com

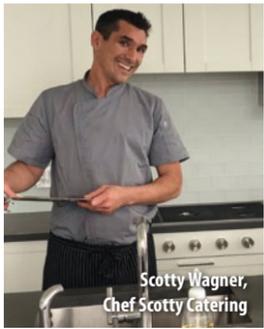




Gavin Logan,  
The Baker's Table



Dustin Barman, D-Bar Bakery



Scotty Wagner,  
Chef Scotty Catering



Jeanne Moe,  
Simply Served Personal Chef



Tami Lax, Harvest  
& The Old Fashioned

Pies and at farmers markets in Sun Prairie and the west side of Madison. He won a Channel 3000 food photo contest and orders for started coming in. Partnering with Chef Dave Heide to use a commercial kitchen allowed Logan to scale up production. During the COVID crisis, he focused on online orders and baking for holidays. This spring he plans to keep selling baker-to-business and at farmers' markets.

**BEE CHARMER** You'll find the honey bee enthusiast at her spot in the Dane County Farmers Market every Saturday. Ask Mary Celley anything about bees and she will bring her many years of experience and education in horticulture to explain why different honey has different flavor or how you can successfully keep bees at home. During the COVID crisis, Mary partnered with The Old Fashioned for summer retail sales. The Bee Charmer is now taking orders for the 2021 season.

**CHEF SCOTTY CATERING, LLC** A native of rural Wisconsin, Chef Scotty Wagner of Chef Scotty Catering, LLC returned to his roots after finding success in the foodie scene of Southern California. An accom-

plished chef, Scotty's innovative menus are grounded in the "best of the fresh" any season and area has to offer, with a hint of Asian influence and an overlay of the tropics. With additional safety measures in place and taking every necessary precaution, Chef Scotty Catering is continuing to cater events while following Covid-19 guidelines.

**D-BAR BAKERY** D-Bar Bakery is a home bakery settled conveniently in the Madison community. Dustin Barman loves bringing your ideas and creative thoughts to life in a way that helps build community and enhance your gathering with delicious baked goods from light summer tarts to tiered wedding cakes.

**THE GOOD TABLE** In 2018, creator Katie Miller used her masters in nutrition and dietetics to guide The Good Table's pop-up dinners for Madison's LGBTQIA+ community. During the COVID crisis, events came to an end and Katie decided to pursue training as a physician's assistant at UW-Madison as a different way to support all aspects of health for the queer community. She hasn't given up on The Good



Ken Monteleone,  
Fromagination



Casey Tompson & Thomas Beckwith-Thompson,  
Fair Trade Coffee House

Table and hopes to host an event this summer if it's possible to balance COVID health precautions and a graduate student's schedule.

**ROOTS CHOCOLATES** Based in the Wisconsin Dells, Lisa Nelson is a fourth-generation farm owner who's sourced seasonal ingredients to make Roots Chocolates since 2010. Specialties include chocolates with mint and basil in the summer, and aronia berries or squash with Wisconsin maple syrup in the fall. During the COVID crisis, Lisa produced small-batch chocolates to sell at farmers markets, and partnered with producers to pair treats with beverages in packages for home tastings. Her products are at Metcalfe's in Hilldale Mall and online.

**SIMPLY SERVED PERSONAL CHEF** Jeanne Moe prepares meals, offers cooking lessons one-on-one or for groups, serves food for special events, and sources seasonal ingredients for omnivores or those with gluten-free or vegan preferences. As a personal chef, she does everything from shopping for ingredients to preparing food in your home, cleaning the kitchen, and storing meals in your fridge or freezer. During the COVID crisis, Jeanne did not offer her services, but Simply Served plans to operate again this spring.

**STUBBORN MULE CATERING** Co-owned by Ryan Meuller, Stubborn Mule Catering focuses on creating unique events. Menus are always different, and they bring fresh ideas to catering large events or personal chef services. When possible, they source ingredients from farmers markets and base menus off of local, seasonal ingredients. During the COVID crisis, canceled events brought their services to a halt. As people begin to reschedule summer events, Stubborn Mule is operating again with the goal of having all staff vaccinated.

**OTHER NOTABLE CHANGES**

**ONCE PLAN B AND THEN PRISM**, 924 Williamson Street is now I/O arcade bar. The space might have become a lounge operated by Austin Carl, but neighborhood opposition and scrutiny by the common council's alcohol license review committee put the proposed club on pause. During the COVID crisis, I/O moved from its location at 720 Williamson Street into the former Prism space with plans to open in the spring.

**Cow & Quince** owner Lori Stern handed the baton over to new natural food enthusiasts who reopened the downtown New Glarus restaurant as The House Cafe and Bakery in February 2021. Owner Kaylee Walters says "our goal is to be a coffeeshop and a sort of freehouse where anyone can feel comfortable, especially those who might not otherwise find comfort being themselves in a rural setting."

In June 2020, **Manna Cafe** on the north side of Madison closed. The longtime queer-friendly space plans to publish a cookbook of its legacy recipes, including oatmeal pancakes from the Collins House bed and breakfast. The renovated space is now home to Ancora Coffee. ■

Enjoy the warm summer air without mosquitos!  
SAVE UP TO 30% ON YOUR NEW ROOM



Call today for a free consultation!

Showroom Hours: **MON - FRI 8-4 SAT BY APPOINTMENT**

Sunrooms - Pergolas - Screen Rooms - Porch Enclosures

Get a New View from



608-222-7777 | koolview.com  
4701 Triangle St. McFarland



We stand for you!



www.dccu.us  
608 256-5665 • 800 593-3228



We stand for you

**BETHKE**  
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING, INC

Furnaces • Boilers • Air Conditioners  
Humidifiers • Duct Cleaning  
Preventative Maintenance Plans

**Emergency Service 24/7 251-2222**

Locally Owned. Locally Operated.

**BETHKE**  
HEATING & A/C  
845-6396 251-2222

FINANCING AVAILABLE  
**BethkeHeating.com**



**HAPPY HOMEOWNERS**

"The design you came up with is a wonderful marriage of beauty and function." **CHAD & DALE**

Looks like it's...

**TIME 2 REMODEL**

time2remodel.com

**5NINES**  
CYBERSECURITY

5NINES has been securing Madison business computers, infrastructures and networks for 18 years.

Visit security.5nines.com to learn how we can protect your business from costly downtime or disaster.

security.5nines.com

**COOKBOOKS** **JAMES BEARD** **PENDARVIS**

## Yummy, yummy

**R. Richard Wagner** takes us on a culinary tour of gay mid-Century cooks and gourmards from James Beard to Wisconsin's own Edward Harris Heth and the men of Pendarvis.

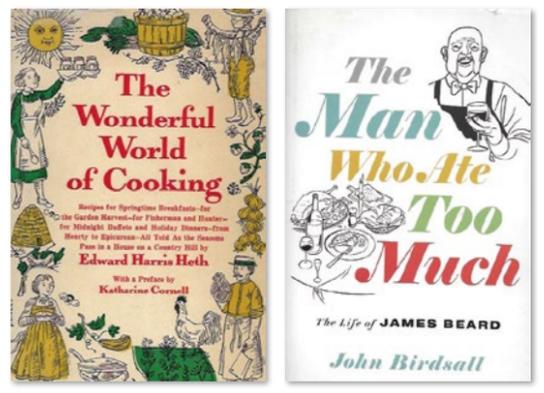
**OSCAR WILDE**, perhaps the most famous homosexual of the 19th Century, due to his literary fame and his 1895 conviction for homosexual relations, spent two years in Reading Gaol prison. Yet his reputation has only grown and his witticisms continue to be quoted. He insightfully drew a link between gays and good food. Wilde noted, "After a good dinner one could forgive anybody." And yet again, "To get into the best society nowadays, one has either to feed people, amuse people, or shock people." His dinners entertaining rent boys in London accomplished all three.

### THE REAL JAMES BEARD

The link between good cuisine and queerness recently comes through in *The Man Who Ate Too Much: The Life of James Beard* (Norton, 2020). The biography of this "Dean of American Cookery" was written by John Birdsall, himself a restaurant critic and cookbook author. Birdsall shows how Beard, a West Coast native, was expelled from Portland's Reed College for a supposed sexual relation as an undergraduate with a young professor. While in Portland and later in New York the young James Beard tried to make it in the theatrical world—a milieu known as friendly to gays.

Edward Harris Heth resided in the Welsh Hills of Waukesha County with his partner William Chancey in a home they built and named the House on the Hill.

Beard, who carried substantial body weight by the late 1940s, had an early TV show which he ended with the tag "I love to eat!" Birdsall notes the publishing world's de-queering of Beard's personality into "an epicurean bachelor professor" to make him a commercial entity to promote cookbook sales which became a prime source of his income. Birdsall notes that the Cold War Frost furthered by the likes of Wisconsin's own Senator Joe McCarthy insisted on "a strict patriotic adherence to gender expecta-



tations." Birdsall asserts the editor of *Gourmet* magazine booted James Beard for being "too brazenly queer."

One summer some friends who had a hamburger stand on the wharf in Nantucket asked Beard to take over one season's operation of the business, which bore the name "Lucky Pierre." The establishment's name had sexual overtones of a Frenchman in the middle of a male threesome. The owners had played with bad French on their menus with Chiens Chauds Aboyants, or Hot Barking Dogs. The owners also joked in a fake testimonial that Senator McCarthy suspected their catsup because it was red.

Working on a new outdoor cookbook Beard suggested calling it *Balls, Picnics and Other Outdoor Pursuits*. Another idea was titling it doing it outdoors in all small letters a la the poet e. e. cummings.

Among the many gay men Beard met in the food world one gentleman from San Francisco was involved with the Mattachine Society, the early homophile organization strongest on the West Coast. Though the friend pitched the new organization to Beard and even gave him a subscription for a year in 1958 to *ONE*, a gay magazine, Beard remained standoffish from early gay activists, preferring more discreet gay circles. After all, he was a regular contributor to *The Argosy*, a "men's" magazine, though Beard was not above having a favorite seduction menu for young gentlemen.

### EDWARD HARRIS HETH

In Wisconsin, another gay foodie was also exploring menus and ingredients in post-war

America. Edward Harris Heth resided in the Welsh Hills of Waukesha County with his partner William Chancey in a home they built and named the House on the Hill. Like Beard, Heth used media to popularize country life and cooking with a show on Wisconsin Public Radio.

In *My Life on Earth* Heth published a semi-autobiographical work which recalled his leaving the New York advertising world to return to Wales and how he built his country kitchen. Like Beard, Heth used the supposed bachelor cover for his persona in the book. Yet his building contractor wondered why he needed a sink and stove and so many cupboards if he didn't have a wife.

Heth was not quite as reticent as Beard about engaging a gay identity. He recalls exchanging recipes with Alfred Lunt from Ten Chimneys at whose home the gay playwright Noel Coward and his partner were frequent guests. Heth published *1951 Almanac: A Handbook of Pleasure* which included artwork from a number of gay artists. And in the credits, he acknowledged "Mr. Chancey shares the House on the Hill." Neighbors would recall they knew Heth was gay.

In 1956, Heth published *The Wonderful World of Cooking*, which was republished in 1968 as *The Country Kitchen Cook Book*. The reprinting of the book had an introduction by naturalist Euell Gibbons who had written about stalking the wild asparagus. Gibbons praised Heth as one who "titillates the appetite" and "flouts his recipes"—not the most typical male attributes. Gibbons notes that some of Heth's guests discussed what they might serve to people they cannot stand. His cookbook was also populated with stories about colorful Wisconsin characters like Aunt Dell.

Heth, as a good Wisconsinite, advocated for having a blizzard cupboard to get by in the unheeded snowstorm. With a quarter mile drive on a hill sometimes days might go by before full access returned. His blizzard cupboard consisted of stockpiles of better canned meats, mushrooms, brown bread, pates, and jars of preserves.

### BOB NEAL AND EDGAR HELLUM

Of course, in the gays and food category, the real Wisconsin pioneers were Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum of Mineral Point. At Pendarvis, their restored Cornish miner's home, they operated a restaurant that was praised by Duncan Hines, author of the pre-eminent food guide of America. Hines, a traveling salesman, kept lists of good restaurants which he published as *Adventures in Good Eating* for travelers starting in the 1930s and continuing with yearly editions into the 1950s.

Originally, the couple of Neal and Hellum



Robert Neal serving a Cornish pasty that could feed six. Credit: Wisconsin Historical Society ID 37871.

started serving tea and were lavished with a good write-up by Betty Cass, a Madison journalist. These two "artistic" young men proceeded to help revive Cornish lore and cuisine with the Cornish pasty being a featured item on the menu. It is in the English tradition of the individual meat pie to be picked up. The Cornish miners' wives in the old days would bake them ahead for the miners to take them along for lunch.

Neal and Hellum in the restaurant served them in larger sizes for dinner guests often made up according to the number in your

party when you made a reservation. The pasty basically included chopped meat and sliced or chopped potatoes and onions in a pie crust. Some traditions substituted rutabaga for some of the potatoes. I also find adding a few dabs of Korean hot chili sauce or gochujang is yummy, though of course not traditional.

### DAN CURD

I want to end with a tribute to my modern-day neighborhood gay gourmand Dan Curd who has served so many yummy meals to so many gay men over the decades. Known as a local food writer for his many culinary contributions to *Madison* magazine, the Kentucky-born Curd searches out the correct recipes and the best ingredients for his creations. For a select few, he has shared some highlights in his own very limited-edition cookbooks. Since it is spring and the horse races are picking up in Louisville, Curd's recipe for Derby Pie is on my mind. I am sure James Beard would have liked it. ■



**RICHARD WAGNER**, openly gay former Dane County Board Chair and co-chair of Governor Earl's Commission on Lesbian and Gay Issues, is the author of both *We've Been Here All Along: Wisconsin's Early Gay History* and *Coming Out, Moving Forward: Wisconsin's Recent Gay History*.

# Achieve the dream of home ownership

To find out how you can get into the home of your dreams, call Mike today.

- Buyer's Edge® – first-time homebuyers program
- Fixed- and adjustable-rate mortgages
- New construction loans
- Refinancing
- Providing statewide support to the community

**Michael Fumelle**  
4402 East Towne Blvd.  
608-259-4263  
Michael.Fumelle@AssociatedBank.com  
NMLS ID: 523546

Subject to credit approval. Equal Housing Lender. Associated Bank, N.A. is a Member FDIC and Associated Banc-Corp. (4/12) 1336

[AssociatedBank.com](http://AssociatedBank.com)

do you dream of a



but you only have



Christie Olsen, MSN, NP

forwardfertility.com • christie@forwardfertility.com  
608-217-7511 • Madison, Wis.

EGG DONATION AND SURROGACY  
PROVEN RESULTS IN THIRD-PARTY FERTILITY



Dutcher

PHOTOGRAPHY  
SINCE 2002

robandsamphoto.com



CONNECT → OUR INTERSECTIONS



OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



QTBIPOC INDIGENOUS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## An Indigenous Epidemic

Each year the US reports thousands of cases of missing Indigenous women and girls, with barely any media attention. Our indigenous Madison Alder **Arvina Martin** looks at how Wisconsin and the Two Spirit and LGBTQ communities are impacted.

**WE ARE LIVING THROUGH** a global pandemic. We are living through a national reckoning of the abuse that our Black siblings experience at the hands law enforcement. We are living through our Asian siblings being physically attacked across the country, after the previous president scapegoated the entire community for a virus. What the majority of the public probably doesn't recognize is that we are also in the middle of another human rights crisis, the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Though this problem has existed for generations, tribal members, and activists have been working hard to bring attention to this very serious issue.

The statistics are staggering. But the statistics are also incomplete. With the information we have, it is estimated that 84% of Indigenous women have experienced violence in their lifetime. For Indigenous women and girls between the ages of 10 and 24, homicide is the third leading cause of death. For those who are between 25–34, it is the fifth leading cause of death. The National Crime Information Center reported almost 6,000 cases of missing Indigenous women and girls in 2016, but the US Department of Justice was only tracking 116 cases.

We don't even have statistics for Wisconsin. It is happening here though. Katelyn Kelley, Menominee, was reported missing by her family June 18, 2020. Despite the efforts of her family, friends, community members, and law enforcement, they were unable to find her. Unfortunately, her remains were discovered, and confirmed to be her, on March 22, 2021.

That was 277 days. During those 277 days, those who love her held onto the hope that she would return home, safe and sound. Did you hear about Katelyn in the news? Probably not. She didn't get the same coverage as she might have if she was a white woman from the suburbs. There were no "Breaking News" cutaways with updates, or daily articles across the country regarding leads.

Too many of these cases end up as cold cases. Potential information stops coming.



We do know that Wisconsin ranks sixth in the nation in sexual trafficking, and our spot along the I90/94 corridor makes it likely that this exploitation has happened here.

Rae Elaine Tourtillott was 18 when she disappeared in 1986. Her remains were found months later. Today, her case is still unsolved, and the Menominee Tribal Police and the FBI are still looking for information.

### LGBTQ GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

While we have scarce data as to the extent of this epidemic, there is even less information about our Two Spirit and LGBTQ siblings. We know that gender-based violence doesn't only happen to cisgender women and girls. In fact, it is estimated that 78–85 percent of Two Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous people have experienced gender-based violence. Unfortunately, in addition to dealing with racism, they must face homophobia and transphobia that too often permeates our society. Because of these barriers, reporting is very likely not happening.

Nationwide, Indigenous activists have taken up this cause, marching with signs, and red dresses, which have come to be associated

with the movement. Artists have created beautiful and devastating art that speaks to the sheer scale of those we've lost.

Human trafficking is thought to contribute to this epidemic, and some have pointed to the "Man Camps" of North Dakota, where (mostly) men work on the Bakken oil fields. In 2012, reports claimed that violent crime including gender-based violence, murder, and human trafficking grew substantially in areas with these camps.

We may think that because we live here in Madison, we are removed from these situations. Unfortunately, we just don't know, because we don't have the information. We do know that Wisconsin ranks sixth in the nation in sexual trafficking, and our spot along the I90/94 corridor makes it likely that this exploitation has happened here.

We need to open our eyes, and pay attention to what is happening. We need to amplify the voices of the families who are missing their loved ones. We need to support initiatives like the ones led by Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, our country's first Indigenous cabinet secretary—she has created the Missing and Murdered Unit, which will be housed in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They will be tasked with collecting accurate data, and sharing across all jurisdictions. We also need to support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, which was created by Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul, after the Wisconsin State Legislature failed to advance a bill with bipartisan support that would have done the same. This kind of governmental work will open lines of conversations between jurisdictions, allowing more information to be collected and shared.

### MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS AWARENESS DAY

We also must remember the ones we've lost, and the ones whose names we may never know. May 5 is Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Awareness Day. Please, take the time to learn more about this issue. Support work done by Indigenous activists and organizations, like the Waking Women Institute here in Wisconsin. A candlelight vigil to honor the memory for those we've lost was held May 2 at the Capitol to take the time to honor those who we've lost, and the families who love and miss them every day. ■



**ARVINA MARTIN** is a member of the Madison Common Council and Former Chair of the American Indian Caucus for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. She is also a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation as well as Stockbridge-Munsee.

RYAN FUNERAL HOMES

& CREMATION SERVICES

Guiding families through the process of grieving with neighborly concern and professional care since 1938.



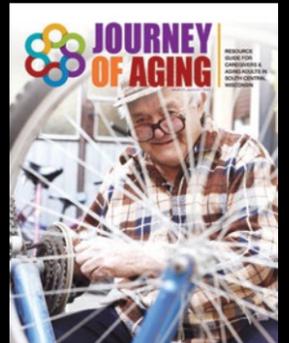
HAVE YOU SHARED YOUR WISHES WITH YOUR FAMILY?

- Relieve loved ones of emotional decisions
- Personalize according to your wishes
- Tomorrow's funeral at today's cost

608-249-8257

Madison | Verona | DeForest

RYANFUNERALSERVICE.COM



TOGETHER!

we make a difference

madisonessentials.com | homeelementsandconcepts.com | journeyofaging.com

ALEXANDER EINSMAN  
MS LMFT



Mind +  
Body Focus

ATLAS  
COUNSELING

LGBTQ-  
Affirming  
Relationship  
Therapy

EMDR  
Hypnosis

ATLASMADISON.COM  
608.535.9285

In This House...  
**ALL  
STILL  
MEANS  
ALL**

**First United  
Methodist  
Church**

**Sunday Worship  
9 & 11:15**

203 Wisconsin Ave  
Madison, WI 53703  
608.256.9061

**fumc.org**

Dulcy Dog Photography

**NOW  
BOOKING  
FOR 2021**



Dulcy  
dog photography

406.823.0028 | info@dulcydogphotography.com  
dulcydogphotography.com

CONNECT → OUR ISSUES

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM




MENTAL HEALTH ISOLATION LIMINALITY

## Tips for Combating Pandemic Fatigue

Many who once thought that social distancing, masking, and quarantining would last a few weeks or months, have since settled in for the long haul and are now beyond exhausted. **Amber Ault, Ph.D., MSW**, offers some advice for making it through the COVID home stretch.

**IN SOCIOLOGICAL TERMS**, “liminality” describes the state of being between two statuses. Being engaged to be married is a liminal state, as is time between jobs, and the wait between buying a plane ticket and getting in the air. In broader terms, the time between a US election and the inauguration of a new president is a liminal moment. Liminal moments are tricky ones, rife with uncertainty, and often punctuated by danger. They are also full of possibility.

The Covid-19 pandemic might be seen as a liminal phase between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic, vaccinated world, and more than a year into the experience, with vaccine-inspired hope, the risks of liminality increase. We’re traumatized and exhausted and suffering decision fatigue. We’re wary and grieving and stressed by wildly mixed messaging about the virus and public health, even while many of us take comfort in the new administration’s efforts to bring the pandemic to an end. In this liminal moment, we struggle to make sense of things, to chart our individual courses of action, and to resist throwing caution to the wind impulsively and too soon.

It’s not surprising that people are suffering the long-term strain of the pandemic, as it rages on. Here at one of the most hopeful

moments in this long siege, we’re experiencing not only the ongoing effects of isolation, frustration, and fear, but also new anxieties typical of liminality. With the availability of vaccines, what is safe to do? When will it be okay to gather again, and with whom? These questions feel especially poignant for LGBTQ people, as so many of us create chosen families with whom we don’t live, and experience community gatherings as vital. In this pandemic, one of the most important resources for our mental health has posed the greatest risk to our physical safety: spending time together.

After more than a year of on-line Pride festivals, events-by-zoom, and postponed visits, gatherings, trips, and memorials, after a year of figuring out how to work from home or on the front line, if we have been able to avoid job

loss, after a million and one pivots in strange circumstances, we have acclimated to a “new normal.” We can celebrate our creativity and fortitude in figuring out the work-arounds and supporting each other’s survival. As we hope for a transition back to life that is more social, however, many of us will continue to experience anxiety around how to re-connect. Our risk tolerance will vary; some of us plan to rush into the nearest bar as soon as we are fully vaccinated, while others plan to continue to live socially distanced until outbreaks are small and geographically contained. This range of impulses reflects the broader ambiguities we face as experts offer mixed guidance about what’s safe.

How can we maintain emotional stability and mental wellness in the context of the current uncertainties? Here are some strategies I provide my coaching and therapy clients:

- 1 Give yourself credit for getting this far. None of us can comprehend at present the impact of this global pandemic. Few of us had a roadmap for navigating all of the challenges the pandemic would pose. You have done the best you could do with the knowledge you had at any given moment. Offer yourself kindness, gratitude, and appreciation for that.
- 2 Recognize that you’re living through an extraordinary experience, in global terms; the pandemic has made clear the degree to which we are all connected on this planet, the ways in which we affect each other’s well-being, and how we may be able to use that knowledge for the benefit of the planet, people most disadvantaged by social and economic inequality, and our local communities. The old normal will not be the new normal, but the new normal can be smarter, kinder, and more just.
- 3 Recognize that nearly everyone has been profoundly affected by the pandemic—whether through the loss of loved ones, increased economic fragility, deeper isolation, depression or anxiety, profound work stress in high-risk environments, a range of traumatic and post-traumatic challenges, the deterioration of physical health, the postponing of important life events, or the strain of supporting others going through these experiences. As we move closer to a potential post-pandemic world, be kind to yourself and to others who differ from you.
- 4 Continue to follow public-health guidance, at a minimum. Educate yourself about the best possible practices for keeping others and yourself safe; given the mixed signaling from various entities, hold yourself responsible for finding a range of reliable sources of information related to the pandemic, vaccinations, and public health. Integrate that in your practices.
- 5 Begin to allow yourself the pleasure of reasonable risk-taking, when it feels safe, based on scientific knowledge. This may include outdoor masked meet-ups with vaccinated people, for those who are more cautious, to unmasked indoor gatherings with fully vaccinated others for those who are less risk-averse. It’s okay, when you’re uncomfortable, to take a step back. Eventually, you will gradually be able to take more and greater steps forward.



**AMBER AULT, Ph.D., MSW** (amberault.com), is a sociologist, licensed mental health clinician, and Gottman couples therapist that provides coaching and counseling to individuals and couples. During the pandemic, she has worked in an urban emergency room and in her virtual office.

**LGBTQ-AFFIRMING & EXPERIENCED**

**LOOKING FOR A  
PROFESSIONAL  
TO HELP YOU  
GET THROUGH IT?**

**I CAN HELP INDIVIDUALS AND COUPLES:**

- Live authentically
- Overcome depression, anxiety, low self-esteem
- Improve relationships

David Lacocque, Psy.D.  
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST

Free phone consultation  
608-358-6868 [drlacocque.com](http://drlacocque.com)

**702 N. BLACKHAWK AVE.**



## A Health Plan for All of Us

Quartz is a health plan that shares your values and works to keep you healthy.

Quartz is a health plan committed to serving our community.

**Isn't it time you had Quartz?**

**Quartz**

[QuartzBenefits.com](http://QuartzBenefits.com)



QTBIPOC COMING OUT PEER SUPPORT IDENTITY

## Flannels & Sass: Exploring Queer Friendship

**Maggie Di Sanza** and **Antonio Wu** have navigated multiple rites of passage together. Here, they have a conversation ranging from coming out to shrugging societal expectations.

**ANTONIO WU:** Early on when I was still reconciling with my sexuality, I'd really only come out to one person before you. I told you because we were very close friends already.

**MAGGIE DI SANZA:** I came out to you not even 10 minutes later.

**A:** I actually had no idea you were gay.

**M:** Really? It makes sense. We were so internally critical that it was hard to acknowledge what others were communicating. Nevertheless, coming out to you was indescribably relieving. After coming out to straight friends, being affirmed by another gay person was refreshing. No explanations were required. That was a turning point for us, unlocking shared experiences and consciousness-raising sessions in the years to come.

**A:** Compared to most people, I had a fairly quick “gay-discovery” phase. Becoming more confident in that identity was the problem. Gay representation in media is already scarce; much less representation that looks, thinks, or acts like me. So much of my developing personality in middle school latched onto the few people I found on the internet.

Tyler Oakley and Connor Franta had an impact on what I thought of myself and what I should aspire to be. As a young gay boy, my demeanor was removed from the person I actually was. In everyday interactions I would be extremely sardonic and cynical. Sass is such a stereotypical gay trait that it felt like I was failing other gay men and myself not to be sassy. It sounds silly, but as someone whose identity wasn't legitimate in society or in my own eyes, the smallest details counted.

It was not only inorganic to my generally friendly intuition, but it became a crucial defense mechanism towards the hate (perceived or real) I felt as a young gay person. While I depended on that artificial confidence for years, there was a point where roasting people became counter-productive, and trying to be everybody's best friend—the “Gay Best Friend,” in a lot of cases—was much more socially advantageous.

**M:** As a young queer femme growing up, I felt the requirement of conforming to the traditional lesbian expectation of masculinity. Cutting my hair and wearing flannels in no way defined my queerness, but for the majority of my adolescent life I thought it did. I felt validated when my peers would mock me with the word “dyke” as it certified my intentions: to be perceived as the right—or rather, more masculine—type of lesbian woman. At the same time, I understood how cutting of a sentiment it was, but felt that I had already committed to this persona and couldn't turn back. I prioritized satisfying a dangerous stereotype over my personhood, begging the often unanswered question: Am I good enough for myself, sans the societal implications of gayness? For straight, cis peo-



ple, self-discovery is painted as an exciting process, but for LGBTQ+ folks it represents a painfully constricting experience. LGBTQ+ people are faced with the challenging dichotomy of both being expected to perform to the stereotypes inflicted by a cis-heteronormative society, and bound by the narrow expectations of LGBTQ+ culture itself.

**A:** Having each other before we even came out to each other was vital in discovering our identities as not simply gay people, but gay people with our own personhoods, and not just caricatures of what we see in media.

**M:** In reality, our queer friendship does not reflect societal expectations of a queer friendship. Society will lump together lesbians and gay men with a vague LGBTQ+ connection, but will simultaneously separate us using the gender binary. It's as if we can't be friends without being the same gender, or without being attracted to the same gender. You're either the gay friend, or are friends because you're gay; but, we're just friends. Obviously, confiding in one another when it came to gay struggles we experienced has been a prominent aspect of our relationship, but it's less about discovering that we're queer and more about discovering how we can be both queer and our own people.

**A:** At the same time, we started forming a consciously queer solidarity after coming out to each other. Solidarity seems inherent to any friendship, but for us it was rooted in mutual experience and connection, in spite of the forces of society that relegated us to our respective roles. Our relationship allowed for emotional vulnerability that drove hyper-awareness of one another's hardships. That's just another way that our friendship transcended social constructs, and it allowed for our personal development as queer individuals.

**M:** Our bond of shared stories from love to pain was transformative; allowing us to invest in our own humanity, regardless of LGBTQ+ tropes.

**A:** Our humanity is often lost in the cultural lens we use to see the LGBTQ+ community. The meaningful friendship we have is a deeper demonstration that we are individuals in and out of LGBTQ+ spaces. ■

# THE BEST *SELFIE* YOU'LL EVER TAKE



Picture your future as a **college graduate!**

## Give us *The College Try*

Try us risk free for 7 days. *No obligation. No worries.*



[madisoncollege.edu/CollegeTry](https://madisoncollege.edu/CollegeTry)

# Forward thinking moves people forward.

Here in the Midwest – in Wisconsin – community is important. Supporting one another is important. What’s more, having a healthcare system that’s looking out for each and every one of us is important as well. And that’s why at UW Health, we strive every day to provide inclusive and affirming care for our LGBTQ+ patients and their families. Because in the end, not only does that make us healthier, but it also makes our community stronger. That’s forward thinking. **UW Health. Remarkable.**

## UWHealth



COMMITTED  
TO HEALTHIER  
COMMUNITIES