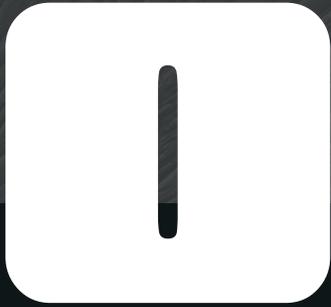


our lives



ENTERTAINMENT

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

TIKTOK'S TRANS HANDY MA'AM: Mercury Stardust

September
October 2021

WHO'S WHO IN QUEER ART

Our third annual effort to celebrate the depth of local queer arts spans the visual, performative, and literary scenes.

p.34

HISTORY OF TRANS RIGHTS

A look at the cultural and political factors affecting progress through the years and what movement has been made in Wisconsin.

p.48

MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

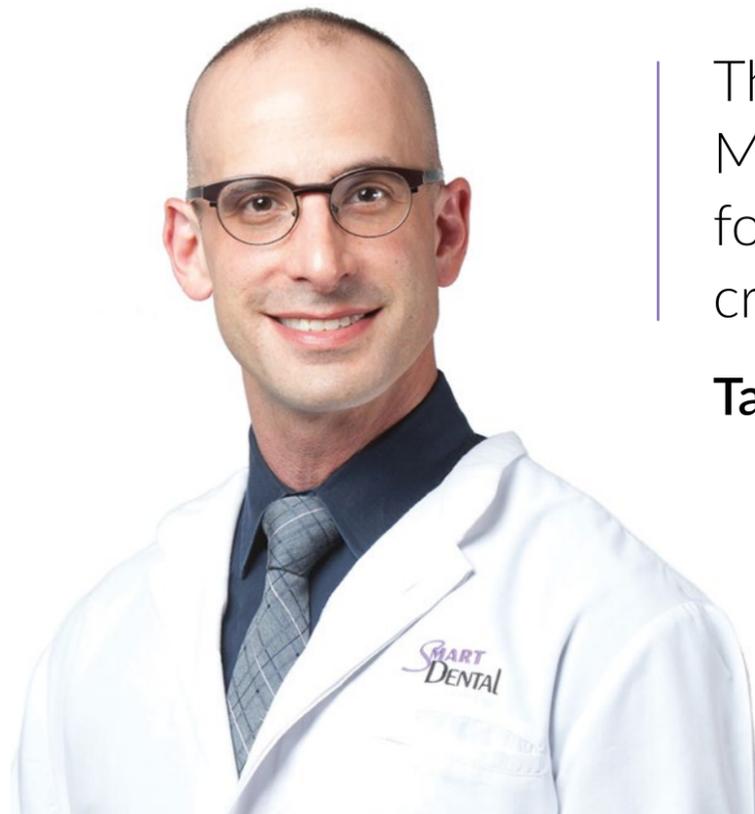
Rae Senarighi

His message of love, joy, and acceptance through powerful art, reclaiming space, and encouraging everyone to express themselves creatively.

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

**MOM,
HOW DID YOU MEET
THE BEATLES?**
A True Story of London in the 1960's
by ADRIENNE KENNEDY
AND ADAM P. KENNEDY

SEPTEMBER 9 - 26, 2021
IN-PERSON AT OVERTURE

TICKETS AT FORWARDTHEATER.COM
OR 608.258.4141

Featuring Marti Gobel
as Adrienne Kennedy

**FORWARD
THEATER CO.**

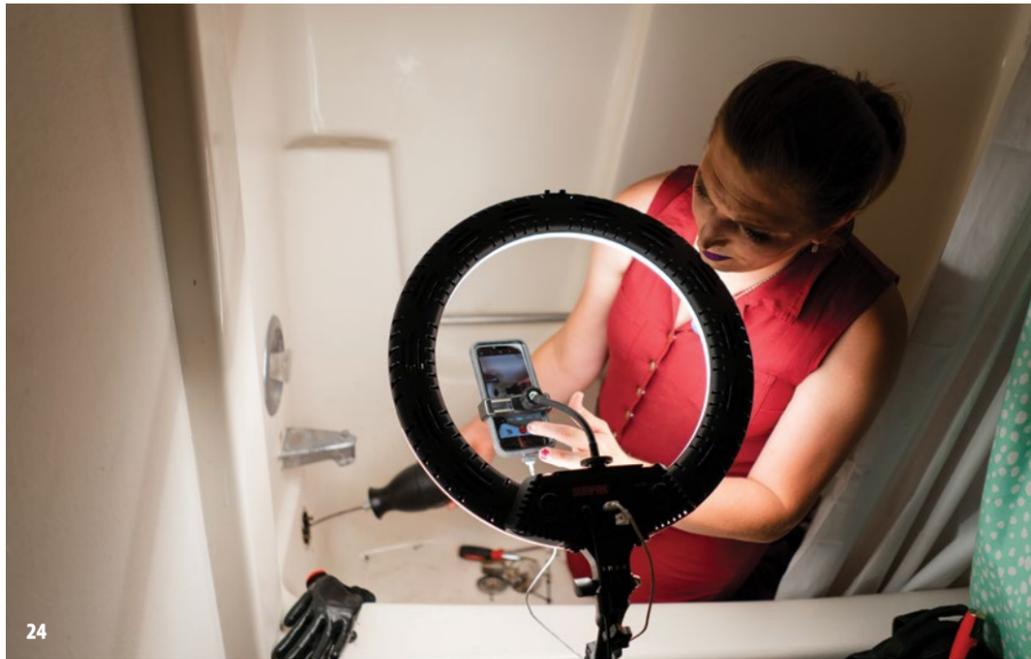
**GAY, LESBIAN, BI,
TRANS, STRAIGHT.**
Honestly, the only label we care about is
FAMILY.

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.

**wisconsin fertility
INSTITUTE**

wisconsinfertility.com
3146 Deming Way, Middleton

photo: bornarchivalco.com



24

“We need to understand that whatever we do, we’re all human beings first.”

- Billy Porter

TABLE OF CONTENTS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2021

DEPARTMENTS

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

FEATURES

- 30 DRAWING PEOPLE WITH LOVE
34 THE GREAT MADISON LGBTQ+ ARTIST SURVEY

CONNECT

- 9 A HEALTH CARE FIRST
10 NEWS BRIEFS
12 OUR ORGANIZERS
14 OUR ORGANIZATIONS
16 OUR ORGANIZATIONS
18 OUR ORGANIZATIONS
20 OUR ADVOCATES
24 OUR ENTERTAINERS
26 OUR JOURNEYS

IMPROVE

- 48 OUR HISTORY
56 OUR INTERSECTIONS
58 OUR YOUTH



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: Diego Campoverde Cisneros, Stacy Harbaugh, Alexia Linez, Dina Nina, Andy Schueler, Zak Stowe, Michail Takach
Contributing Artists: Ian DeGraff, Amanda Fincutter, Melanie Jones, Samantha Waldron
Social Media Curators: Jill Nagler, Doug Rowe
Webmasters: design.garden
National Advertising Sales: Rivendell Media Inc.

Subscribers in 450+ Wisconsin cities & towns

©2021 All Rights Reserved. Sept. / Oct. 2021, Volume 15, Issue 2 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.

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. 3 Forward Theater
p. 60 Madison Opera
p. 15 OutCast Theater

ART / ARTISTS / ART SUPPLIES

- p. 33 Monroe Street Framing

ATTORNEYS

- p. 21 Balisle Family Law

AUTOMOBILES

- p. 49 MINI of Madison

BANKING / FINANCIAL ADVISING

- p. 37 Shannon M. Anderson, Ameriprise Financial
p. 25 Dane County Credit Union
p. 19 Mike Fumelle, Associated Bank
p. 41 Summit Credit Union.com
p. 59 UW Credit Union

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- p. 10 Community Shares of Wisconsin
p. 11 GSAFE
p. 16 New Harvest Foundation
p. 7 OPEN

COUNSELING / SUPPORT

- p. 26 David Lacoque, PsyD
p. 27 Alexander Einsman, MS MFT

FASHION

- p. 18 Ulla Eyewear

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- p. 51 Capitol Centre Market
p. 19 Delta Beer Lab
p. 13 The Sow's Ear
p. 43 Willy Street Co-op

FUNERAL SERVICE

- p. 47 Ryan Funeral Home & Cremation Services

HEALTH/ WELLNESS

- p. 6 Barefoot Hands
p. 17 Dental Health Associates
p. 18 Forward Fertility, LLC
p. 6 New Health Chiropractic
p. 2 Smart Dental
p. 27 Wildwood Family Clinic
p. 3 Wisconsin Fertility Institute
p. 23 Wisconsin Well Woman

INSURANCE

- p. 5 Colleen Frentzel Agency, American Family Insurance
p. 5 David Ryan-Sukup, American Family Insurance
p. 11 Jim Hartman, State Farm
p. 57 Quartz Health Solutions

INTERIOR DESIGN / HOME

- p. 29 Bethke Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.
p. 55 Chad's Design Build
p. 45 Kool View
p. 21 MaraLee Olson Design Studio
p. 31 Quigley Decks & Cable Rails
p. 39 Time 2 Remodel

JEWELERS

- p. 52 Goodman's Jewelers
p. 35 Jewelers Workshop

MEDIA

- p. 47 Towns & Associates, Inc

PAPER SUPPLIES & CARDS

- p. 23 Anthology

PETS

- p. 29 Angel's Wish
p. 13 Bad Dog Frida
p. 44 Dane County Humane Society
p. 15 EarthWise Pet Supply

PHOTOGRAPHY

- p. 55 Dutcher Photography
p. 26 Dulcy Dog Photography

REALTY

- p. 24 Vivienne Anderson
p. 13 Lauer Realty Group

SPIRITUAL

- p. 56 First United Methodist Church
p. 31 Holy Wisdom Monastery

UTILITIES

- p. 8 Madison Gas & Electric

WEDDINGS

- p. 23 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



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 Merrion

608-273-2222

newhealthmadison.com

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



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

(608) 770-1022
barefoothands@gmail.com

PUBLISHER'S LETTER PATRICK FARABAUGH



FROM STUGGLE COMES VISION

I GOT A SOBER REMINDER this production cycle that the pandemic isn't over. As if Covid cases rising again, the masks going back on, and another heavy lift on the horizon with vaccine booster shots wasn't enough... I'm again centering our September issue around one of the industries getting hit especially hard by the times were all living through. I want to thank the advertisers that have helped sustain *Our*



Rae Senarighi.

Lives since the pandemic started. We've survived so far because of them.

There's a theme around survival that's present throughout this issue. From **Jess Waggoner's** efforts to connect us through their queer mixtape project, to the perspective **Rae Senarighi** shares in his narrative cover story. Rae helps us see how he uses his art to transform hate into love as a means to fuel the movement for trans rights.

And perhaps one of the most significant pieces I've been able to publish is **Michail Takach's** recounting of the history of transgender rights, and the impact and progress the movement has had for us in Wisconsin. It's a good reminder for cisgender folks that there's a lot we can learn from our trans and non-binary siblings. They teach us not just about survival, but also about centering and celebrating our shared humanity. I'm grateful to have so many trans friends as mentors and role models, and grateful to be able to share their leadership here with you, too. ■

CONTRIBUTORS



MELANIE JONES (she/her) is a photographer who has been working in the Madison area for around five years. She specializes in dogs, women in agriculture, and weddings. When she isn't working in town, she is most likely out west, either working for the box office at Burning Man or photographing clients in Montana. She lives with her spouse on the northside of Madison with two dogs and three cats.

DINA NINA, who was called "...very funny" by The Late Late Show's James Corden, is a standup comedian and actor and the founder of Lady Laughs Comedy. She's been seen and heard on PBS and NBC and was called one of the "58 trans women actors you should know and also love" by Autostraddle.

VIRGINIA HARRISON enjoys editing *Our Lives* and learning about all the awesome, local queers in Madison and beyond. Her other work hat is as Bridge Builder Project Manager for LOV Inc. When she isn't working, she can be found hiking with her partner, Melissa, and their fur babies or seeking balance in a yoga studio.

MICHAIL TAKACH is a historian, author, reporter, and communications professional living in Los Angeles. He earned his master's in communications and history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a fifth-generation Milwaukeean, he supported various non-profit organizations over the past two decades, including Historic Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the Walker's Point Association, the Brady Street Association, United Performing Arts Fund, and Milwaukee Pride, where he was communications director for 10 years. Michail is currently the curator of the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project, a not-for-profit, all-volunteer, independent organization devoted to connecting local LGBTQ people with their hidden history and heritage. He is currently working on his second book, *The Golden Age of Milwaukee Drag*, an exploration of nearly 140 years of drag performances, with co-author Bjorn Nasett.

OUR READERS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



MADISON, WI

Lou Vancil

I'm honored to be featured in Our Readers. I am a trans man living in Madison. I believe my being trans is the least interesting thing about me. That being said, I strive to be open and honest about my journey in hopes to provide support and encouragement to my trans siblings. I wouldn't be where I am without other trans folks, specifically trans men, speaking loudly and proudly about their experiences. I want to see a world where we don't have to come out. A world where trans folks don't have to be brave, strong, or some great inspiration for simply existing. I'd like to see a world where trans folks can just be, without hate, without fear, without question. Ultimately, I am but a singular being woven into something far larger than I can comprehend. Go outside today. Drink some water. Tell your people you love them. ■



Out Professional Engagement Network

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

ACT TODAY
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Living in
BALANCE
POWERED BY MGE



Watch Now
www.livinginbalancemadison.com



OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



OUR NEWS

Leading News & Local Stories



A Health Care First

A new LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program is coming to UW Health, with plans to keep the program scalable and sustainable.

HEALTH CARE | UW HEALTH | HEALTH EQUITY

FOR MANY YEARS, *Our Lives* has covered issues of health and health care for Wisconsin's LGBTQ+ community. We've reported on victories and stories of progress in non-discriminatory, affordable, gender- and sexuality affirming care. However, while the LGBTQ+ community is incredibly diverse, it's also more prone to greater disparities in adequate housing, employment, and access to quality mental and physical health care and treatments.

Looking at what would make health care better for us, we know the problems of access and discrimination are deeply enmeshed in our health care and employment systems. Making things better will take training, funding, and leadership. Now at the University of

Wisconsin's School of Medicine and Public Health and UW Health, there could be a sign of advancing those elements of systemic change.

The university was selected by the American Medical Association Foundation this year to be the first site of its National LGBTQ+ Fellowship Program. The program focuses on training new doctors on the unique needs of queer and trans patients.

The Wisconsin State Journal reported that the fellowship would allow a doctor who has completed a primary care residency in family care, internal medicine, or pediatrics to come to the Madison campus to do research, community outreach, and work in clinics. The AMA

50

TOGETHER WE TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY

Community Shares of Wisconsin has been funding systemic change for 50 years. Now more than ever we need to ensure communities are safe, healthy, and thriving for all. We must invest our resources into nonprofit groups challenging systems and holding decision-makers accountable.

Your pledge through your workplace campaign is urgently needed. When you designate to one of our member organizations, they receive 100% of the gift. Thank you for your past support and for your renewed pledge this fall.

communityshares.com/workplace-giving



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

[OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM](https://ourliveswisconsin.com)



Foundation's funds support the work for three years, but Dr. Elizabeth Petty, senior associate dean for academic affairs, plans to keep the program going.

"Our goal is to make it scalable and sustainable," Petty said. "We'd like to create a path-

way to faculty positions so they can be true champions of health equity for the LGBTQ population. We want (the fellows) to help us transform our health systems and our public health landscape to really achieve health equity for the population." ■

NEWS BRIEFS

WRITTEN BY STACY HARBAUGH

TWO TRANSGENDER YOUTH ATTACKED IN APPARENT HATE CRIME IN LA CROSSE

PROSECUTORS ADDED A HATE CRIME enhancement to felony counts of substantial battery with intent to bodily harm assault charges against a man who police arrested for attacking two transgender youth in Copeland Park in La Crosse. Victims told police that, during the attack, the assailant accused the couple of having sex and called them anti-gay slurs.

Prosecutors added the hate crimes charge over two weeks after 40-year-old Travis Crawford's arrest. As news of the attack prompted an outcry by LGBTQ+ rights advocates, they pointed to the attack as an example of how state law doesn't protect transgender Wisconsinites from hate crimes based on gender identity.

In a statement, La Crosse Mayor Mitch Reynolds said it was appalling that some members of the community would be consumed by hate and provoke an attack against youth. He added that "we should extend our indignation of this attack to our state lawmakers who choose inaction on outdated state laws over justice."

Diverse & Resilient posted a statement of support for the victims on their Facebook page that called for the La Crosse County District Attorney's office to look deeper and use its prosecutorial discretion to ask for additional hate crimes penalties. The statement said "While gender identity of this trans couple may be considered a 'gray area of the law' for protection, sexual orientation including the *perceived* orientation is very clearly a protected class."

LA CROSSE COMMUNITY REACTS TO LGBTQ ASSAULT

IN RESPONSE TO a La Crosse area hate crime, Marie Varble started an online petition to gather signatures in support of state lawmakers changing hate crimes laws to include gender identity and expression.

The news of the arrest of Travis Crawford for attacking two transgender teens in

Copeland Park hit close to home for Varble. Her 15-year-old daughter was targeted at a July 4th party. Varble told WKBT-TV that her daughter "had firecrackers thrown at her and her friends, and homophobic slurs yelled at them." Varble did not report the incident to the police and believes many attacks are not reported.

Varble's original goal for the petition was to collect 1000 signatures. As of the deadline for this issue of Our Lives, the signatures reached more than 1800 and include many messages of support for the LGBTQ+ community. The ultimate goal is to encourage Wisconsin State Senator Brad Pfaff (D-Onalaska) to introduce a proposal to add transgender and non-binary terms to state statutes on hate crimes.

OPENLY GAY CHILDREN'S COURT JUDGE PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHILD PORN CHARGE

IN AUGUST, FORMER Milwaukee Juvenile Justice Division Judge Brett Blomme, 38, pleaded guilty to two counts of felony child pornography. In a plea agreement, Blomme will give up his right to a jury trial and will surrender property or assets related to the crimes. Each felony's sentence will be determined by a federal judge and may include a mandatory minimum five-year sentence, plus five years of supervision and up to a \$250,000 fine.



Blomme

In March, Blomme was arrested at his home in Cottage Grove and was originally charged with seven counts of possession of child pornography. In a criminal complaint, prosecutors alleged Blomme downloaded child pornography on 27 occasions using a messaging app registered to his personal Gmail address.

In an initial appearance in court, a commissioner assessed Blomme as a low flight risk and set a \$500 signature bond that in-

cluded 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.

Before becoming a judge, Blomme served as CEO of the Cream City Foundation in Milwaukee. Blomme was elected to the circuit court in 2020 to replace a judge who was appointed by Gov. Scott Walker.

PETITION ALLEGES A LACK OF SUPPORT FOR COURAGE HOUSE CARE WORKERS

COURAGE MKE, A NONPROFIT that provides housing and services to queer and trans youth in Milwaukee, is under fire by former employees who logged complaints about staff and leadership in a change.org petition.

The petition alleges a lack of support for care workers by house supervisors, inadequate policies regarding therapeutic and dietary care, lack of employee benefits, and other examples of challenges with cultural competency of staff and leadership when working with transgender, non-binary, and racialized youth.

Courage House leaders responded to the petition publicly on its Facebook page with a lengthy statement by co-founder Brad Schlakowski. The statement acknowledged that the nonprofit for displaced youth was established quickly with generous community support, but also was primarily led by white, cisgender men which limited their perspectives on how to provide services to queer youth of color.

The statement further explained that Courage MKE isn't a residential treatment facility with licensed therapists, but rather an out-of-home housing facility for youth referred by counties. However the petition and public statements by former employees brought serious concerns for the nonprofit's leadership to address and explained that follow-up actions include additional training and commitments to hiring more people of color as staff members.

In response to Courage MKE's Facebook post, a robust comment section includes community members calling for the resignation of leaders and staff members. Commenters alleged that leaders took action after problems were made public rather than when employee complaints began. Many comments explained that the most meaningful changes would only happen with a complete change in which leadership would entirely be composed of people of color with lived experiences similar to the youth who use the home's services, rather than simply hiring more diverse care workers.

Courage MKE's Facebook post notes that the nonprofit is currently recruiting for open positions "with a focus of increasing diversity. This helps ensure everyone we serve has a voice within the organization." ■



Proud to help all my neighbors.

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

As a proud member of the LGBTQ community in the Madison area, I'm here to help all my neighbors protect what matters most. Call me today.

Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there.®

State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2006039



TRICK OR TROT 5K WALK/RUN

What's your sign?

MADISON
OCT 10 2021

gsafe

SIGNUP @
BIT.LY/TRICKORTROT2021





Jess Waggoner with a banjo against the former Plan B's Love mural.

projects include a drag gospel quartet, a Meatloaf cover band, and various twangy queer femme-centric bands such as Corn Palace, The Cabinettes, and Mary Okie. In my other life, I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies at UW-Madison, where I teach feminist disability studies and queer and trans studies.

WHAT IS THE QUEER MIXTAPE, AND WHERE DID THE IDEA ORIGINATE?

Queer Madison Mixtape is a digital mixtape created in collaboration with local queer musicians and the local arts and culture non-profit, Communication Madison. Having moved to Madison in the midst of a pandemic, I was dreaming up ways to find musical community, particularly with musicians who are also invested in social justice, so a virtual compilation centering queer, trans, and non-binary folks felt like an accessible and exciting way to find my people. I have always been drawn to creative collaboration. Although I've preferred to create while in bands and share that electric feeling when something starts to come together, I've been writing this year in solitude and wanted to find new ways to share music beyond live shows or recording full albums.

We are currently a small collective of three: Jennifer Bastian, Shaun Soman, and me. Jennifer, the Director and Arts Manager of Communication has been incredible at getting the word out and creating beautiful graphics. Shaun has been instrumental in making the mixtape sound excellent. We were all so floored by the submissions and grateful that Madison musicians took the time to contribute these amazing tracks. Communication was the perfect place to help the mixtape flourish—it is important to them to continue amplifying the voices of queer musicians, maintaining connections to the community, and feeling a sense of togetherness safely.

CAN YOU SAY MORE ABOUT HOW THE MIXTAPE PRIORITIZES SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY?

During a time where this rush "back to normal" has become increasingly fraught, I am invested in the lessons we have learned from the disabled community during the pandemic. In this vein, I wanted to create a project that didn't require physical presence and where musicians could participate from anywhere, including their beds. We also asked musicians to engage in access measures such as including lyrics and a description of the "feel" of the songs to enhance the experience for D/deaf and hard of hearing people, and we include image descriptions for any accompanying promotional materials or images.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING LOCAL MUSIC

Musical, Virtual Community

Jess Waggoner (they/them) and a few others have come together to produce the Queer Mixtape, a digital mixtape created in collaboration with local queer musicians and Communication Madison. Here they share its origins as well as how to find it or participate in the next one.

PLEASE SHARE WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU'RE FROM

I'm a recent transplant from Houston, Texas (before Texas, I was in Bloomington, Indiana). In my music I'm drawn to themes such as rural queers, trans trucks, big hair, and femme utopias. Some of my past

The low-effort aspect of the mixtape is also important to us. Musical spaces can feel dominated by those with resources such as higher-end instruments and recording equipment. Marginalized people are not often resourced in this way. We don't want this to be a barrier and encourage musicians to submit whatever they have time to make, including phone recordings, unfinished pieces, and 4 a.m. songwriting revelations.

WHEN WILL THE NEXT ONE DROP, AND HOW CAN FOLX CONNECT IF THEY WANT TO BE A PART OF IT?

You can find the first and second Queer Madison Mixtapes at queermadisonmixtape.bandcamp.com/releases. You can read more about the artists and project on communicationmadison.com. The mixtape is free, but donations for downloads will go to Freedom, Inc, a local Black and Southeast Asian non-profit organization that works with low- to no-income communities of color.

If you'd like to be involved in the next compilation in any way, please drop us a line at queermadisonmixtape@gmail.com. We'd love to have more folks in the collective and of course can't wait to hear from our next batch of artists. Be sure to follow @communication-madison for updates.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS GOING IN THE FUTURE?

We don't want the mixtape to merely serve as a time capsule of the pandemic. I'm hoping the project can continue to evolve and model sustainable, accessible practices for queer musicians to connect. For safety reasons, we have decided not to have a release event where physical presence is required, but if we move forward with a release event in the next few years, we hope it will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in-person and accessible for in-person and virtual attendees with measures such as accessible seating, fragrance-free spaces, captions, and ASL. We are also interested in expanding the project into a possible "visual mixtape" where visual artists, performance artists, and musicians can collaborate. At this point releasing a mixtape twice a year feels sustainable, but we are open to expanding this as our collective grows. ■



back to school

Smart toys to occupy your smart pup. Keep 'em busy while you're busy!



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

608.442.6868 baddogfrida.com 2094 atwood ave. madison

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*

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 608.467.3220



STAGEQ's 21ST SEASON: WE BELONG

#cheersqueers #intermissionisover

COVID COMMUNITY THEATER ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Show Must Go On

StageQ's Board President **Zak Stowe** looks back and looks forward, describing how this local queer theater company is poised to launch a new season of shows for the community as well as exciting new initiatives and access.

IT HAS BEEN QUITE A YEAR since I last wrote about StageQ for *Our Lives*. Last year, I explained just how a season and a production comes together. I shared what we were doing behind the scenes as a board and volunteer staff to get ready for a new season. We had all our fingers and toes crossed that COVID was going to go away in time. We had shows chosen, rehearsal space booked, directors chosen, and—well—we all know what happened next. And what continues to happen.

Looking back, it may have seemed naive of us to think that live theater would return in the fall of 2020, but for many of us it was that hope that kept us going. Well, here we are again, on the cusp of a new theater season and COVID just doesn't seem to be done with us yet. The big difference now, of course, is we have a new tool in our toolbox: vaccines. Armed with this life-saving technology we are heading back into the theater with a full season more confident than ever. But it took a lot to get us there.

WHAT'S CHANGED

During the shutdown, the board of directors had a lot of time to reflect on how we operate. We were honored to welcome three new members onto the board during the shutdown period: Chole Honeyman-Blaede, Traci Marett, and Amber Palmer. They really hit the ground running and are helping us to revise who we are and where we want to go. They have already poured so much heart and soul into StageQ, and they haven't even gotten to see a StageQ show yet since we have been shut down the entire time they have been on the board! That's commitment.

We have launched new initiatives that we are so excited to share with everyone. We are introducing a new ticketing model meant to offer more economic accessibility. We have new, cheaper ticket options for people

to take advantage of if they need to as well as options for others to choose a "pay-it-forward" option to help support the lower ticket prices. StageQ is for the community, and the most important way we can keep it accessible to the community is to keep the tickets as cheap as possible. With costs of producing a show rising every year, keeping prices low isn't always easy. One part to make this reality work is launching this new ticketing model that helps share the cost of the show; the other part is looking for more sponsors, donors, and grant opportunities. The search for funding is never ending.

This last year and a half has been so hard on so many arts organizations. StageQ finds itself very lucky in many ways. We don't operate our own building or have any leased property, and we are volunteer run, so our operating expenses during this time were very low. Our amazing treasurer, Mike Webber, kept up-to-date with all of the latest federal, state, and local government assistance being offered throughout this time which gave us the ability to stay afloat financially. Our vice president, Ryan Main-Luu, launched the "Friends of StageQ" donor program, and we were delighted by the generosity of so many in the community. All of those donations truly helped us keep our proverbial lights on last year.

Thanks to everyone's hard work, we have a rather sturdy financial footing to start our season on. It wasn't easy, and I fully credit the amazing board for getting us here. In that light, we have begun a search for our first paid staff position: a part-time Production Manager (applications still being accepted!) as well as exploring ways we can start offering more stipends to production staff. While we are still a volunteer organization, we are starting to recognize that our hard-working artists deserve compensation for their art, and we are working to build the financial resources to be able to do just that in the coming years.

We have also launched a new Festival Committee charged with creating and overseeing our new play festival: CapitalQ Theatre Festival, which will be our new annual pride month offering. The committee is co-chaired by current board member, Amber Palmer and former StageQ President, Donnovan Moen. This committee is currently seeking members interested in helping start a new pride tradition in Madison!

There were many "not so fun" board meetings during the shutdown where money was the main topic. It was serious at times. Then again, it was serious for so many. COVID affects all of us, whether it is an arts organization tightening its belt because funding is low or individuals

tightening their belts because they got laid off. A lot of us had some of those "not so fun" conversations this last year. We have gotten this far together though, and we aren't about to give up now. I feel like that is the spirit we carry with us into our new season, and it is the main theme to our shows this year as well: joining together and celebrating being together again.

Sadly though, COVID still isn't done with us yet. Our season was scheduled to open in September with a brand new work called "Laced" by Samantha Mueller and directed by Amy Rowland. Fiery and poetic, "Laced" ferociously celebrates the spaces in which we find our truest selves and the spectrum of ways the LGBTQ community comes together in the face of hate. However, just days after we held auditions, Dane County reinstated a mask mandate. The big difference with this mandate is that they provided no exceptions to performers on stage which sent us and the rest of the arts and entertainment world here in Madison scrambling. After some soul searching we decided to postpone "Laced" again.

The mask mandate has been frustrating because StageQ did our best to stay ahead of such mandates by instituting a vaccination requirement for all our actors and crew members. StageQ, along with the Bartell Theatre, were also one of the first groups in Madison to mandate masks and vaccination proof for all audience members as well. Sadly, while they provided restaurants and bars with mask exemptions for their customers, Dane County Health has yet to see the arts community to be equally important. This kind of work can be frustrating sometimes, but you always have to look ahead.

We will mount "Laced" sometime in the fall of 2022 and look forward to our next upcoming show in February with Taylor Mac's "Hir," which is directed by Michael Rebekah Fleishman. When waning male privilege and PTSD collide with clown makeup and gender neutrality, the result is explosive. Next stop is our big musical for the season! Jay Gile will direct "Priscilla: Queen of the Desert" in April 2022. Based on the smash-hit movie, this is a heartwarming, uplifting adventure of three friends and drag performers who agree to take their show to the middle of the Australian outback. Finally, in June, we will hold the inaugural edition of the CapitalQ Theatre Festival. A one-act festival featuring workshops and masterclasses all over a single weekend.

WHAT'S STAYED THE SAME

While this last year took a lot from us, it also allowed us to really reevaluate what and who we want to be. What cannot change is our commitment to our community and our dedication to providing a space for queer stories to be told. One of the coolest things to come out of this time is a newly formed group called the National Queer Theater Coalition. This is a national group made up of representatives from every major queer theater company in the United States. I am honored to be a founding member and representative for StageQ. One of the most important messages these fellow theater leaders have taught me is that wherever a queer theater exists in the world, we are a light for our community there.

We exist, as theater, to tell stories and to provide a place for artists and technicians to tell those stories. Queer theaters are that and so much more. We tell stories so often overlooked by mainstream media. We provide a communal experience for the queer community to gather and be with one another. We provide a place for queer artists to feel welcomed and give them the space to create art that is of immeasurable importance. We provide support and visibility.

Our StageQ family felt very different this last year, but we haven't gone away. This commitment to be there for you and to give you the space to experience your stories, and experience them together, must never change. Just grow stronger.

Learn more about the upcoming season at stageq.org. ■



**The Weapons are out. The Game is On.
You just might die laughing.**

Clue

LIVE! On Stage!

**A killer comedy based on the movie screenplay
by Jonathan Lynn
Written by Sandy Rustin**

Directed by Steve Noll

September 17 - October 9, 2021

Beer/Wine/Soda/Snacks available



113 E Mifflin St in Madison - All Tickets Reserved Seating - \$25/\$22

BartellTheatre.org 608-661-9696

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

EARTHWISE Pet
SUPPLY • GROOMING • WASH
Locally Owned and Operated.



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

DONATE

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

contact us for questions

info@newharvestfoundation.org
www.newharvestfoundation.org

PO Box 1786
Madison, WI 53701-1786

LAW & POLITICS | SCHOOLS | ONLINE RESOURCE

Mapping Progress

A new, interactive map is now available to help Wisconsinites learn about and compare local LGBTQ+ non-discrimination ordinances and school district policies.

The **Wisconsin Equality Map** is a joint venture between **GSAFE** and **Fair Wisconsin**.

SINCE 2005, GSAFE has worked with local school districts to put policies and procedures in place to protect LGBTQ+ students from discrimination. As more school administrators, teachers, parents, and journalists learned about progress in some Wisconsin schools, GSAFE staff received more questions about which schools were implementing new policies around the state.

Similarly, Fair Wisconsin's work to encourage nondiscrimination policies in local government has been ongoing since the organization's fight against the statewide same-sex marriage ban in 2006. In the absence of statewide protections for sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, municipalities can pass their own laws regarding equal access to housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Every year, both groups continued to get questions about which schools and cities had good rules and laws, how many districts across the state were making progress, or how similarly sized areas compared to each other. What was missing was one resource to pull all the information together at a glance.

MULTI-YEAR PROCESS TO LAUNCH

To make the map a reality, GSAFE and Fair Wisconsin staff worked together to envision what would be a useful tool to help answer policy and geography-based questions. They worked with local web developer Sid Richards to construct a user-friendly front-end with an interactive county map, as well as a back-end based on a database of policies, procedures, and municipal laws.

"Sid was great in donating a lot of his time and services to help us put this together," said Fair Wisconsin Executive Director Megin McDonnell. "We also got a small grant from the Department of Public Instruction to help with costs of developing the site. Like a lot of websites, it was actually several years in the making and the pandemic added more challenges. We were finally able to work through all the issues through trial and error to make it easy to navigate, easy to understand, and have a database behind the scenes that includes a lot of information about each community's local protections. Building the back-end was its own work."

Both groups focused on how the map could highlight the frequently asked questions about nondiscrimination laws, school policies and procedures, and which cities are on a growing list of communities that have banned conversion therapy, a discriminatory form of counseling that attempts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity that is often aimed at youth. McDonnell acknowledges that the map has limits for practical reasons. The work to complete a complex project that was useful to the public was its own achievement.

"Our main goal right now is to make sure it is maintained and stays up-to-date and accurate," said McDonnell. "The map will be useful to raise awareness of the fact that there are no federal protections yet like the Equality Act, and that our state does not include gender identity and expression in nondiscrimination laws. We've worked at the local city, village, and school level to make those changes. The map will let people see what ordinances exist, and hopefully encourage those that do not to pass better ordinances."

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THE EQUALITY MAP

Each county's page includes 2010 census data about the population count, and details about municipalities with nondiscrimination ordinances, conversion therapy protections, inclusive school nondiscrimination policies

and, separately, school procedures. If no cities or villages have protections, you'll find a red X and an invitation to help advocate for changes in local policies.

McDonnell said the map was in part inspired by the Movement Advancement Project's equality map. While the information presented in both maps is similar, GSAFE and Fair Wisconsin's interactive map lets visitors

Each county's page includes 2010 census data about the population count, and details about municipalities with nondiscrimination ordinances, conversion therapy protections, inclusive school nondiscrimination policies and, separately, school procedures.

see which counties have no protections or which school districts have nondiscrimination policies, but have yet to implement sound procedures to protect students from harm.

"We continue to work to ensure students are free from harassment and discrimination based on their gender identity," said GSAFE Co-director Brian Juchems. "How do we get to '100% of students protected'? There are amazing, passionate, and determined people in districts—not just the larger districts—who are educators, administrators, and parents across

Wisconsin who are dedicated to making sure that trans and nonbinary students are included. It busts the mythology that this is only happening in Madison. It shouldn't be a partisan issue, and we'd love to see a statewide law so we don't have to track district by district. But we aren't there yet. This is a step toward that."

FALL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

This summer's soft launch of the website will turn into a more formal fall awareness campaign to encourage local leaders and equality advocates to see how their community compares to others in the state.

"The ultimate goal is to have statewide protections for students in schools," said Juchems. "We realize that as long as the current makeup of the legislature is in place, we have to work district by district to make a change. We think that once we get a number of districts with good policies, it will be easier for us to make the case for statewide protections.

While the website is complete for now, both GSAFE and Fair Wisconsin expect the database of information on the back-end of the website to be updated as local policies change. Wisconsinites can help with this evolving information when they advocate for local change or share equality map corrections via email.

Explore the Wisconsin Equality Map at equalitymapwi.org. ■

Dental Insurance You Can Smile About

Momentum DENTAL PLANS



Personalized and Affordable for Individuals & Families.

Enroll Online Today!
MomentumPlans.com

608.729.6500
Locally owned and operated in Madison

LOCAL CLINICS. OUTSTANDING CARE.



7 Convenient Locations

Sun Prairie • Fitchburg • University East • Gammon • Old Sauk • Downtown

DENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES
dhamadison.com



CITY GOVERNMENT | TRIBAL COMMUNITIES | PARENTING

Balancing Act

Our Lives spoke with Madison alder **Arvina Martin** on the expectations versus realities of political life, parenting and dating during a pandemic, and how identity facilitates connection with community.

AS A KID, ARVINA MARTIN could hardly wait for the pool to open. She grew up on the west side of Madison and went to Van Hise Elementary School, Hamilton Middle School, and West High School. Her family moved to Washington, D.C. for a while after her father got a job in the Department of the Interior, but when Bill Clinton was elected in 1992, the family returned to the Hill Farms neighborhood.

“That’s where the pool is. So for a kid, that was the center of my

social universe. I still can’t wait for the pool to open every summer. It’s like, I NEED this. It’s hot,” Arvina remembered.

Because she was born and raised in Madison, her connections with people continued to ripple out as she grew older. Today, her daughter complains about how they can’t go anywhere without running into someone they know.

“There are still people in my neighborhood who are parents of the

friends I had growing up,” she said. “I see people from the pool, parents of kids I used to coach. Now I have friends who have moved back to the neighborhood who I knew growing up. Not to mention my daughter’s friends and families. I had a friend visit from San Francisco, and he was shocked at how many times I’d run into people I knew. Madison is small. It’s easy to feel like you know everybody. I’ve lived here forever.”

FORTIFYING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Martin’s roots in the Madison community are even deeper now that she’s a mom and serves on the Madison Common Council.

Before she became an alder, she had a calling to engage Tribal members around the state on voting issues. She worked to mobilize Indigenous voters in Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, and advocated for the rights and education of voters who could use Tribal ID cards to comply with voter ID requirements signed into law by Governor Scott Walker in 2011.

“I was a voter protection fellow,” said Martin. “I was the only non-lawyer or non-law student who was doing this work, but I had been doing a lot of work with voter IDs, especially with Tribal communities. I made sure clerks knew they could use Tribal IDs as voter identification, and I got to do a lot of that work that year.”

Waking up the day after Election Day to the news of Donald Trump winning the election left her distraught, in mourning, and having feelings of denial.

It was my way to personally respond to things I saw that were going to be happening. (Trump) wasn’t even inaugurated yet when I took out papers to run for office, but I knew we would have to fortify at the city level to try to protect as much as we can.

“It was a rude awakening,” said Martin. “When my alder resigned that year, I had applied to be the interim alder. I wasn’t appointed, but I was still thinking about it. Then (after the Presidential election) I thought I could sit here on the couch, be depressed, and watch “Law and Order” all day, or I could buck up and do something.

“Here was this opportunity, and it was a good time. It was my way to personally respond to things I saw that were going to be happening. (Trump) wasn’t even inaugurated yet when I took out papers to run for office, but I knew we would have to fortify at the city level to try to protect as much as we can.”

Before winning her election in April 2017, Martin had worked as a page in the State Assembly where she saw firsthand the expectations of legislators and how complex laws are passed. The demands of serving in local office, however, were different. She works to balance the time commitments of council meetings that can run up to 10 hours with staying in touch with highly involved constituents.

“City government is different in that it’s nonpartisan, we don’t have caucuses where we can discuss legislation. Everything is on you. I’ve struggled with some decisions over votes. Sometimes people see a controversial issue, see your vote, and have that color their perceptions of you. They may think you are 100% pro or con whatever you just voted on, when really it weighs heavily on me. I do want to keep listening to information and testimony before I make a decision. I’m often still looking at data, at the thoughts and feelings of people this will impact.”

Many constituents are surprised that alders don’t have their own staff. Calling an alder often means reaching them on their personal cell phone. Balancing emails, research, and constituent contacts in what is intended to be a part-time job is hard to keep up with.

In a recent twist, Arvina was diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyper-

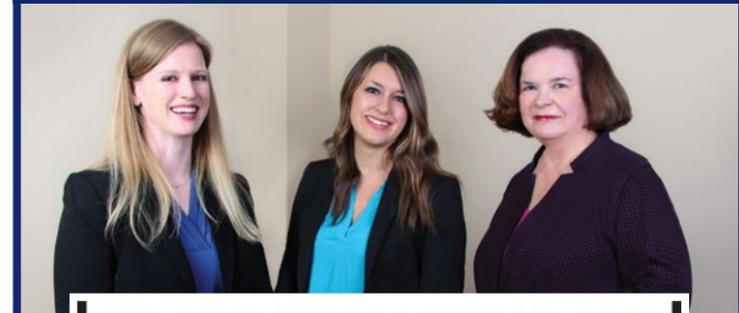
Make Room for Love



Mara Lee Olson
DESIGN STUDIO

maraleeolsondesignstudio.com

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 | balisfamilylaw.com

131 West Wilson St., Madison, WI 53703



activity disorder. Her neurodivergence makes juggling everyday life and civic service challenging, but she's finding ways to manage the demands.

"I'm learning that a lot of my habits, especially in regards to work, are not 'normal.' I can't just sit and watch a movie. I have to either have my computer and do emails at the same time, or do beadwork or something creative, or be on my rowing machine. It's been huge to learn not to blame myself, but to learn different strategies to get things done. It's not a moral failing."

POLITICAL ROOTS

Martin's passion for supporting her community was most likely inspired by seeing her parents as leaders.

"My parents have always been involved in things," she remembered. "My dad worked for Tommy Thompson back in the day as a Tribal liaison. He was always involved in politics, and his last job was as a lobbyist for his Tribe, the Stockbridge-Munsee community. My mom was appointed as an executive director of health for the Ho-Chunk Nation

and was also a legislator for a while."

Having parents who are leaders in government and in the education and health of their community meant that Arvina came along to a lot of meetings as a kid. Arvina's father, Buck Martin, accompanied presidential candidate Jesse Jackson at campaign stops while reporting for a Madison newspaper that primarily focused on issues relating to people of color back in 1984 and brought his family along. Around the same time, Arvina contracted chicken pox, which is even more contagious than the delta variant of COVID-19, and the Jackson campaign had to make sure everyone was healthy. It made the historic visit especially memorable for her.

"I would listen to my dad's interview on tape with Jackson all the time. As a four-year-old, that portended a nerdy future for me."

As a kid she knew she didn't want a regular job. In fact, politics seemed so accessible to her that her childhood career aspirations included being Governor in the morning, a Senator in the afternoon, and also a catcher for the Milwaukee Brewers on the side.

Arvina spent a lot of time near Black River Falls as a kid. She has lots of memories of playing with extended family members on her mother's side of the family. Though her father's roots are in the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, it was through his marriage to her mother, Karen, and his work as a home-school coordinator for the Ho-Chunk's Wisconsin Dells district that Buck was adopted into the Ho-Chunk community. Family life included pow wows, feasts and lots of social time with extended family.

While it's often the experience of children who aren't white to have a moment when they realize they are Black, Latino or Asian, Arvina describes that moment as realizing that not all kids are Indigenous.

"Ho-Chunk familial relations are a lot different. My sister's kids are my kids. My daughter and my sister's daughter are sisters. Your mom's sisters are your mom's and your dad's brothers are your dad's, and then you get siblings from that. And it just keeps going. We have lots of relatives. When I had that moment of realization that not all kids were Native, I remember being sad that my non-Native friends only had two sets of grandparents."

Even as a teenager, Arvina couldn't escape being recognized in public by extended family and her parents' friends. Her parents would remind her to behave because people in the community would be watching. She remembers a time when she went with a friend to see Little Richard at a blues festival at Olin Park. Adults at the concert asked her "aren't you Buck and Karen's daughter?" The feeling that Madison was a very small, tight-knit place for a family to live was always a part of her background.

PARENTING AND DATING AMIDST A PANDEMIC

Now as a single parent, Arvina is grateful to have the support of family and fellow parents. She sees the limitations of the traditional nuclear family, which is typically defined as a husband, a wife, an average of 2.5 children, and a house with a white picket fence. The pressures to conform to that model are closely related to how we define socioeconomic status, employment, debt, isolation, and housing, which we have the right and freedom to question.

The COVID crisis made parenting especially challenging. In early 2020, she hoped the pandemic wouldn't last long and her daughter Nico's virtual classes and social distancing would



only disrupt a semester of school or possibly one spring break or summer season before returning to normal.

"She's 12. Going into sixth grade, it's a time when things change so much socially. We had an education pod with two of her friends. She could go over to their house and do school, so there was some interaction. But at that age, it's possibly the roughest age to experience this. I had to tell her 'I don't know. I don't have the answers. The last time the world experienced this was 100 years ago.'"

While Arvina tried to assure her daughter and tell her it was ok to be worried or frustrated, Nico said "Mamma, I'm sick of living through historic times," and Arvina was quick to agree.

The COVID crisis added more layers to Martin's personal life—not just with parenting, but also with dating. While she feels that she's generally too busy to date, when it was safer to be social again, Arvina gave it

"We got C.A.R.E.S. off the ground in a little over a year. It's going to have far superior outcomes for people who need help. People will be less afraid to call if a paramedic and social worker will be responding instead of someone with a gun."

another shot and connected with men and women online.

"I tried it maybe a few years back and kept seeing the same people. This time there were a lot of new people. It was a lot better this time. Everyone seems to be 'OH MY GOD this is awful, I need human contact.'"

She misses the contact of her roller derby team, the energy and release of weightlifting. The social web of relationships and avenues of coping proved to be very fragile. She's been able to delve into new or renewed creative skills through beadwork, weaving, and studying the Ho-Chunk language in a virtual class.

MARTIN'S FUTURE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Looking ahead to her future in public office, Arvina hopes to strike a balance between continuing to bring an Indigenous voice to City government, while also not remaining in a seat at the exclusion of new voices.

The most visible impact of her leadership is in the effort to change the City of Madison's flag from a graphic that included a Native American symbol to a recognizable, simpler design. She says the symbol on the previous flag wasn't ours to use. After a unanimous vote to make the change, she feels good to see the new flag fly.

More recently, she is proud of helping the C.A.R.E.S. program come to fruition. C.A.R.E.S. (Community Alternative Response Emergency Services) is a mobile response team for mental health emergencies. When she was sworn into office, she was the only newcomer and her orientation meetings with city staff were often one-on-one. That time afforded her an in-depth understanding of the challenges first responders faced when answering calls for service that included mental health crises.

"We got C.A.R.E.S. off the ground in a little over a year. It's a substantial change on how we do things, but it's going to have far superior outcomes for people who need help. People will be less afraid to call if a paramedic and social worker will be responding instead of someone with a gun."

It's challenging to serve on the city council. Alders need to work on a lot of city issues—from potholes to flooding—and can't just focus on their own agenda. She still thinks about votes that were hard, and she's had to learn a lot through experience and making mistakes.

"It's only experience that will teach you," she said. "There will be sucky moments, and people will be mad at you. I want people to like me, but not everyone has to like you. You can take the criticism, decide if it's fair, and let it go. Whenever I struggled or didn't want to do something, my dad would always say 'it builds character.'"

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.



Anthology all the love, all the cards. Includes cards like 'LOVE WINS', 'YOU ARE THE PERFECT PARTNER', and 'Mr and Mrs'. Address: 230 State Street, stop 1.

NEED A MAMMOGRAM? LIMITED INSURANCE? NONE AT ALL? 25 Clinics to Choose From IT'S ALL FREE. QUALIFYING IS EASY. Phone: 608-242-6392 www.WellWomanDaneCounty.org



TRANS RIGHTS SOCIAL MEDIA COMEDY

Building Her Platform

Dina Nina chats with Mercury Stardust, the Trans Handy Ma'am, about everything from her viral success on TikTok to what it's like looking for work when openly trans.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN two trans women meet for coffee and a kiki? Magic.

When Mercury Stardust walked through the doors at the coffee shop, it was the first time I'd seen her without glitter, other than on social media, and was taken in by her warmth and lack of pretense. I asked her where she wanted to sit, she said over in the corner away from the small table of boardgamers. "I'm pretty loud," she boomed through a hearty laugh. "Me, too!" I replied. So, after grabbing caffeine and empty calories we sat down to catch up and to find out how she's adjusting to the whirlwind of TikTok celebrity.

"It's been surreal in a sense that I'm having conversations with TV executives and producers," she said. We didn't start off slowly, and I can't say much, but what I can say (I know such a "Hollywood" thing to say) is that what's in store for her is very exciting. "This is my golden f**king ticket!" she said. "Like as trans people, how often do we get to exist outside of being trans?"

If you don't know Mercury, you should. She is in the midst of a huge burst of fame from her TikTok videos. Her laugh is infectious and obnoxious—just like mine, and I'm here for it always. She's kind, sassy, and if you have a drain clog, her account should be your first stop. The moment she's having right now is something that millions of people hope for and dream of.

"I think the hardest part is that it happened so quickly, and the amount of attention I've gotten is so much that it's hard to adjust. It's like you're in a boxing ring with somebody, and you're going 12 rounds with somebody, but like you didn't have time to prepare," she said.



So, let's break it down: On April 4, 2021, Mercury posted her first "Trans Handy Ma'am" video. Within a couple of days it got 650,000 likes, and she went from a handful of followers to 20,000. Within the month, she'd racked up 250,000 followers. On July 10, she hit one million followers—and at that point, she said, "I had more followers than Reba f**king McIntire! That's crazy to me."

Add in all of the interactions she gets, both good and bad, and she's just exhausted! It's practically a full time job, and like most people, she felt the need to respond to every comment (which we all can relate to when Facebook tells everyone it's our birthday), but imagine that every day.

WORKING WHILE TRANS

"It's weird to be viewed as this wholesome mother f**ker online," Mercury said, "and then be really scared

and full of anxiety constantly." She spoke to me candidly about the fear of sustaining this level of success and the misconceptions about influencers, the creator compensation plan (which is disappointing), and the anxiety of being transgender in the workforce—especially in a field so dominated by men. "Only six percent of the people in this field are women, and the other 94% are men," she noted. "Very few queer humans are in this field," she said. "It's pretty scary sometimes."

The stories she told about job hunting mirror my own: Having an abundance of experience in your field and going to an interview to be told they've just filled the position. Or making it past the interview, only to feel aggressive behavior from those with whom you work while being held to standards higher than your cis-counterparts. The countless meetings with HR. These have only pushed Mercury toward her TikTok family and deeper into the arms of the Madison queer community.

Since she began her transition a little over 2 years ago, Mercury has experienced freedom to be who she is in a way that is so intrinsically true to herself. "July 17, 2019 was the first day I openly said I was trans on the good ol' Facebook," she said. "Then, I started hormone therapy.



DINA NINA, who was called "...very funny" by The Late Late Show's James Corden, is a standup comedian and actor and the founder of Lady Laughs Comedy. She's been seen and heard on PBS and NBC and was called one of the "58 trans women actors you should know and also love" by Autostraddle.

It's so good," she said with almost a tinge of zen in her voice.

For more than 14 years, Mercury has been pursuing a career in burlesque, and she felt the weight of having to choose between her love of burlesque and the job that made her money: maintenance.

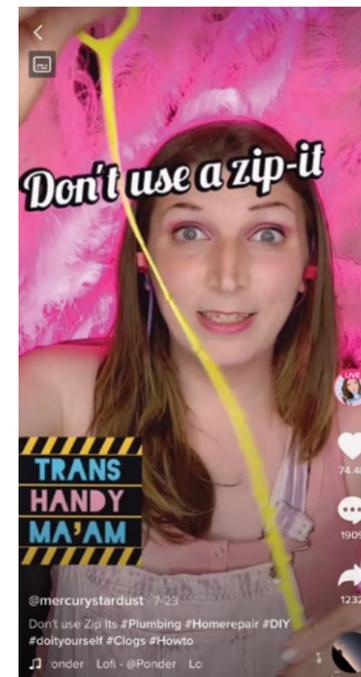
"I had my weekly show for three years, and it was a really successful show on a local scale. But," she said, "no matter what I did, I could never get anything to really take off. It's just weird that combining the two has been the most successful thing. It's just really weird."

And it's no surprise that Mercury doesn't have the same passion for handy ma'am-ing as she does for burlesque. "I would rather shake my tits for a granny in her sixties than ever unclog a f**king toilet," she said.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The responsibility Mercury feels to the community on the platform is real, and Mercury couldn't resist a repair analogy to drive it home. "As far as responding to the hate on TikTok, it's like taking a hot knife to something," she said. "You wanna cut through it as smooth as possible with a steady hand, because if you make the biggest wrong move, you can cut your own hand. It makes it important to not hurt your own community."

She admits that, "Sometimes I just want to take the leash off and bite someone's head off." Her solution is to have a pod of people with whom she can be honest and run her responses and quips by who will guide her and give their unvarnished opinions. "There are times when I've been close to siccing one million people on somebody," she said. "I wanted to



"As far as responding to the hate on TikTok, it's like taking a hot knife to something," she said. "You wanna cut through it as smooth as possible with a steady hand, because if you make the biggest wrong move, you can cut your own hand. It makes it important to not hurt your own community."

so badly." But the people around her keep her from wielding that power. From my view that's a beautifully compassionate and adult thing to do, given the current state of our world.

Even though her moniker, "Trans Handy Ma'am," hooks us in, she's adamant that she's "more than Handy Ma'am Stuff. That's what people know me as, but my TikToks do best if they're diverse. Like, if I just do Handy Ma'am Stuff, my posts don't go anywhere, but if I do my comedy, mixed in with my burlesque, mixed with my handy ma'am stuff, they do the best," she said. "I'm not

teaching people about being trans as much as I'm teaching people how to hold a wrench. We're not allowed to exist outside of our [body parts] half the time. It's annoying."

Mercury has struck a chord with people who may have never met a trans person by teaching them how to hold a wrench, how to fix their "pooper," and how to have a little more compassion for each other. In a time that's as divided and angry as it is right now, she's doing some good work. She can even teach us how to find a stud with a magnet, and that's all I've ever wanted to know. ■



In the movie of your life, YOU play the best part.

We stand for you!

VIVIENNE ANDERSEN
REALTOR®

V@VIVIENNEANDERSEN.COM
608 425 0929



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



Federally Insured by NCUA

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

702 N. BLACKHAWK AVE.



RECOVERY SELF-REFLECTION VULNERABILITY QTBIPOC

It Gets Better with Time

Alexia Linez shares her heart and journey through substance abuse and recovery and how she is falling in love with the woman she's becoming.

THE FIRST TIME I DRANK, I was 13. I remember thinking, this is it. I found the thing to take all the pain away. You see, the year before, I had tried self-harm, but wasn't very good at it. I tried an eating disorder, but it didn't bring relief. But drugs? This worked. Made me happy, funny, made me forget my pain and the fact that I really didn't like myself.

My childhood was scary and unpredictable. I felt alone and like no one understood me. Drugs was where I found the solution.

In high school, I discovered my bisexuality. I had girlfriends, and my whole crew was experimenting. I felt very accepted in that way among my friends, but the pain was still there. I still felt abandoned.

Have you ever had a broken heart, felt so much pain, lived in so much dark, thought you'd never see the light again?

This line, from Ms. Dynamite's song "A Little Deeper," has stuck with me from the first time I heard it as a young teen. I have played this song, cried, and written and talked to God. Even throughout trauma and addiction, I wrote and listened to music. It was my saving grace. It gave me a safe place to process when I couldn't tell anyone else.

My addiction progressed into harder drugs, more often. I was in and out of treatment, and at 21 I was diagnosed with Bipolar 1. I have had three major manic episodes in my life, two related to drug use. I have struggled to recover since the first time I touched drugs and alcohol, some 20 years ago.

FIRST STEPS TOWARD RECOVERY

I got sober on August 11, 2019. And stayed sober. I just celebrated two years. Today, I love myself. I love my life. I don't want to die like I did for so long. I don't even know what changed. All I know is that anyone can turn their life around at any time. It does not matter what you have done, or how far down you have gone, you can get better. I know this because it happened for me.

Life is good today. I am mostly happy, grateful, and joyful. I feel a freedom I had



never experienced before. I still love music and love to write. It is still my saving grace.

In May of this year, I told my story of addiction, trauma, and psychiatric illness for the first time, on a stage. I was nervous, but thanks to my friend and Loud 'N Unchained Theatre Co., I performed. Every time I step out of my comfort zone and take a healthy risk, I am rewarded. Writing is rewarding.

CELEBRATING SELF

I am a 32-year-old queer, Black woman. I was born and raised in Madison. I lost many friends due to my addiction and relationships. Thankfully, today, I have beautiful friends and community. I went to my first big city Pride in Minneapolis in 2019. And that same summer, I was at Warner Park for Pride here. I came

out as Asexual that same year, but it took me awhile to accept it. Today, I know I am somewhere on the Ace spectrum. And I have even found people here in Madison that are also Ace.

Queer. Disabled. Once addicted. Today, I am recovering. Today, I am healing. I am a new doula and in school for Journalism. I am happy and single, dating myself. I am excited to see what life has in store for me. I never thought I would say that.

I just hope you know that it gets, it gets better with time.

Syd's voice. Haunting. Daring me to believe that things get better with time. And they do. ■

ALEXANDER EINSMAN
MS LMFT



ATLAS
COUNSELING

ATLASMADISON.COM
608.535.9285



Mind +
Body Focus
LGBTQ-
Affirming
Relationship
Therapy
EMDR
Hypnosis

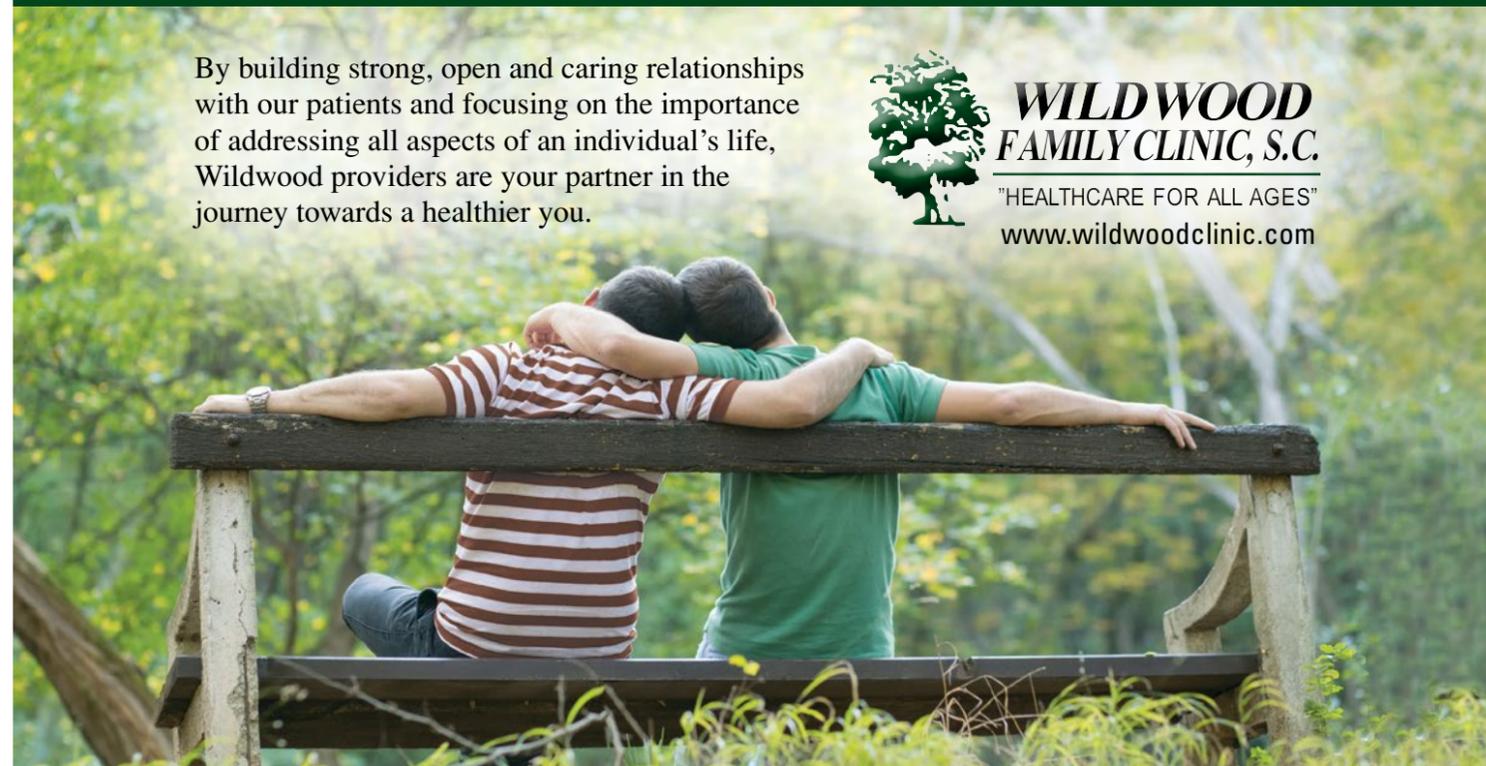
Treating the whole you...

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



Since 1978 | Independently Owned | Individualized Care

Dulcy Dog Photography
**NOW
BOOKING**
FOR 2021



Dulcy
dog photography

406.823.0028 | info@dulcydogphotography.com
dulcydogphotography.com

YOUR
Connection
TO LGBTQ WISCONSIN

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



PEOPLE



EVENTS



BUSINESSES

AUGUST 21 Madison Pride KiKi Ball



AUGUST 21 & 22 Madison Pride Volleyball Tournament



STEVEN NOLL

AUGUST 14 WOOF's Pride Block Party



IAN DEGRAFF

purrrrrsonal matchmaking for every family!



Angel's Wish

WWW.ANGELSWISH.ORG

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

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.



FINANCING AVAILABLE
BethkeHeating.com



Drawing People with Love

Rae Senarighi shares his message of love, joy, and acceptance through powerful art, reclaiming space for nonbinary and transgender people and encouraging everyone to express themselves creatively in all the ways they can.

LOVE TRANS & NONBINARY CANCER PORTRAITURE

LOVE IS AUDACIOUS. Love is action. Love is not passive or blasé. Love is being brave in the face of criticism and judgement. Love is showing up. Love is standing up for the vulnerable. Love is empathy. Love is the foundation from which I build my art.

As a multi-disciplinary artist, all of my artwork fits under the umbrella of my personal mission to empower and celebrate community by changing the narrative to love, joy, and acceptance.

Being a transgender/nonbinary person, I am very familiar with the onslaught of attacks on our humanity, our morality, on our very existence. It's an old and tired refrain from people who are fearful of us, and who turn that fear outward into anger and judgement.

Instead of reacting in argument to these attacks (fighting is a tool of white supremacy and patriarchal power systems to divide, distract, and conquer) my strategy is to flip the script. There's a Buddhist saying that "holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throw-

Not every person who lives through challenging times becomes an artist or considers themselves a creative. But nearly every truly inspired creative that I can think of has been through difficult things.

ing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned." I try to not take on their anger, even though it is incredibly difficult at times, particularly this year, when right-wing fear-mongers have been directly targeting trans children. It does anger me greatly. But I choose to make art that combats this fear and anger through channeling my love of my community.

The message of "you are loved" came in direct response to these attacks by lawmakers who would try to criminalize and further ostracize trans children. I thought about what I wanted to say to those trans kids. If I could give them each a hug and tell them one thing, it would be this simple message. Now, countless others are carrying this message out even further into the world, with bumper stickers, yard signs and billboards across the nation. Don't ever let anyone tell you that art is not powerful.

ART HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE

Art has been the one thing in my life that has always been there for me and allowed me to express myself. I have been interested in and practicing art since I was a small child. My mother was a very talented artist

Holy Wisdom Monastery

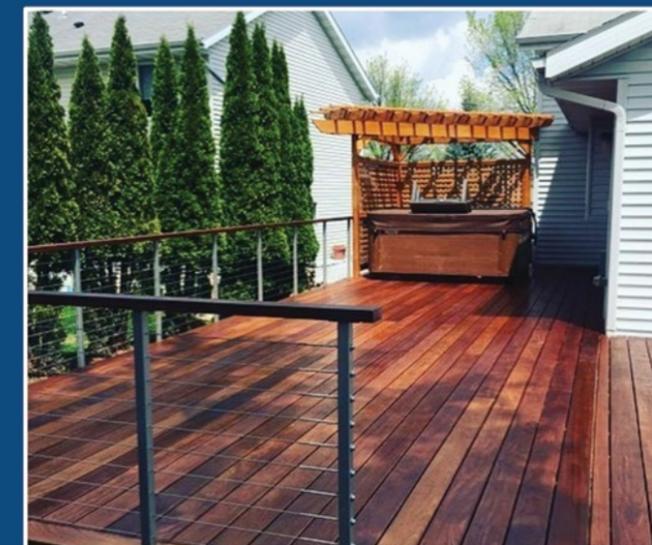
Holy Wisdom Monastery...
A sacred place where all are welcome
Holy Wisdom Monastery is located on 190 acres of peaceful, beautiful grounds that are carefully restored to native prairie, oak savanna and hardwood forest. This oasis is on the quiet side of Lake Mendota with breathtaking views of Madison.
We offer beauty, balance, stability, prayer in common, worship, contemplative silence and respect for all.

You are invited to experience this through:

- Daily prayer & Sunday worship
- Personal retreats
- Group meetings & events
- Volunteering & hiking on the land
- Meals from produce grown on site

HOLYWISDOMMONASTERY.ORG 608-836-1631

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

and I was able to learn a lot from her before she died by suicide when I was just 11 years old. The rest of my childhood I spent in survival mode, living with my father and step-mother who subscribed to a rigidly restrictive Christian church. Art was always the one place where I could find and express my inner world.

COMING OUT

After being kicked out of my parents house during my senior year of high school, I discovered I was attracted to women and came out as a lesbian. I attended my freshman year of college and then dropped out due to getting an “F” in my first painting class. I just wasn’t ready to be in college and had too much to figure out at that time in my life. I went back to get my BFA when I was 25, graduating at 29 with a graphic design degree. At 32, I came out as transgender/nonbinary and began my medical transition. I stayed focused on my commercial art career and found a great deal of satisfaction through my work as a scientific illustrator at the University of Washington, working with an international cohort of epigenetic scientists.

DIAGNOSIS

Then, at the age of 35, my world was turned upside down. My wife and I were living in Portland, OR, saving up to buy a house when we found out I had cancer. Luckily, we caught it early and my prognosis was good. But this sudden look at an early death hit me hard. I had recently lost a dear childhood friend to cancer and had another friend who was losing her battle when I was diagnosed. Her memorial service fell on the same day as my surgery to remove the cancer from my body. Survivor’s guilt swelled up in my newly flat chest.

Enduring a near-death experience often fundamentally shifts one’s perspective. I’m not alone in this. Facing imminent death made me realize the things that were important in my life. Namely, to prioritize my relationships, to tell people that I love them, to express and center gratitude in my daily routine, and to carve out space in my life for my own art.

10 MINUTES PER DAY

I promised myself that I would spend at least 10 minutes per day making the art I wanted to make. I could spend the whole rest of the day making art that makes money. But for a minimum of 10 minutes per day, I would go into my studio and make art for ME. I made a commitment to treat my fine art with the same respect that I treat my day job.

At first, I had no idea what to create. But I went into my studio every day and often that 10 minutes would turn into 30 minutes or even a couple of hours. Once I am in my studio, even if I’m tired and it’s the end of the day, because I am making art that I’m interested in, it generates energy instead of draining it from me.

It’s surprising how fast a body of work can add up with a commitment to 10 minutes per day. After two years I found myself making art that I knew was different. I was onto something. I had found my thing. For me, my thing is making portraits of my community.

TRANSPAINTER

I create larger-than-life paintings of transgender and nonbinary people because I love going to art museums and galleries. I love seeing giant

artworks taking up bold space, and I see a huge lack of representation of my community in the fine art world.

My goal as an artist is to help generate respect and understanding for the transgender and nonbinary community. I use my art to communicate our complexity, our humanity, our divinity, our sacred beauty.

UNIQUE PEOPLE, UNIQUE STORIES

Being transgender/nonbinary is not linear and not simple. How people experience and express being trans is incredibly nuanced and diverse. There are so many factors that play into this, including (but not limited to) age, race, class, location, access to health care, safe housing, education, support, etc. I want to celebrate our differences and help tell these complex and beautiful stories of resilience and self-acceptance. My portrait subjects are people who are living their lives out in the open, with integrity and courage. Each of these folks are telling their own unique stories in their own ways. They are poets and writers, musicians and teachers, activists and speakers, athletes and modern dancers, photographers, organizers, and artists—and they each have a story to tell.

ADVERSITY FEEDS CREATIVITY

I believe that adversity and challenges directly inspire creativity. It is important to find and create happiness and peace in one’s life. But in my experience, the most compassionate and creative individuals I know have been through incredible hardships and challenges. Not every person who lives through challenging times becomes an artist or considers themselves a creative. But nearly every truly inspired creative that I can think of has been through difficult things. To be creative is to understand and be comfortable with failure. One can’t be truly creative without trying and failing and trying again. The creative process

itself is one of continual risk. It’s how we grow. It’s how we come up with new ideas. Failure is part of the process. And people who are comfortable with that have most often been through really hard things in their lives and know just how strong they are. They know that they can survive hard things. And they are willing to think and act differently in order to express themselves.

I see myself reflected in every portrait I paint. I see the humanity, the beautiful and joyous self-expression of those in my community, and I celebrate that with every brush stroke. I think I had to go through a pretty radical shift with my battle with cancer to begin to love myself. And now that self-love is what allows me to love others. My view of the world is that it will be a better place as more people begin to love themselves.

DIVINE HUMANITY

When I see people viewing my portraits, I watch them get drawn into the exquisite beauty and power of the subjects. My hope is that the viewer is able to witness the divine humanity of the trans/nonbinary person in the piece. I chose the title “transcend” for my first portrait series because I want to rise above the confusion and chaos perpetuated by people who are trapped in systems of fear—my art aims beyond binary systems.

I feel like most people have been shamed at different points in their lives for their gender expression. Cisgender people are not immune from



this. It’s everywhere. Society has narrowed the “acceptable” behaviors into these two rigid extremes of hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine. When in reality, these expressions exist in all of us. Most cisgender people have been taught at early ages to conform and to not buck the system. To suppress any expression that might get them made fun of, laughed at, or beaten up.

What I mean when I say it’s okay to go beyond those gender lines is to encourage people to be able to freely express themselves. That will look, feel, and sound different for every individual. Allowing yourself to fully express the different aspects of YOU is a powerful and freeing experience. It is when we repress these things in ourselves that we often will turn and lash out at those who are expressing themselves freely.

CHOOSE EXPRESSION

To express or repress: those are really your options. And I choose expression every time. It is a much more full and enjoyable way to live, and I encourage cisgender people to explore their own self-expression, however that may look and feel to them.



I am one who believes in the artistic creativity of everyone. Again, many of us are criticized for our artistic expression at early ages and stop creating. I can’t tell you how many times I hear people say, “Well, I’m not an artist.” I don’t buy it. All of us are creative. If you have been told that you’re not creative, and you hear those voices in your head when you think about taking up some creative project, give yourself permission to do it. Tell that voice that they are wrong. You are allowed to create just for creativity’s sake! You don’t have to show anyone your art, or let anyone hear you sing, or watch you dance—or whatever it is that your heart is yearning for or just plain curious about. You can do this, you can express yourself JUST FOR YOU.

I am endlessly curious about our varied experiences and expressions. I will use whatever methods are at my disposal—whether creating bumper stickers, protest banners, country-wide billboard projects, speaking, typography messages, or larger-than-life portraits—my goal is to draw people in with love. This is my call to action, my call to love. Go paint tonight. Go run a marathon. Go do whatever that thing is that heart yearns for. ■



**YOU MAKE THE MEMORIES.
WE’LL MAKE THEM LAST.**

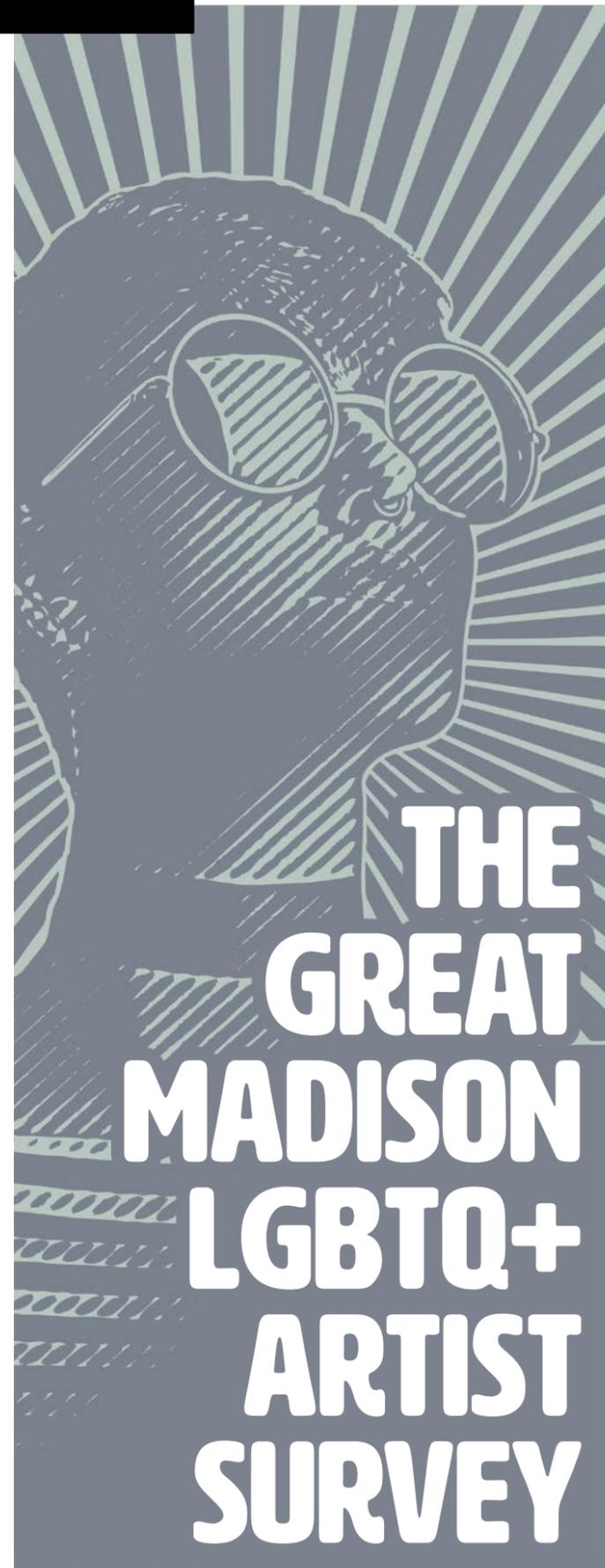
Our shop features an extensive selection of frames, mats, and glazing, as well as a custom workshop to create designs inspired by your wildest ideas.

OPEN
Tues – Sat, 10am – 5pm
Appointments available by request

**MONROE STREET
FRAMING**

1901 Monroe St Madison, WI | 608.255.7330 | monroestreetframing.com





MADISON'S ARTS SCENE is always popping, and LGBTQ+ identified people bring so much of the color and variety to the scene. Through everything from live music to mixed media, teaching to curation, dance to poetry and literature, queer folk have long contributed enormously to the artistic fabric of the community. To honor those creative efforts, below is our third annual survey of LGBTQ artists and bands/companies with LGBTQ-identified members in the Madison area. May it serve to spread awareness and appreciation of their work!

As always, this is by no means a comprehensive list. We reached out to our various networks for names and resources, and did our best to get permission and/or updated information before including them on the list. We hope to continue building on this survey in future years, so feel free to reach out with recommendations at contact@ourliveswisconsin.com.

PERFORMING ARTISTS: BURLESQUE / DRAG

Curation help from Brandon Rounds

Amethyst Von Trolenberg | [instagram.com/amethystvt](https://www.instagram.com/amethystvt) | Amethyst Von Trolenberg is a local drag and burlesque entertainer known as the Seven Foot Siren. She is a former Miss Madison Pride and is known for her sultry demeanor and powerful vocal talent

Anita Spanx | [instagram.com/spanx_me](https://www.instagram.com/spanx_me) | Anita Spanx is a creative queen who wants to make you laugh. She loves to bring you characters, concepts, and absolute buffoonery!

Anya Knees | [instagram.com/theonlyanyaknees](https://www.instagram.com/theonlyanyaknees) | Anya Knees is a show director at FIVE Nightclub and This Is It in Milwaukee. Anya is the reigning Miss Hamburger Mary's MKE 2019. In addition you can find her and co-host Rachel Slurrz hosting their virtual talk show Ungodly Gossip on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

Bianca Lynn Breeze | [instagram.com/blbreeze](https://www.instagram.com/blbreeze) | Bianca Lynn Breeze has been gracing stages around the midwest for over 8 years. She is Madison's premier drag queen bingo hostess and event producer. She is a mix of glam, sparkle, and sass and you can find her hosting and directing shows at FIVE Nightclub, Majestic Theater, Paoli Mill, Fifth Quarter, Flavors! Wine Bar, & Grateful Shed (Wi Dells).

Bryanna Banx\$ | [facebook.com/bryannabanxs](https://www.facebook.com/bryannabanxs) | Bryanna Banx\$ has been in the industry for about 17 years and is still blessed to be able to continue emceeing, performing, and organizing events all over Wisconsin. An award winning entertainer with an infectious personality that will always leave you coming back for more.

Cass Marie Domino | [facebook.com/cassdowning](https://www.facebook.com/cassdowning) | Cass Marie Domino a native of Madison WI is an Accomplishing Performer of 30+ years winning numerous state and national titles such as WI continental, WI Entertainer Of The Year, and National Entertainer Of The Year Femme. You'll find Cass in high end fashion couture designs and unique looks tailored to fit all of her curves. Also an advocate for transgender youth and adults as well as people like herself who live with HIV.

Cynthia Mooseknuckle | [instagram.com/cynthiamooseknuckle](https://www.instagram.com/cynthiamooseknuckle) | Known as the Queen of the Pups and the Mother of Moose, Cynthia Mooseknuckle is a Wisconsin based Drag entertainer that has been performing around the state for 7 years. A few of her titles include Miss Glitter Stage and Miss Players PHAT! Her entertainment styles varies from Broadway to country, diva ballads and concept costuming. She is best known for her well executed concept numbers and personal favorite Wicked!

Cyrus K Stratton | [instagram.com/cyruskstratton](https://www.instagram.com/cyruskstratton) | Cyrus K. Stratton hit the drag scene in 2018 and quickly made a name for himself as the king of suave. Cyrus is a Madison-based drag king who is also the current reigning Mr. Rock County Pride. He will steal your heart and your girl.

DaddyDon't GiveaDamn / MamaNo Shits | [instagram.com/mamanoshits](https://www.instagram.com/mamanoshits)

Daddy Don't Give A Damn/MamaNo Shits is a fierce trans non-binary drag king with an in your face, theatrical style. They come from the world of burlesque and theatre, but have been performing in drag for about 2 and a half years. Variety is key as they like to incorporate gender fluidity, dramatics, music theatre, unique narratives, and a whole lot of weird creativity into their performances.

DeeDee Purr | [instagram.com/deedeeppurr](https://www.instagram.com/deedeeppurr) | Best described as the drag clown of Madison. Their performances are best described as crude, comedic, pushing the barrier, and celebrating everything stupid. One of Dee Dee's greatest honors is being the reigning Mx. FIVE ApocaLips, a 8 week competition based out of FIVE Nightclub.

Gio | [instagram.com/gio_guzman_180685](https://www.instagram.com/gio_guzman_180685) | Gio has been in the Male and Drag entertainment since 2008 in Wisconsin and puts much love, pride and dedication into his performances by infusing his art with hope and his Mexican culture along with other cultures around the world. He has been lucky to represent as Mr. Five Night Club, Mr. Gay Latino Madison, Mr. Club Wisconsin, and Miss Wisconsin Capital Pride. Gio is thankful for the love and support from fans.

Gretch Grimm-Deville | [instagram.com/omggretch](https://www.instagram.com/omggretch) | Gretch Grimm-Deville is a diverse non-binary entertainer who will give you comedy and spook in the same night. They love to make DIY outfits and drag comedy mixes. They always give a concept with their performances.

Jasper Madison | [instagram.com/jaspermadison608](https://www.instagram.com/jaspermadison608) | Jasper Madison is a fan favorite in the local community. Her style ranges from classic drag to alternative, burlesque and even male performance. She got her start on stage in 2017 and is constantly evolving.

Josie Lynn | [facebook.com/joel.duffin](https://www.facebook.com/joel.duffin) | The first time Josie Lynn performed in a wig and heels was 27 years ago at a small bar in Wausau. If you would have asked her then to describe her drag, she would have said, "I'm a beer drinking, cheese eatin' farmer in a dress." As she continued to perform, she started taking on different characters: Pageant queen, camp, dancer, prop master, chameleon, a queen for charity even the HIV queen. Now she likes to say she is the Madonna of drag, because she is always reinventing herself.

Karma Zavich | [instagram.com/karmamirage](https://www.instagram.com/karmamirage) | Karma Zavich is the reigning Miss Wisconsin USofA Newcomer. She is also the co-show director of the Madcity Drag Review at FIVE Nightclub and host of BABE at This Is It in Milwaukee. When she's not in drag, she teaches dance at Madison Ballroom Company.

Kasper James | [instagram.com/master_nick3](https://www.instagram.com/master_nick3) | Kasper James has been a face of the stage since 2018 when he first competed, and was crowned Mr. Madison Pride. Since then, you can find him all over the great state of Wisconsin. In 2019 he was crowned Mr. Gay Wisconsin USofA and represented well at the national stage. His favorite part of the performance community is a good pageant. Enjoying the elegance and regality of it all. Kasper loves to meet people and have a great time.

Kayos Mirage | [instagram.com/worldofkayos](https://www.instagram.com/worldofkayos) | Jacob Lefebber is a Drag Queen that goes by the name of Kayos Mirage. She has become one of the show directors at Five Night Club in Madison, Pyramid Event Venue in Lake Mills, and 'This Is It' Bar in Milwaukee. Each of which she produces and hosts her own shows that never fail to serve entertainment. A wild child of a performer with a sharp tongue on the mic, Kayos is always ready to make sure you have an amazing experience for every minute she shares the stage with you.

Lola Monet | [instagram.com/lola_monet01](https://www.instagram.com/lola_monet01) | Lola is a fresh face in the Madison area and has been performing for a little over 2 years. She is a comedic campy Queen, who focuses on spreading positivity, love and laughter.

Loretta Love Lee | [instagram.com/sheezlovelee](https://www.instagram.com/sheezlovelee) | A Wisconsin Sensation, Loretta is a kind, spiritual, and a plant loving goddess. She checks off fine

details in drag serving glamour, glitter, and hyper-feminine illusions! She is an event coordinator and show director at LaCage Niteclub, Wisconsin's three story night club. You can also catch her on the mic at Northsider's in Lake Geneva & The Sand Bar in Wisconsin Dells.

Lucy Von Cucci | [instagram.com/lucyvoncucci](https://www.instagram.com/lucyvoncucci) | Lucy von Cucci has been in the Wisconsin drag scenes for almost a decade and has won many regional and state titles. Lucy's first love had always been the stage and always adds her theater background to anything she does, whether it be lip syncing, acting, drag queen story time, or hosting events.

Madam Lacy | [instagram.com/madamlacy](https://www.instagram.com/madamlacy) | Madam Lacy is a burlesque, drag, and vocal artist. She is the current Miss Gay Madison Plus and was award 2019 Wisconsin Burlypics Master of Vocals. Madam Lacy's performance style is a campy mix of Disney Princess and story telling that's sure to have you laughing and blushing, making her the original Disney Plus. Madam Lacy may be sassy but her curves are all sweet.

Malaiya Marvel | [instagram.com/malaiyamarvel](https://www.instagram.com/malaiyamarvel) | Malaiyas is Wisconsin's favorite nerdy cosplay Queen! Her drag combined the whimsy of video games, anime, and cartoons with fierce looks, creative concepts, and high energy performance. She frequents most venues throughout Wisconsin, but can be found primarily as a show director at This is it!. She's the current reigning Mx Showdown and cohosts MANIA! at This Is it!.

Mercedes Benzova | [instagram.com/mercedesbenzova](https://www.instagram.com/mercedesbenzova) | Mercedes is bodacious diva that's a whole lotta fun with an extra side of Sass. You can catch her performing and hosting at The Sandbar in Wi Dells, Northsiders in Lake Geneva, LaCage Niteclub in Milwaukee and all over the state.

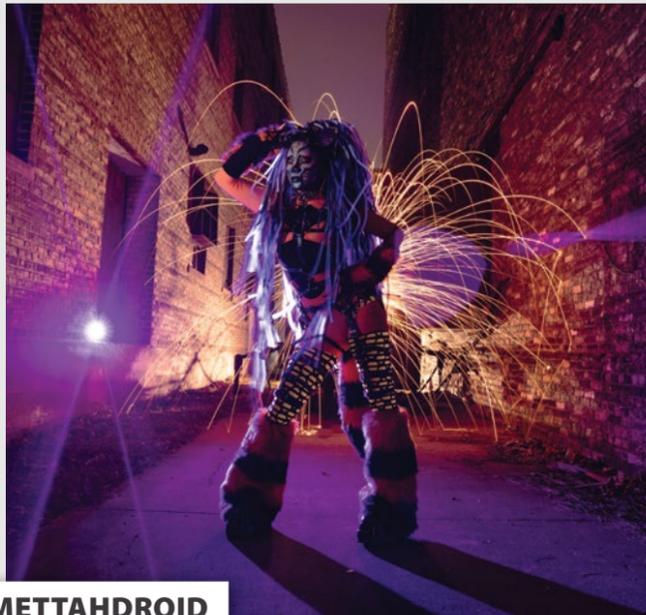
Mi Mi Sanchez | [instagram.com/mimi_sanchez](https://www.instagram.com/mimi_sanchez) | Mi Mi Sanchez is the life of the party giving you face, grace and no lace. She is high energy and her drag is always evolving and captivating. During the day she works as a full time extension specialist, natural hair care and color.

 JEWELERS WORKSHOP



**YOU DREAM IT
WE MAKE IT!**

EXPERTS IN CUSTOM DESIGN & REPAIRS



METTAHDROID

Burlesque/Drag | [instagram.com/mettahdroid_mks](https://www.instagram.com/mettahdroid_mks)

FROM THE DEPTHS of the universe comes an interstellar being that has made their home in Madison. MettahDroid is an alien shapeshifting drag entity who shatters the glass ceiling of conventional drag. They are the first Mx. Madison Pride crowned in 2019 and are determined to keep competing and representing gender nonconforming and alternative drag performance art. Using unconventional costume fabrication materials, explosions of color, unique fashions that pay tribute to late 90s and early to mid-2000s club kid era, MettahDroid represents the potential and versatility drag as a visual art has to offer.

Underneath the neon hues and cybernetic tubes is the visual and conceptual artist Yochu Lebron-Myatt. They are a proud Puerto Rican, bi-racial, and nonbinary-transmasculine human being. For Yochu, MettahDroid is more than just a stage persona. They are an embodied concept and shared experience defined by actively pushing the boundaries of gender expression. From the colors and shapes carefully sketched on their face to the energetic EDM performances filled with vogue tricks and flow arts, MettahDroid's vision of drag in the future is bold, inclusive, and challenges one's perspective of conventional drag.

When Yochu is not in drag, they are pursuing their degree in Anthropology and Archaeology with a focus on indigenous cultures and people of the Caribbean and South America. Harnessing the same motivation and determination to usher in a new cultural perspective of drag, Yochu hopes to inspire change in the American public education system. One day, they hope to see it encompass the rich history of Latin America and the Caribbean as an integral part of our history and culture. They are also passionately open about their disabilities and fight for representation of Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, people of the global majority, disabled, and neurodivergent artists on stage.

Yochu seeks to inspire change and representation in the drag performance community by encouraging performers both new and old to cultivate versatility, trust, and space for marginalized performers and audience members within Madison's local LGBTQ+ community and beyond. With their navigation systems set to the future, MettahDroid hopes to be a manifestation of creativity that inspires future generations of drag artists to come. MettahDroid is coming to a planetary system near you, so prepare yourselves for assimilation! ■

Michael Lynn | [instagram.com/thatchichaellynn](https://www.instagram.com/thatchichaellynn) | Michael Lynn enjoys upbeat performances and showing the glamour side of being a Male Lead. You can catch him producing Drag Brunches at the Rigby Pub & Grill.

Miss Elegance started performing in the scene just over two years ago. She is a gymnast and an amazing self taught dancer. She's one of the first black trans woman on cast in a previous Madison burlesque show.

Monica Ciccone | [facebook.com/valentin.elizalde.397](https://www.facebook.com/valentin.elizalde.397) | Monica has been an entertainer since 1998. She won the title of Ms. Diva Latina Madison 2010. She loves to bring enjoyment to her audience through her live singing or lipsyncing performances. She is the hostess of Noches Latinas at FIVE Nightclub- Madison's monthly Latinx Drag Show.

Mystie von Cucci | [facebook.com/mystie.voncucci.92](https://www.facebook.com/mystie.voncucci.92) | Mystie von Cucci, co-host of Pour Decisions. Her drag can be described as fun and comedic who's loves to get the audience on their feet and laughing. She loves hosting trivia and sipping a cocktail. In addition to taking the stage, she loves supporting other queen's pageant numbers and has designed and built sets for award winning talent numbers.

Nemo | [instagram.com/nemo_drag](https://www.instagram.com/nemo_drag) | Nemo is a 15-year-old trans male drag queen. As Nemo, he is able to make people laugh, make fun of himself, and make fun of gender norms. Being Nemo is not just about putting on a wig and makeup, although that is a part of it. It's about becoming someone else and creating a character with a point of view. Nemo uses his presence on Instagram and YouTube: Nemo_drag to fight for causes important to himself and the LGBTQ+ community, to spread awareness of gender non-conforming individuals, and to spread happiness.

OD Kimani | [instagram.com/od_kimani](https://www.instagram.com/od_kimani) | OD is a creative and innovative burlesque and performance artist, seen regularly on the stages at FIVE Nightclub, and a founding member of the Wisconsin Burlesque Association. He won the Judges' Choice Award at the Great Burlesque Expo in Boston in 2017, and has gone on to compete at several burlesque shows nationally and internationally, winning awards and hearts along the way.

Persephone B Diamond | [instagram.com/glamcholita](https://www.instagram.com/glamcholita) | Persephone B. Diamond is a beauty dancing queen. She is the only queen professionally trained in Mexican Folklorico. Performing high energy stunts to traditional twirls, she brings a cultural experience to every show.

Pony Boy | [facebook.com/ponyboy.trevor.9](https://www.facebook.com/ponyboy.trevor.9) | Pony Boy is a mix between funny and sexy. He tries to get the people hyped up for a good time. He also tries to use some of his numbers to inspire people to be who they are and not care what others think or to trans folx that they can do it too.

RyRy Minaj | [facebook.com/ryan.moffat.39](https://www.facebook.com/ryan.moffat.39) | Former Mr. Gay Wisconsin USofA and Mr. Gay Madison, RyRy Minaj has been performing for over 6 years. You never know what you'll get when he's on stage from his sparkly costumes to his amazing flipping body in front of your face.

Sasha Christine | [facebook.com/sasha.christine.1](https://www.facebook.com/sasha.christine.1) | Sasha Christine is co-host of Pour Decisions. Her drag can be described as a tiny little dancer, who's polished and pristine, but doesn't mind getting a little dirty. She helps coordinate and stars as one of the headliners, in the Annual Advanced Employment Benefit show, which is on it's 9th year running! You can catch this kitty cat performing at her favorite place, FIVE Nightclub. She also has a side gig of doing promo head shots for local queens.

Susan Sox | [facebook.com/auntsusansox](https://www.facebook.com/auntsusansox) | Susan Sox is Madison's Premier Auntie of Drag. Her charming, comedic stylings make you feel right at home. Why don't you ever visit your Auntie Sue anymore!?

Victoria Lynn | [facebook.com/jeremy.sharpee.77](https://www.facebook.com/jeremy.sharpee.77) | Victoria Lynn also known as Bicky the Bucking Queen is a quick witted, kind, and statuesque drag queen who has been performing for over 3 years. Being a queen to them is so freeing and gives them the confidence to conquer the world hunny!

ZZ Topz | [instagram.com/zz_topz_drag](https://www.instagram.com/zz_topz_drag) | ZZ Topz is a non-binary drag king from Madison Wisconsin. They are Mr. Five Nightclub 2019/2020. Their style is a must mix emotional portrayals and sensuality with cre-



OD Kimani



Bianca Lynn Breeze



Chris Walker



Beth Racette



Duane Lee Holland

ative costuming. They strive to create representation for drag kings and other gender nonconforming performers.

PERFORMING ARTISTS: COMEDY

Curation help from Dina Martinez

Becky Wennlund | [rebeccawennlund.com](https://www.rebeccawennlund.com) | Becky Wennlund is a local comedian and curator of the Perpetual Kindness Project, a study of how kindness, generosity, compassion have the power to improve your life.

Dina Nina | [Dinaninamartinez.com](https://www.dinaninamartinez.com) | [ladylaughscomedy.com](https://www.ladylaughscomedy.com) | Dina Nina's blend of sass and charm has been featured in comedy festivals and multiple world-class comedy venues including LA Pride, The Chicago Women's Funny Festival, LA's The Comedy Store and Chicago's Zanies Comedy Club. She is a HuffPost blogger, the founder of Lady Laughs Comedy & Artemis Bow Productions and writer of "The Misadventures of Delilah James." She was named one of the "58 Trans Women Actors You Should Know & Also Love" by Autostraddle, and won Madison's

Favorite Local Comedian as voted by the readers of the Isthmus. She will be in the upcoming film "2 Men & A Pig" with Dermot Mulroney.

Shawna Lutzow | [facebook.com/slutzow](https://www.facebook.com/slutzow) | Shawna Lutzow started her comedy career shortly after coming out of the closet. She draws from personal experiences to shed light on queer issues and to dismantle stereotypes. She's also been known to play a tune or two on her guitar.

Vanessa Tortolano | [facebook.com/vanessa.tortolano](https://www.facebook.com/vanessa.tortolano) | Vanessa Tortolano jumps from improv comedy to playing music and singing, and can be found on various Madison stages and in support of women- and LGBTQ-centric stand-up comedy classes and events.

PERFORMING ARTISTS: DANCE / THEATER

Curation help from Zak Stowe

Chris Walker | [education.wisc.edu/staff/walker-chris](https://www.education.wisc.edu/staff/walker-chris) | Chris Walker is a professor in the U.W. School of Education's Department of Dance and founding artistic director of First Wave, a nationally prominent scholarship pro-



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)



ROBERT A. (BOBBY) GODERICH

Performing Arts: Opera | facebook.com/bobby.goderich

ROBERT A. GODERICH HAS BEEN on stage since the early 90s. Growing up in a very small town in Southwestern Montana, Robert was introduced to stage through a traveling touring company. With the company, the students would audition, rehearse, costume, put up the set and perform in six days. After this first experience, he knew this is what he wanted for his life.

Fast forward 30 years later, and he is living his dream and performing. A veteran of the Madison stage, you will find him on stage both performing musical theater and opera, performing with such local companies as Madison Opera, Four Seasons Theater, Capitol City Theater, Musical Theatre of Madison, and many more. Robert has even worked with Skylight Music Theatre in Milwaukee, and with the San Francisco Opera company.

"Growing up, I was always laughed at when I talked about acting or performing as my goal," Goderich explained, "I just knew what I wanted to do and didn't want to allow other people's view of my idea for myself to keep me from achieving my dream."

When you think about going into the arts sector, you may think schooling would help start you off in the right direction. For Goderich, college, unfortunately, wasn't in the cards. "I knew what I wanted to do, so I looked for auditions and just tried to get seen as much as possible. I worked, watched, listened, and learned every time that I had the opportunity. Hard work and staying positive, I would say, are the keys to my growth."

The same hard work and positive outlook helped him make the transition to opera. Both musical theater and opera are very similar, yet so very completely different. Both have challenges, as well as opportunities to learn and grow.

"I was asked to be in the opera chorus in 2008. After I joined, I listened, worked hard, and tried to learn every day," Goderich said. "I started in the chorus and then was offered my first solo in 2012."

In 2015 Goderich got his first principle role and has been a regular principle performer with the company ever since.

"I started at the back of the stage and worked my way to the front. I am proof of what a positive outlook, and hard work can do," he said. ■

gram known for pushing the boundaries of poetry, dance, theater and art. He is the Director of the Division of the Arts. Walker is a multi-hyphenate contemporary dance and performance artist. Rooted in "Resistance Aesthetics," Walker's work draws upon the danced rituals, mas traditions, and embodied performance history of the African diaspora.

Duane Holland | duanelee-hollandjr.squarespace.com | Duane Holland is an Assistant Professor in the U.W. School of Education's Department of Dance. Duane began his professional dance career at the age of 17, dancing for the first Hip-Hop theater dance company, Rennie Harris Puremovement (RHPM). In 2015, he graduated Magna Cum-Laude from the University of Iowa with a Master of Fine Arts in Dance with a focus in Choreography. In 2016 Duane became the first full-time Hip-Hop professor at Boston Conservatory at Berklee. In 2019, he became the first full-time Hip-Hop professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In July 2020, he released his House single, "Hold Tight."

Dana Pellebon | infamousmothers.com/dana-pellebon | Dana has worked with community and professional theatrical troupes in the Madison area since 2001. She performs in/produces the Madison-based Caburlesque troupe, Foxy Veronica's Peach Pies. She is a co-founder of the Loud 'N Unchained (LNU) Black Theater Festival. In 2021 she directed "Good Bad People" for LNU Black Theater Festival, directed 2 pieces in "Network Playwright 10 Play Festival" for Chicago Dramatists, and directed in Forward Theater's Monologue Festival "Within These Walls."

Danielle Dresden & Donna Peckett | tapitnewworks.org | Donna is producing artistic director of TAPIT/new works, which she co-founded in 1985. She received two Choreography Fellowships from the Wisconsin Arts Board and was recognized by the Wisconsin Dance Council for her contributions to the field. Currently, Donna serves on the faculty of the Edgewood College Department of Theatre Arts, and as an instructor for UW Education Outreach and for the UW-Madison Department of Liberal Studies and the Arts.

Jay Gile | facebook.com/jeremiah.a.gile | Jay's goal is to always create meaningful and fun theater while also striving to be a learner and educator. They want to continue to bring uplifting, emotional and thoughtful theater to the Madison area, while also working on developing their voice in social justice works. Jay has done work as a Director for StageQ for the past several years, from Queer Shorts, to most recent Co-Directing "Dog Sees God." Jay's next Directing adventure will be "Priscilla: Queen of the Desert" with StageQ in Spring 2022!

Kelsyanne Schoenhaar | facebook.com/EncoreStudio | A Jane-of-all-trades, Kelsy is the Executive Director of Encore! Studio for the Performing Arts, which produces plays with input from and acting by adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities. She has mixed a career of music, theatre, and human services.

Malissa Petterson | facebook.com/mal.lamont | Malissa Petterson has written and directed nine major projects in the last decade, with another in the wings for 2021. Armed with an MFA in creative writing, she spends her days spinning stories about her two favorite things: feminism and sex. From the lonely tower of quarantine, she has given her time to directing a podcast—BawdCast—which is an adaption of *Threshold*, an erotic novel by Harper Mitchell.

Michael Bruno | facebook.com/Bruneaux1955 | Michael Bruno is the former Artistic Director for WhoopDeDoo Productions and past President of StageQ. He is a former Board Member of The Bartell Theater, AidsNetwork of Madison and Dane County Cultural Arts Commission. Premiered his local CBS-TV Entertainment segment, Bruno's Best Bets in 2011 and is currently seen on Wisc-TV Channel 3's Live at Four every Friday on Backstage With Bruno. Since Covid, the segment has become "Behind The Screens," where Bruno chats via Zoom with local artists, schools, theaters, and arts organizations to find out how they are



Tim Sauers



Dana Pellebon



Roseann Sheridan



Bone Holler

managing to survive and adjust during this time of the pandemic.

Richard Ganoung | facebook.com/richard.ganoung | The Madison-based actor is best known for his roles in the movies *Parting Glances* (1986), *True Identity* (1991) and *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss* (1998), but has appeared on stage with groups like Tap-It/New Works, the Madison Rep, and in quite a few productions of Shakespeare, among many others.

Roseann Sheridan | facebook.com/roseann.sheridan | The Producing Artistic Director of Children's Theater of Madison, Roseann has been with CTM since 2008. Previously, she was Producer and Associate Artistic Director at American Players Theatre.

Sara Beth Hahner | facebook.com/sbhahner | Sara Beth (SB) Hahner is the founder and former Program Director for The Penguin Project of Sun Prairie Civic Theatre, and a past board member of Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre, Sun Prairie Civic Theatre and StageQ. SB has performed with a number of Madison area theatre companies, directed for SPCT, Mercury Players, Ball Drop Blitz and Left of Left Center, and stage managed for "Are We Delicious?." SB is in Edgewood College's Social Innovation and Sustainability Leadership graduate program, focusing on creating diversity and inclusion initiatives for artists with disabilities.

Tim Sauers | facebook.com/tim.sauers | As Overture Center's Chief Artistic Experiences Officer, Tim is responsible for providing program and marketing vision, strategy, leadership and management, and for developing and directing Overture Center's portfolio of artistic experiences.

Trevin Gay | artitlab.org/artists/trevin-gay | Trevin has directed and performed around the globe for 30+ years. He holds an MFA in Actor Created Physical Theatre from Naropa University in conjunction with the London International School of Performing Arts. Trevin serves as the Artist Relations Manager and Artistic Associate for Children's Theater of Madison (CTM) and as a teaching artist for Whoopsocker and CTM.

Zak Stowe | zakstowedesigns.com | Zak has been President of StageQ—Madison's queer community theatre—since 2018. Zak is also an award-winning lighting designer and production manager having previously worked with numerous theatre companies in Wisconsin and Minnesota. He recently directed StageQ's productions of "Southern Baptist Sissies" and "Dog Sees God." He is currently the Lighting Supervisor for the Overture Center for the Arts. Zak also serves as the Vice-President of the Bartell Theatre Foundation Board of Directors, and spends weekends touring with Tora!Tora!Tora! as an air show pyrotechnician. Zak has the privilege of representing StageQ as a founding member of the newly formed National Queer Theatre Coalition.

PERFORMING ARTISTS: DJ

Curation help from Doug Rowe

Ashlei Miller/Ashlava | facebook.com/harvamama | Ashlei is an animal lover who deejays, in that order. She is one half of the duo Ashlava and you

can now catch her regularly at Robinia Courtyard dropping beats older than she is with throwback down-tempo jazz and trip-hop vibes.

DJ Avalon | facebook.com/theonlyDJAvalon | Avalon Clare (she/her) aka DJ Avalon and Avalon Clare Illustration, is a gender fluid and bisexual artist, designer, anarcha-feminist, survivor, advocate, DJ, writer, and illustrator. She grew up in Colorado, went to art school in Philly, and spent a year and a half in Santurce, Puerto Rico before landing in Madison, WI in 2018. She is passionate about mental health, unicorns, non alcoholic beverages, the internet, neon, ending rape culture, the eradication of capitalism, dismantling white supremacist hetero patriarchy, and saving the planet.

DJ Boyfrriend (Joey Bee) | facebook.com/DJBoyfrriend | Voted Madison's Favorite Club DJ, DJ Boyfrriend's dark pulsing sets showcase voices of queer, political, and femme-centric artists while keeping the dancefloor throbbing. Her mixes have been featured on Pitchfork Radio and Homoground and she has performed across the continent, including most recently as an arena DJ for our NBA Champions the Milwaukee Bucks.

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



SAINT SAUNTER

Performing Artists: DJ | mixcloud.com/saintsaunter

SAINT SAUNTER (AKA SARAH AKAWA) spins a mix of genres from club, pop/mainstream, house, and solid throwbacks. Much more than a DJ, Saint Saunter is creator of Madison's favorite queer multi-genre festival Hot Summer Gays alongside Dyke Dive. She has been creating queer nightlife spaces since her early days in Madison at the now defunct Plan B in collaboration with Tina She of The-L-Word-famous hip duo, God-des & She. After She Said Parties ended, Saint then created her long standing series QueerIRL which has held art pop ups, slow jam nights, and other events. Saint Saunter can also be found spinning at Dyke Dive, Madison-based house group JAMS, Madison and other Midwest PrideFests, and various local Madison venues. Seemingly oddly, Saint Saunter's start in music comes from emo/pop punk music. She began her career as a promoter as a young teenager throwing shows for other teens, primarily booking emo bands in her hometown of Stevens Point. That makes more sense when you find out that her side and passion project is Emo Nite Madison and Pop Punk Pizza Party; nights that celebrate her root love of emo and pop punk music.

As a queer, Asian woman in a white/cis/male-dominated field she has delighted in mentoring other people of color and queer DJs.

"I feel like it has been a huge gift to share my love of DJing and nightlife with the community and helping to uplift more queer and POC DJs around Madison," she said.

Recently, Saint Saunter has joined Milwaukee's No Stress Collective, which is a party collective of DJs, party planners, photographers, creating amazing dance parties for people who love to dance. Their motto is "Always Fun. No Hate, No Ego, No Stress."

Ultimately, Saint Saunter says it's all about the community and friends that are made at her parties.

"None of this would be worth anything without the people who come out, sweat, dance, meet new and old friends, and have fun," she said. "The community we create depends on every single person who comes through the door, and it makes it all worth it."

Whatever the night, genre, or location, Saint Saunter is always bringing together the queer community for dancing, fun, expression, and to celebrate the queer community. Lastly, Saint Saunter encourages those who are seeking to make a space that is needed to reach out to her: "I'm a huge collaborator; nothing is worth doing without friends alongside you," she said. ■

Catch one of her steamy sets at shows most frequently in Madison, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.

DJ Ellafine (Elly Fine) | facebook.com/djellafine | DJ and promoter ellafine spins current and classic darkwave, industrial, goth, new wave, post punk, synthpop, dream pop, indie and more. Look for the Tuesday night Isolation session on Twitch or catch ellafine at another online show.

DJ Femme Noir (Tempestt Ballenger) | facebook.com/DJFemmeNoir | Femme Noir spins an eclectic blend of highly danceable tunes. Hop on SoundCloud for a hot mix to bop to or catch a show at Five Night Club, Hot Summer Gays, GLITZ at the Majestic, or This is It in Milwaukee.

DJ Millbot (Emily Mills) | facebook.com/djmillbot | Independent, queer DJ with a long history and a wide repertoire. Millbot's heart lies in the house genres (classic, tech, vocal, deep), but you can also expect to hear dark electro, underground '80s, old school soul/blues/rock/R&B. Her sets focus on underrepresented identities and include obscure hits.

PERFORMING ARTISTS: MUSIC

Curation help from Doug Rowe

7ucky Vita | facebook.com/7uckyVita | Pop/R&B musician and mad as a hatter! 7ucky confronts concepts of normalcy/love/freedom through music and performance art. From the really far out dance tunes, to broken-hearted ballads, to a dystopian American disco, 7ucky packs a big beautiful punch through catchy choruses, raw lyrics, and a heart left on the stage for all the world to see.

Aggie Silver | aggiesilver.bandcamp.com | Aggie Silver is the solo project of Ava G (lead singer/guitarist of popular Milwaukee band Negative/Positive). The EP promised last year was released in April titled "Who is Aggie Silver?" In contrast to Negative Positive you can expect more ballads and a cleaner singer-songwriter sound.

Akiya Alexander | soundcloud.com/kiloakaskitiz | The hip-hop artist and emcee has a list of accolades including Female Artist of the year (Madison Hip-Hop Awards 2016), Madison's #1 Lesbian Rapper (Queer Pressure Awards 2017) and Hip-Hop Performer of the Year (MAMAs 2019 and 2020). She brings an R&B sensibility to pointed and smooth flows along with a message of integrity and self respect.

Alejandra Perez | miyha.bandcamp.com | The former frontperson of bands Tarpaulin and Miyha has continued writing solo. Their songs catalog the interpersonal tragedies that we suffer living life open to love. If you listened to Worlds Biggest Crush but missed the EP "In Ending" go give it a listen.

Amanda Jane Hoffman | amandajanehoffman.com | Amanda says, "I strum, sing, and mash up my favorite songs from the radio, stage, and campfire. I'm a dreamy diva, contact tracer, educator, researcher, and queer lefty Jew. I've delivered free socially-distanced singing telegrams during the pandemic, and shared the tips I earned with local abolitionist and racial-justice groups."

Benjamin Rose | mxbenjaminrose.com | Self-described as a "hopeful skeptic," Benjamin Rose (they/them) uses music to tell stories and connect with people's deepest emotions. Benjamin Rose has been writing music since they were 13 and has been performing live in various capacities since 2014. Since 2018, they have also been part of the queer indie rock band Kat and the Hurricane.

Bone Holler | facebook.com/BoneHoller | Bone Holler is a three piece acoustic band (Maggie Richardson, Molly Mitchell, and Ellie Erickson) that plays gleefully dark and sparse songs about murder, revenge, loss and sometimes zombie apocalypses. With a lot of harmonies and a minimal amount of instrumentation, they play a lot of murderous swamp noir melodies. They are finishing up an album of songs they plan to release later this summer and are currently booking gigs around Wisconsin.



nibiwakamigkwe



Dina Nina



Cynthia Mooseknuckle



Raphael Kadushin



Josie Lynn

CNL | cnelsonlifson.bandcamp.com | C Nelson-Lifson plays solo as a singer and guitarist but they are also part of the group Proud Parents. Check out the band's new release "At Home With..."

Damsel Trash | damseltrash.bandcamp.com | The filthy, feminist, and very queer punk-rock duo of Meghan Rose and Emily Mills is currently hibernating until it's safer to get together and write music or play sweaty, packed shows in small, grimy, beautiful dives.

Dana and the Joanis | musicbydana.bandcamp.com | Dana Perry (formerly of She She) brings her powerhouse vocals and expert rhythm guitar to Jenna Joanis' nuanced, groove-heavy drumming, with poignant original songs of an evolutionary folk rock variety. Released in June "Tunes on the Battlefield" was written out of a need to cope with the state of the world and with the state of the local music scene during the pandemic.

Dash Hounds | dashhounds.bandcamp.com | This guitar pop 4 piece will have you gazing at your shoes while your toes tap to dreamy guitar riffs, technical drumming and the grooviest bass. Frontperson Alivia Kleinfeldt adds their dulcet ethereal vocals on top to make a sound that is

totally out of this world. Like so many others they have been on hiatus during the pandemic but we hope to hear more soon.

Dequadray | dequadray.art | Dequadray is an interdisciplinary artist creating worlds where the radical is normative. From his marrow he believes it is our responsibility to demand liberation and joy for ourselves, families, and community, to use our power to conjure a better place. Check out his new track "Sputnik" available for streaming now.

dirty cops | facebook.com/dirtycopsmusic | Born of the pandemic age, and an urge to play music safely, with Carmela Wiese on drums and Jilip Malicious on guitar, dirty cops seeks to tell stories of our dystopian reality through catchy hooks and experimentation. This grungey, sludgy, art rock, noisy, instrumental duo, is deeply rooted in leftist politics, hence their name dirty cops.

Dylan Bryne | naivetrax.bandcamp.com | Drawing from influences such as the aggressive industrial funk of Nitzer Ebb, the robotic pop of early John Foxx, post-punk studio experimentalism, and spacey Detroit electro, Dylan crafts strange and futuristic electronic music. They believe

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE. We're on it, you're in it.

Houses move fast, so we do too. Here's how it all comes together.

- Reach out. You'll hear back within 24 hours.
- Apply. Then watch for your preapproval in as little as 15 minutes.¹
- Lock your rate when you choose – up to 7 days before closing.
- Save BIG on closing costs. We'll give you \$500 off closing costs² (or \$1,000 for first-time buyers).³

Ready to make your move? Let's talk. Visit SummitCreditUnion.com to schedule an appointment or apply today.



SummitCreditUnion.com | 800-236-5560 | 608-243-5000



¹The Wisconsin's #1 Mortgage Lender designation is based on the number of loans originated in 2020, gathered from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data compiled annually by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The results of the data were obtained through the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's website: https://ffiec.cfpb.gov/data-publication/modified-lar/2020_LEI_254900NTAC4H0M6SL023. ²Preapproval request is subject to applicant providing required financial documentation. ³The following loan programs are not eligible for the closing cost credit: Federal VA, FHA, Rural Development, WHEDA, Investment Property and Construction loans. Offer effective with purchase applications dated January 1, 2021 or later and subject to change at any time. The \$500 closing credit cannot exceed the actual amount of the closing cost, prepaid interest and escrow reserves. This includes if the credit is combined with a seller closing cost credit. First mortgages only (offer does not apply to second mortgages, home equity lines of credit and refinances). The credit will be applied at the time of the loan closing and will be reflected on the closing disclosure. Not valid with any other offers. ³Offer valid for first-time homebuyers and requires a Summit Credit Union checking account. Minimum to open Free Checking account is \$25. Primary Savings account required to have Free Checking. Primary Savings account minimum to open is \$25. Annual Percentage Yield (APY) as of 2/1/2021 is 0.03%. An individual is to be considered a first-time homebuyer who is purchasing a property, will reside in the property as a principal residence, and has had no ownership interest (sole or joint) in a residential property in the past 3 years. This program is not eligible for: Federal VA, FHA, Rural Development, WHEDA, Investment Property and Construction loans. The offer does not apply to second mortgages, home equity lines of credit and refinance. Offer effective with purchase applications dated February 1, 2021 or later and subject to change at any time. The \$1,000 closing credit cannot exceed the actual amount of the closing cost, prepaid interest and escrow reserves. This includes if the credit is combined with a seller closing cost credit. The credit will be applied at the time of the loan closing and will be reflected on the closing disclosure. Not valid with any other offers. © Summit Credit Union 2021.



NIPINET

Visual Artist: Tattoo | linktr.ee/nipinet

NIPINET'S TATTOOS are designed to tell a story on the skin, be that in bright color gradients and curving lines inspired by the beadwork of their culture or the dark and intricate linework of woodcut illustrations straight out of a fairytale. First and foremost they consider themselves a translator: someone who takes an idea from one language and expresses it in another. Their preferred language is visual. Navigating the world as a queer, Indigenous, neurodivergent person has left them with a lot to process, and they've always found it easiest to express themselves with art. They take that language and apply it by translating clients' emotions and ideas into something they wear forever.

Nipinet is Michif, Anishinaabe, and wabishkiiwed, a descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and the Red River Métis in Manitoba. They are Two Spirit, nonbinary, and gender-antagonistic. Their art is a reflection of all of their identities, and they work mainly with other people who experience some avenue of marginalization. Tattooing especially has been a perfect tool for Nipinet to contribute to their community, fulfilling the need for personal expression, body reclamation, cultural pride, or the desire to just look really badass. They see tattoos as a way to define your relationship with your body and how the world around you interacts with it, and maybe make it a little more accurate than first impressions would otherwise allow.

Nipinet has been tattooing for four years. Just last August, they opened the collective giige on Williamson Street with their three co-owners as an Indigenous and queer arts and community space. giige embodies what Nipinet finds most important about tattooing: relationships. Tattooing is a practice based on consent and communication between artist and client at all steps of the process, something which has often been forgotten in the boys' club gatekeeping of the industry. Translating the client's ideas into art takes effort and conversation, and those same things are what foster good relationships in a community. Much of Nipinet's art is based on their relationships to others and the stories they've shared together. ■

strongly in a DIY ethic and supporting local artists.

Erika Pauline Marcotte | soundcloud.com/erikaqueenpauline | Erika writes/records rap music as an outlet for difficult emotions and with the hope that some trans person somewhere will hear it and feel represented, understood, and less alone.

Hannah Edlén | hannahedlen.bandcamp.com | Hannah Edlén is a one-of-a-kind multi-instrumentalist and composer, most frequently seen performing with the nationally touring band, Nate Meng and the Stolen Sea. She is a lifetime clarinetist, with experience ranging from symphony orchestras and recital halls, to playing klezmer music in local taverns while beat-boxing. Her current projects include: composing her next EP, and arranging unique covers of various 90s alternative rock songs to perform with her amazing partner Brittany Hofer.

Jess Waggoner | queermadisonmixtape.bandcamp.com/track/diners-and-queer-bars | Jess Waggoner (they/them) is one of the founders of the Queer Madison Mixtape project. They are drawn to songwriting themes such as rural queers, trans trucks, big hair, and femme utopias. Past projects include a drag gospel quartet, a femme-fronted Meatloaf cover band, and various twangy femme-centric projects such as Corn Palace and Mary Okie.

Johannes Wallmann | johanneswallmann.com | Pianist-composer and UW-Madison Director of Jazz Studies Johannes Wallmann was fortunate to complete the recording part of a new album for jazz quintet and string orchestra prior to the Covid shutdown. That recording "Elegy for an Undiscovered Species" is now available and also features Ingrid Jensen, Dayna Stephens, Allison Miller, Nick Moran, and string orchestra.

Julia McConahay | juliamcconahay.com | Recognized as a finalist and two-time winner of Madison Area Music Awards for Best String Instrumentalist since 2009, Julia McConahay's distinctive violin sounds have radiated throughout the music of Mark Croft, Madison Greene, Little Marsh Overflow, Compass Rose, Whiskey Doll, and SHESHE. Julia has been a frequent participant and contributor to the songwriting events at The Holiday Music Motel in Sturgeon Bay Wisconsin including Love on Holiday, Dark Songs and Steel Bridge Music Festival.

Kat and the Hurricane | katandthehurricane.com | Kat and the Hurricane is a genre- and gender-bending synth rock project from Madison, Wisconsin. Lead singer/guitarist Kat Farnsworth, keyboardist Benjamin Rose, and drummer Alex Nelson deliver a unique blend of pop and haunting indie rock - which they dub as "Sad Lesbian Music." They released their third project "The Sorry EP" in June 2021.

Killcrop | soundcloud.com/killcrop | The solo project of Josh Killcrop, one half of the founding members of psychedelic-industrial band, Gentleman Loser, the experimental electronic music draws influences from indie rock and darker industrial. "Ejected Naked Into the Void" has not yet been published but a track was released for Caustic's HaLO2020 compilation.

Ladyscissors | facebook.com/ladyscissorswi | Prolific and longtime Madison musician Stephanie Rearick joins forces with Brent George and Anne Bull for a boppy rock project with an irreverent core.

LINE | linesoundslike.com | LINE is a queer multi-genre, collaborative music project by artist Maddie Batzli. Maddie works as a solo artist and with bandmates Esther Chun, Austin Lynch, and Will Ault to create songs ranging from acoustic folk to indie rock to synth pop. LINE released their first indie-pop EP Choosing Sides in 2020 and a synth-pop single No Burden in June 2021.

Negative/Positive | negativepositivemke.bandcamp.com | Girls Rock MKE alums Negative/Positive have been making music for eight years and their music ranges from soft indie jams to full on punk rock. With topics ranging from mean, Not Homophobic™ teens to the story of a failed office-worker-turned-YouTuber, Negative/Positive's music is widely varied, but always unapologetic. In March they released a new



Kaci Sullivan



Borealis



Rebecca Bedell



DJ Boyfrriend



Pony Boy

LP "Mint Bag (Bag Full of Mints)."

Olyvia Jaxyn | lyvjaxyn.bandcamp.com | This dreamy solo project brings elements of the underground, melodic no-wave of the '80s and combines it with heady, introspective lyrics.

Raine Stern | facebook.com/rainestermusic | Raine has a gritty soulful voice, shreds the electric guitar, and incorporates a little bit of every genre into her arrangements. Her sound hits hard because she pours her guts into her art. She appeared on season 20 of NBC's "The Voice" and made it through the blind audition and battle round before being knocked out. She recently performed at Madison's Orton-Front Festival.

Rin's Violin | facebook.com/RinQRibble | A genre-bending violinist and teacher, Rin has played with several area projects, including the Five Points Jazz Collective, Shotgun Mary, and Sortin' the Mail. This year Rin's Violin has been awarded a DANG! grant supporting local artists from Dane Arts.

The Hasbians | facebook.com/thehasbians | Relentless queer punk rock fueled by social justice and white male tears, reminiscent of the riot grrrrl era. No nonsense, no prejudice, and no constraints, with a motto of "We do

what we want!" The Hasbians are Jaime Niedermeier (bass), Jilip Malicious (guitar/vocals), Emmalee Pearson (theremin/vocals), and Carmela Wiese (drums).

Venus in Furs | venusinfursband.com | The long-running surf-punk outfit features couple Victoria Echeverría (guitar/vocals) and Natalie Hinckley (bass/vocals) alongside energetic drummer Marlo Darken. This group is heavy on the instrumentals with catchy, darkly humorous, and sometimes pointedly political lyrics.

Woke Up Crying | wokeupcrying.bandcamp.com | Woke up Crying is a 90s alternative/grunge queercore project fronted by Doug Rowe (they/them). Since last year Doug has released two lo-fi tracks via the Queer Madison Mixtape and hopes to record a solo EP over the next year.

LITERARY ARTISTS

Curation help from Anonymous

Alina Boyden | alinaboyden.com | Alina Boyden is a trans rights activist who successfully sued the state of Wisconsin for insurance coverage for

SEPTEMBER IS Eat Local Month

Owners: save up to \$75 from Owner Rewards sales on local products in September!

See the sales flyer in the store or at willystreet.coop/owner-rewards.

PLUS every day in September, Load Up On Local and take 10% off all local products in your cart – including sale items! – when you buy at least \$50 worth of local products.



From vegetables to milk to meat to bodycare to prepared foods and more!



Not a member? Not a problem!

Become one today for \$10 and start getting the benefits of Co-op Ownership. Join online or at any of our three locations.

Everyone Welcome!



www.willystreet.coop





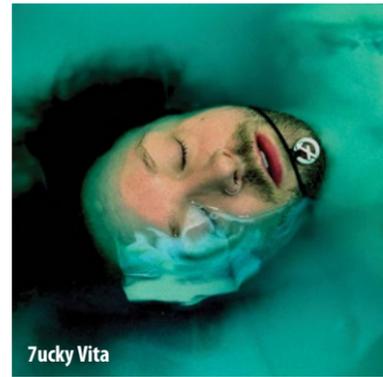
Zak Stowe



Karma Zavich



David Wells



Tucky Vita



Karin Wolf

transition-related procedures with the ACLU. She is also the author of the Stealing Thunder series of fantasy novels out now from Ace Books. The most recent installment, *Gifting Fire*, is now out.

Annie Menzel | gws.wisc.edu/staff/menzel-annie | Annie Menzel is completing revisions on her first book, *The Political Life of Black Infant Mortality*, under contract with the University of California Press. She is also at work on a second book project, *Birthing Paradox: Race, Colonization, and Radicalism in US Midwifery*, which seeks to understand the contradictory and practices in the homebirth midwifery movement since 1970. She has work published or forthcoming in the *Du Bois Review*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Political Theory*, *Signs*, and *The Boston Review*.

Bridget Birdsall | bridgetbirdsall.com | Bridget is an award-winning author, a real estate broker, a yoga teacher and an inspirational speaker, who overcome dyslexic challenges to balance a life in business and the arts. Her 2015 YA novel, *Double Exposure*, won numerous awards and outstanding reviews for its portrayal of an intersex character.

Lissa McLaughlin | artlitlab.org/artists/lissa-mclaughlin | Lissa McLaughlin has her M.A. in fiction writing from Brown University. Four of her books were published by Burning Deck Press in Providence. Lissa has taught fiction writing at The Rhode Island School of Design, San Francisco State University, University of California-Berkeley Extension, and UW-Madison. Currently she works in McFarland as an expressive arts facilitator with children with autism.

Misian Taylor | instagram.com/misiantaylor | Misian Taylor is a sober, queer, trans, Egyptian-American abolitionist, writer, and bookseller.

Raphael Kadushin | facebook.com/raphael.kadushin | Raphael recently retired as the humanities editor at the UW Press. He is an award-winning travel and food writer, with work appearing in a wide range of anthologies, including three editions of *Best Food Writing*. He is the editor of two travel anthologies: *Wonderlands* and *Big Trips*.

R. B. Simon is a queer African and European-American artist and writer living Madison. She's currently a full-time student at Edgewood College, as well as working part-time as a Group Facilitator and Certified

Peer Specialist. In her free time, she is also raising a teenage daughter and four rambunctious little dogs in the home she shares with her wife.

Rebecca Bedell | facebook.com/rbedell95 | Rebecca Bedell is a trans poet who loves queering the church and making friends across many hobbies. She earned an MFA at UW and works at Pres House.

Rita Mae Reese | ritamaereese.com | Author, Poet, Teacher | Rita Mae Reese is a poet and the Literary Arts Director at Arts + Literature Laboratory. She also designs Lesbian Poet Trading Cards for Headmistress Press.

Sami Schalk | samischalk.com | Dr. Sami Schalk (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Gender & Women's Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison. She published her first book in 2018 entitled *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*. Dr. Schalk also writes for mainstream outlets, serves as a board member for Freedom Inc., and once twerked with Lizzo. She identifies as a fat, Black, queer, femme, cisgender, middle-class, disabled woman. She is also polyamorous, body-neutral, sex-positive, and a pleasure activist.

T. S. Banks | instagram.com/ts.banks | T. S. Banks is a community organizer, a mental wellness advocate, poet, and playwright. After graduating with a degree in English creative writing, Banks has successfully used his art through plays and poetry to address racism, transphobia, and ableism. As a black, trans, queer person with a disability, T believes the movement for Black Lives must be intersectional and deeply connected to the struggle to end patriarchy, specifically as it manifests as violence against black trans folks. His work addresses the need for the black liberation movement to be accessible to those with mental wellness challenges and/or physical disabilities as well fights for the ability of these populations to regain their autonomy in a capitalistic society.

VISUAL ARTISTS

Curation help from Cedric Johnson

Rae Sowards | artlitlab.org/artists/amber-sowards | Rae Sowards is a fine art photographer with a focus on shooting with film and in black and white. Their work is often beautiful and gritty at the same time, showcasing deeply personal reflections on identity, location, class, and more.

Angela Richardson | angela-richardson.com | Angela Richardson creates elaborate, artful procedures that allow interaction and collaboration with audiences. Conversational gleanings get reshaped into cryptic, cursive text drawings. Strangers' secret stories are reworked into artifacts of connectedness. Drawing, installation, and dialogue form the foundation from which her interdisciplinary work emerges.

Anna Campbell | annacampbell.net | Campbell's research-based practice employs props, scaffold and trusswork to support models of representation for queer forms that challenge the gaze of classifying taxonomies. This critique via form, space, and ephemera resists the social dynamics that reinforce our constructions of what may be understood as aspirational.

BOBBY GODERICH PHOTO BY ERIC ROMAN BEINING.

Because animals are family too.



Explore creating your estate plan at giveshelter.org/legacy



KelsyAnne Schoenhaar



ZZ Topz



Nicole Bresnik



Johannes Wallmann



Cyrus K Stratton

Appropriated and abstracted references to domestic spaces, gay bars and other more provisional architectures, poach key signifiers of gender- and hetero-normativity and open them onto new attachments of possibility and desire from what might seem otherwise to be static legacies.

Araceli Zuniga | sleeplesstransgressor.com | Araceli Zuniga is a Mexican-American multidisciplinary artist based in Madison and Milwaukee whose work is defined by vibrant colors and fluid figures. Her relationship with her own mental health and its origins in childhood are key themes in her personal work. Araceli uses playful qualities to encourage the nurturing of the inner-child in us as adults. Through her work, she binds the contrasting experiences of childhood and adulthood."

Babette Wainwright | babettwainwright.com | Babette is a clay sculptor who draws extensively on her African roots and the work of the pre-Columbian people of Haiti, where she was born. Her work has been exhibited across the country and in galleries across Wisconsin. In 2000, she earned an MFA in Ceramics at the UW-Madison. She has since been working in both mediums, using the female image as a vehicle for conveying her sense of uprootedness and her spirituality.

bear cunningham | giige.co/bear-cunningham | Bear (they/them) is a queer tattoo artist specializing in fine-line minimalist and illustrative design. They love working with a wide range of subject matter from florals, pop culture references, celestial bodies, and occult imagery, to pin-ups, portraits, and anything involving queer forms and identity. They have a passion for creating collaborative works with clients and relish in the challenge of taking disjointed ideas, words, expressions, and references to create unique and cohesive visions that fit and enhance the natural human form specific to each individual's personality.

Bernadette Witzack | bernieandzuzu.com/design | Bernie & Zuzu creates original, hand painted, printed and dyed home goods, accessories and prints. We believe that everyone deserves to have a little more beauty and joy in their lives. That is why we place a special emphasis on bold, bright color and exuberant designs created with a spontaneous process, resulting in compositions that are alive with movement and energy.

Beth Racette | bethracette.com | Beth Racette is a visual artist and cultural worker who aims to bring a breadth of wonder, inquiry and inspiration to her fellow Earthlings. She has worked with many materials and process. The themes that unite her work are flow and interconnection. She is currently working on a series of paintings about Earth called Gaia Series.

Borealis | alauraborealisart.com | Borealis is a social artist, writer, and educator whose practice is rooted in the queer art of care. Their artwork is performative and participatory. They are excited by relationships, conversation, and closeness as media. Borealis is currently in the research and early production phases of a new social project; this gay af heterotopia aims to build the intimacy, trust, and collective power needed to imagine, rehearse, and embody future-building politics—and play—among queer people.

Cassy Marzette | cassandramarzette.com | Cassandra Marzette is an artist, writer, and creative director from Racine. Early on, she sought solace in her imagination and creativity to escape the tough realities of her childhood. It wouldn't be until 2012 that she'd discover the power of her voice and story, leading youth theater and art groups before co-directing a youth production "Guess What I Did Last Summer" (2012). Marzette wrote and directed her first full-length play, "Palindromes/If Walls Could Talk (2013)," co-directed and produced a one-woman show "I Can't Live Like This Anymore!" with Lilada Gee, produced for Lilada Gee's "A Public Affair" radio show segment (2016-2017), and wrote, produced, and performed an original one-woman show, "A Conversation with Ashes," to a sold-out audience (2017). She currently resides in Portland, OR, writing her screenplay, "The Stones We Throw," and serving as the creative director and sound engineer for the new podcast, *Defending Black Girlhood*, found on all major streaming platforms.

Claire Warhus | snaggletootharts.com | Claire Warhus been doing freelance art for over 12 years and translated that skill set to tattooing. She was lucky



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



T Banks



Akiya Alexander



Sasha Christine



Natalie Hinkley

enough to train under people who have been in the industry for decades and continue to hone her craft and push her abilities as I set out on new adventures. Illustrative organic subject matter is what calls to me the most, especially portraits and animals mixed with plant life.

David Wells | finearts.edgewood.edu/art-department/faculty/david-wells | David Wells is Director of the Edgewood College Art Gallery and Ernest Hüpeden's Painted Forest folk art site. As an independent community-based curator his projects include Art On the Rooftop at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center (since 2014) and GLEAM: Art in a New Light, at Olbrich Botanical Gardens (since 2015).

Goldie Raye | goldieraye.com | Goldie Raye is a fine art photographer, illustrator, and printmaker. Her art work focuses on gender identity and defining the female queer gaze. She also studied graphic design and works as a freelance illustrator and designer.

Jay Ramirez & Ryan Hartman | instagram.com/jaysgallery | This collaborative artist team brings their separate skill sets to both their art and their marriage. Jay has a background in fine art and Ryan is a contractor with his own business Hartman Custom Design, Inc. When they collaborate to create visual art, they try to use their talents to bring positive energy to their community. They recently completed several large-scale murals on State Street in June of 2020 as allies in support of BLM and in August, they created the sculptural installation "Full Human Spectrum" to represent the intersectional LGBTQ community.

Jaundy Brunswick | jaundybrunswickart.com | Jaundy's work explores and critiques personal identity and highlights the space between self-perception, others' perceptions and how easy it is to alter those perceptions. Sourcing from magazines, books and discarded prints, Jaundy works in multiple layers to create her final pieces. With a background in fashion design, and a life-long obsession with fashion photography, Jaundy's work often uses editorialized silhouettes as the central figure. Jaundy reimagines their existence and apply my own lived experiences to their form. Both embracing and rejecting what already exists. As a woman of color, raised by white parents in a predominantly white farm community and education system, Jaundy has spent my life balancing the urge to blend in while simultaneously needing to feel heard. Her art is a meditative and healing practice that allows her to express who she am, who she used to be and most importantly, who she would like to become.

Kaci Sullivan | kacisullivan.com | Kaci is a queer business consultant, strategist and professional creative.

Karin Wolf | facebook.com/karinlwolf | Karin serves as the Arts Administrator for the entire City of Madison, curating events, running grant programs like the BLINK temporary art project, and generally advocating for all things arts and artist. Karin oversaw the creation of the plywood murals on State Street's boarded-up windows in the summer of 2020.

nibiwakamigkwe | instagram.com/nibiwakamigkwe | nibiwakamigkwe is a Métis, Onyota'a:ka, Anishinaabe, and waabishkiwed Two-Spirit artist and organizer working in Indigenous craftwork and contemporary

Woodlands style to foster awareness of land protection, Indigenous cultural landscapes, and the complexity of identity.

Lisa Loren | kettleblacksilver.com | Lisa Loren specializes in creating jewelry through silversmithing. She often uses stones, crystals, bones, fur, leather, silver, copper, and a variety of other natural/found materials.

M.Rose Sweetnam | artitlab.org/mrose-sweetnam | M.Rose Sweetnam (they/he/she) is a mixed media artist, educator, and organizer. They work primarily with collage and print, as well as embroidery, illustration, dance, video, photography, and found objects. Their collages are made from predominantly thrifted and repurposed materials. M is an undergraduate at UW-Madison majoring in Gender and Women's Studies, along with LGBTQ+ Studies, Studio Art, Dance Therapy, and Education.

Mar Gosselar | mgosselar.com | Mar Gosselar is a work in progress, and moves through the world knowing everyone else is, also. They prefer to approach tattooing as a collaboration, because the act of tattooing is a liminal space, a place between who we were and who we become. Their art is illustrative, most often depicting the natural world, both alive in botanicals and remembered in bones.

Michael Velliquette | velliquette.com | Michael Velliquette's work is vibrant even when monochrome, formalist even when colorful, and sculpturally durable even though his medium of choice—paper—is so noticeably ephemeral. Look for his art around town as he has also contributed images of his paper sculptures to Madison's popular Art on Utility Box Program. He just finished up a summer as Artist Resident: Houston Center For Contemporary Craft.

Natalie Hinkley | hinckleyproductions.com | Natalie is the owner and founder of Hinckley Productions, and has created video work for companies like Lands' End and Duluth Trading Company as well as Madison Roller Derby and the Roller Derby World Cup. When not playing with her band, Venus in Furs, Natalie is busy building her videography business and team, which has won dozens of awards for their work.

Nicole Bresnik | facebook.com/nicole.aerial.bresnik | Co-founder of Teen Pride Arts, which showcased and supported work by LGBTQ-identified youth, Nicole is an accomplished painter and arts activist who brings her trans and sober identities proudly, incorporating them into her artistic and educational work, along with a focus on mental health.

Nykoli Koslow | nykolikoslow.com | Nykoli is an artist currently working out of Milwaukee. Working in the realm of painting and drawing, Nykoli fuses figuration with abstraction to explore notions of gender, sexuality and agency. Part autobiographical and part research based; his current series turns the visceral feelings of gender dysphoria into a queer cosmology. His work pulls from ancient history, mythology, religion, mysticism, and a kind of theoretical physics infused with sci-fi.

Rae Senarighi | raesenarighi.com | Rae Senarighi is your average non-binary cancer survivor inspiring self-compassion, activism and gender resilience via unapologetic portraiture of vibrant transgender and non-binary power and spreading joyful presentations and meditations worldwide.

Risë Christesen | facebook.com/RiseChristesenFineArt | Risë is a mixed media assemblage artist who deconstructs and reassembles objects in ways that give them new life and renewed purpose. She create tableaus and installations in which the relationships of objects convey layered riddles about notions of domesticity, sexuality, gender, relationships, religion, and other axiomatic ideas.

Rolando Cruz | rolandocruz.com | Rolando is an award-winning artist and photographer, as well as ardent runner, who explores issues of identity and race through his work.

Simone Doig | simoneandmax.com | Simone is a visual artist, youth worker, and museum educator involved in projects that reflect her interest in ethics, technology, and local community issues. She is co-founder of the multimedia studio Midwest Story Lab, and the artist collective Solarpunk Surf Club, and is Education Associate at Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Simone and her collaborator, Max Puchalsky, are artists, organizers, and educators who work collaboratively on a range of projects that reflect their interest in empathy, technorealism, and engagement with local community issues. Recent projects have explored such topics as social media mourning, youth incarceration, academic freedom, and climate change tourism through installations involving video, graphic design, print media, text, photography, audio, software, and readymade assemblage.

T.L. Luke Park | tl-luke.com | T.L. Luke is a professional illustrator providing printed goods, custom commission services, and art business consultations. In 2018, she started illustrating empowered g*rls, exploring whimsically dark and often spooky worlds. She wanted her work to occupy space somewhere between Edward Gorey's humorous macabre and Hayao Miyazaki's childlike wonder.

Yvette Pino | yvettempino.com | Yvette combines personal experience with bouts into the fictional. Political content finds its way into her subject matter but rarely does it saturate the image. Yvette's goal when creating a piece of art is to tell a story through vivid, thick color and textures which heighten the drama and amplify the sense of movement in her compositions. Most recently, her images are narratives built from her experiences in Iraq as a deployed soldier and overlap with symbols of her Catholic upbringing in New Mexico.

Chris Nania | nahkneeahh.tumblr.com | Chris has an extensive background in the creative industry and the arts. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, with additional training in graphic design and visual communication. ■

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



TRANS RIGHTS GENDER POLICING POLITICS GAY PEOPLE'S UNION

Protections Past Due

Forty years after the landmark "Gay Rights Bill" is passed in Wisconsin, gender identity remains unprotected here. Historian Michail Takach chronicles the cultural and political factors affecting progress through the years and where things stand today.

"I have been beaten. I have had my nose broken. I have been thrown in jail. I have lost my job. I have lost my apartment. For gay liberation, and you all treat me this way? ... the people who are trying to do something for all of us. And not men and women that belong to a white, middle-class club? That's what y'all belong to. REVOLUTION NOW!"

— Sylvia Rivera, June 24, 1973

SYLVIA RIVERA WAS MANY THINGS: colorful, aggressive, outspoken, explosive, commanding—even controversial, but she wasn't exaggerating the mood of that moment for gender non-conforming people (including self-identified cross-dressers, drag queens, transvestites, and transsexuals). Only four years after the Stonewall uprising, our transgender ancestors were already feeling ignored, excluded, and even resented by "gay rights" activists who valued mainstream acceptance and separatist agendas more than universal equality.

It's not hard to see why. Only one year after Stonewall, the first Christopher Street Liberation Day March ordered queens to the back of the parade, inspiring Bunny Eisenhower and Lee Brewster to form the Queens Liberation Front. The QLF employed in-your-face, confrontational drag to drive their political agenda, which ultimately achieved the legalization of cross-dressing in New York City.

Over 50 gay rights organizations were founded by 1970, but their vision of "gay rights for all" soon fragmented. Gay men, frustrated by the lack of common ground with lesbians, pushed forward their own agenda. Lesbians, unimpressed with the sexualized culture of gay men, and perceiving the same sexism they faced from straight men, founded their own, separate women's groups. "Gay is good, but not good enough—so long as it is limited to white males only," wrote Del Martin



Marsha P. Johnson & Sylvia Rivera.



Sylvia Rivera.

in *The Advocate*. Gender non-conforming people didn't really feel welcome in either group. While they were often relied upon to be the front face of a protest, demonstration, or action, they were often ushered aside when reporters and police showed up, so that more "socially acceptable" members (usually white, gay men) could be the front face to the public. Battered by erasure from men's groups and dual discrimination in women's groups, gender non-conforming people started to feel like outcasts within their own community.

Even the all-inclusive Gay Liberation Front splintered only six months after Stonewall, with dissatisfied members forming Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) as a single-issue, politically neutral organization. That single issue, "completely and solely," was gay rights. Transgender rights weren't a priority and transgender people weren't considered equal members. Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson were the only non-white, non-cisgender meeting attendees, and both would later recall the unwelcome experience of being stared at, talked down to, and eventually silenced.

Rivera and Johnson, having experienced homelessness, sought to create a place for

homeless gay and trans youth, owned by the community, for the community, and outside New York Mafia control. STAR (Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries) was formed in September of 1970 following a sit-in for gay rights at New York University. Two months later, the STAR House (213 E. 2nd St.) opened as a four-bedroom shelter. Unfortunately, it soon fell into arrears, so they turned to GAA for support. Shockingly, GAA denied them a loan, refused to host a fundraiser, and distanced themselves from STAR. The House closed in July 1971.

STAR continued as an organization until the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade of June 24, 1973. At the parade rally, feminist activist Jean O'Leary read a statement denouncing drag queens as an insult to women. Rivera's scheduled appearance was cancelled, along with other queens, but she and Lee Brewster fought their way onstage.

Few knew that Lee Brewster had either raised or donated most of the money necessary for the first pride parade in New York history. Three years later, she was now being denied the right to speak. She got up on stage, threw her tiara to the crowd, and said "fuck gay liberation."

Rivera shouted to the crowd, "You go to bars because of what drag queens did for you, and these bitches tell us to quit being ourselves?"

"I had to fight my way up on that stage, and literally, people that I called my comrades in the movement beat the shit out of me. That's where it all began, to really silence us," said Rivera. "It all came down to a brutal battle on the stage that year at Washington Square Park, between me and people I considered my comrades and friends."

Affected by the events of June 24, 1973, Rivera left New York and the gay rights movement for years.

As the story goes, a popular young lounge singer heard the angry crowds on the radio, raced from her Greenwich Village apartment to Washington Square, and took the stage to



Eisenhower



Brewster



O'Leary

perform "Friends." Somehow, Bette Midler's performance prevented the situation from escalating into a full-force riot.

The riot was calmed, but the transgender backlash continued throughout the 1970s.

- San Francisco's 1973 pride parade splintered when lesbian separatists and conservative gays banned queens from participating. The splinter group eventually became the city's main pride organization.
- Schisms between feminist groups and their lesbian members fostered a more extensive (and in some cases, extreme) lesbian feminist subculture throughout the 1970s.
- Beth Elliott, an early trans activist and vice president of the Daughters of Bilitis, was shamed offstage at the 1973 West Coast Lesbian Conference by audiences' cat-calling her as "a man," and a hateful keynote speech calling her "an opportunist...infiltrator...and a destroyer, with the mentality of a rapist." The speaker, referring to Elliott as "a male transvestite leeching off women who spent their entire lives as women in women's bodies," called for a vote to eject her from the conference. Despite 2/3 vetoing the motion, Elliott left the event traumatized.
- *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male*, published by Janice Raymond in 1979, reduced all transgender people to "castrated men," "deviants," and "rapists," stating, "All trans-

sexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating the body for themselves." Raymond called for the replacement of gender confirmation surgery with biological gender reorientation.

- Johns Hopkins Medical Center, a pioneering provider of gender confirmation surgeries, closed their clinic in 1979. Dr. Paul McHugh admitted he'd wanted to close the clinic for four years, because patients "have severe psychological problems that don't go away after surgery."
- Although homosexuality was removed by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) included transsexualism for the first time in 1980. Although trans activists demanded its removal, the "disorder" continued to be listed in future editions ("gender identity disorder," 1994; "gender dysphoria," 2013.)
- While the Carter Administration signaled that they'd support a gay rights bill in 1976, and even invited a gay and lesbian group to the White House for the first time in March 1977, neither of these events advanced transgender rights at all. Gay rights bills were solely focused on sexual orientation—and the 14-person White House contingent was hand-picked by Jean O'Leary herself as not to be "too wild-looking or too politically radical." In other words, no trans people.
- Ronald Reagan flew into the White House on the sails of the Moral Majority. His first public

meeting was with the National Right to Life Movement. This sent a strong message to gay rights activists: It was definitely a new morning in America.

At the parade rally, feminist activist Jean O'Leary read a statement denouncing drag queens as an insult to women. Few knew that Lee Brewster had either raised or donated most of the money necessary for the first pride parade in New York history.

Advancing equality had to feel impossible on this scorched, splintered, demoralized national landscape. Yet, on February 25, 1982, Wisconsin Republican Governor Lee Dreyfus signed Assembly Bill 70 and activated Chapter 112 as Wisconsin State Law. Wisconsin was now the first state in the nation providing anti-discrimination protections for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

But it did absolutely nothing for the transgender people of Wisconsin. Why?

GENDER IDENTITY IN WISCONSIN

Before the European conquest of Wisconsin, there were no known legal or social punishments for sexual or gender identity.



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



Karl Barton
Mini Motoring
Advisor
608-729-6444



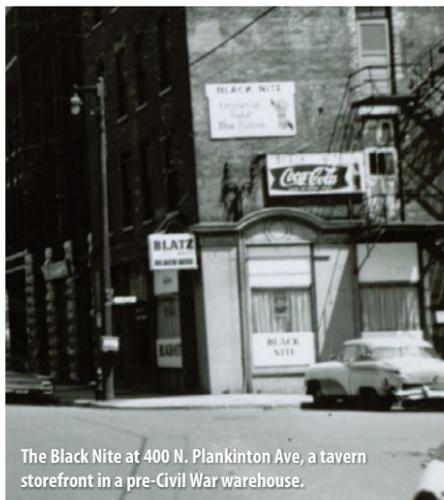
Native American tribes had been recognizing and celebrating two-spirit people since ancient times. The Potawatomi, Winnebago, and Ojibwe nations, particularly, gave them elevated roles: doctors, peacemakers, mediators, matchmakers, and name-givers. The Potawatomi called these people M'netokwe, meaning "supernatural" or "extraordinary," and they were highly respected as such in their society.

European explorers and Christian missionaries saw two-spirit people as a challenge to their authority. They were perceived to be dangerous, even more dangerous than the tribal chiefs, as they were believed to hold supernatural powers. Tribal chiefs were often asked to surrender their two-spirit people to save the rest of their tribe. These promises were usually broken. Many two-spirit people were brutalized, tortured, and murdered. Some were actually fed to dogs. Survivors were incarcerated as "heathens," forced to wear misgendered clothing, and "re-educated" in Christian beliefs and government schools.

Territory leadership worked very hard to maintain moral controls. Sodomy (both homosexual and heterosexual) was criminalized in Wisconsin before it was even a state. Throughout the 1850s, cities across the upper Midwest (including Chicago and Milwaukee) introduced "masquerade laws," prohibiting cross-dressing, that were heavily enforced against queer people including local trans elders James Blunt, Ralph Kerwineo, and Millie Brown. In 1913, Wisconsin introduced legislature that allowed the forced sterilization of "criminals," including the "insane and mentally retarded," to terminate their defective gene pool. Those so-called criminals included gays, lesbians, and transvestites. Over 645 people were sterilized by 1934, when the practice ended, but the law remained on the books until 1978.

Female impersonators flourished at Milwaukee's amusement parks of the 1890s, Orpheum theater circuit of the 1910s, and the "Pansy Craze" nightclubs of Prohibition—as long as they were crystal clear to be men dressing as women to entertain, not to deceive. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, WWII veterans experienced a great national "coming out," and gay subculture flourished in Milwaukee alongside traveling drag cabarets like the Jewel Box Revue. Wisconsin's first gayborhood, the Plankinton Strip (1949–1966), went even further by offering venues where trans pioneers could find their community, including the deeply beloved Black Nite (400 N. Plankinton Ave.).

But it wasn't all fun and games. As Josie Carter, heroine of the Black Nite uprising of



The Black Nite at 400 N. Plankinton Ave, a tavern storefront in a pre-Civil War warehouse.



Josie Carter.

"A lot of young gays now, they just don't realize what it was like then. Oh my god, we had to put on three pieces of men's clothing over our drag. We had to hide whatever we did, and I would."

1961, recounted in 2011 to the Wisconsin Transgender Oral History Project:

"A lot of young gays now, they just don't realize what it was like then. Oh my god, we had to put on three pieces of men's clothing over our drag. We had to hide whatever we did, and I would. You couldn't just go out and buy women's clothes, so I made my own. You did what you had to do, just to be you."

Carter and other trans elders spoke of being subjected to "underwear checks" in their youth. In the eyes of the law, dressing in the opposite gender was as bad as being completely nude in public. It's unclear if Wisconsin laws truly required "three articles" or if police simply proclaimed this rule to harass and humiliate gender non-conforming people in random street arrests and bar raids. Nonetheless, the fear of sexual assault—and genital inspection—intimidated trans people for generations.

Gender policing wasn't all trans people had

to endure. The 1947 Wisconsin Sex Crimes Law allowed any person to accuse another of being a "dangerous sexual psychopath," whether or not that person committed a crime. The law enabled local sheriffs to apprehend, detain, and institutionalize the accused indefinitely. Transvestites were considered especially dangerous. Revisions to the law in 1951 and 1955 only increased potential harm to the community. The heavily revised law remained in effect until 1980.

"Before a movement could take place, gays and lesbians had to perceive themselves as a self-conscious, cohesive minority, oppressed, sharing an identity that subjected them to systematic injustice," says author John D'Emilio in *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. By the 1960s, that self-consciousness was awakening in Milwaukee. All of the efforts of the 1940s and 1950s to keep gay people isolated and separated had failed.

The Black Nite uprising of 1961 accelerated social and cultural changes that made Milwaukee gays, lesbians, and "queens" far more connected, visible, and vocal. After Stonewall, inspired students formed the Madison Alliance for Homosexual Equality (1969), the conservative Gay Liberation Organization (Spring 1970), and the radical Gay Liberation Front (Fall 1970), and hosted a Vietnam War protest that prompted UWM Chancellor Klotsche to declare a state of emergency.

Of the three, the GLF was most gender-inclusive and supportive, pursuing "a re-erotized world. A place where people can live and love free from all the oppressive role-playing imposed on us in the past. We want not only freedom for ourselves—an end to the daily brutality and harassment that we face—but freedom for everyone to express himself and herself in a way that is consistent with his whole humanity."

By 1971, the latter groups had folded into a new organization, Gay People's Union. Like many early gay rights groups, GPU was heavily attended by gay white men, but it wasn't exclusive or exclusionary. Michael Lisowski, who joined in 1976, remembers a spirit of togetherness.

"There was only one gay group to represent everyone," he said, "and we were all in this together. There weren't the divisions you see today. GPU included women, trans, Blacks... everyone. It's not like we took attendance or had quotas to meet, but I never heard about anyone feeling unwelcome or unrepresented either. I do remember being surprised that the more "celebrity" drag queens never participat-

ed. GPU was all about who showed up."

By 1973, over 800 gay rights groups had formed in the United States.

While trans-first activism was being born in San Francisco and New York, Wisconsin's trans community did not yet see itself as a separate, cohesive minority. They bonded with others based on their sexual identity first, and their gender identities second. From 1969 to 1976, the Balistreri family-operated Ad Lib nightclub offered unique financial and social opportunities. When the club replaced its go-go girls with a "third sex" cast of "female impersonators," they actively recruited and protected the city's top drag performers to circumvent gender-specific B-Girl laws. This was more about protecting their assets and maximizing revenue than protecting transgender lives.

ON, WISCONSIN

Chapter 944 of the Wisconsin statutes long outlined "sex crimes" as fornication, sodomy, bestiality, public sex, indecent exposure, and infidelity. Unmarried couples cohabitating were subject to prosecution as late as 1979. Committing oral sex (homosexual or heterosexual) was a crime of lewd and lascivious behavior as late as 1983. Enforcement, of course, was selectively applied.

In 1966, Wisconsin Young Democrats was the first political organization in the United States to resolve that sexual relations between consenting adults did not violate the rights of others. Many Democrats distanced themselves from this resolution language, and Governor Warren P. Knowles mocked the group as "homocrats." Their resolution went nowhere.

Lloyd Barbee, lawyer, activist, and Wisconsin State Assemblyman, was committed to social justice and personal freedom for everyone. As the only African American member of the State Assembly, Barbee had been elected with a solid majority, and had little-to-no risk of losing his seat for liberal politics. In 1967, he introduced a sweeping gay rights bill that would decriminalize sexual relations between consenting adults. This was the start of a 15-year battle.

"I think sex is essentially personal and should be treated that way," said Barbee. "My point of view is that the state has no business proscribing sexual activities...if our heterosexual society wants to be as strong as its image is, you have to live and let live."

Barbee's bill failed in four consecutive Assemblies (1967, 1969, 1971, 1973). In 1971, he introduced the first bill to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This, too, would fail.

In 1971, Steve Endean launched a campaign to make Minnesota the first state offering pro-

tections for sexual orientation. That campaign failed; however, he did succeed in Minneapolis becoming the first major city with a gay rights ordinance in March, 1974. Madison became first in Wisconsin to ban discrimination based

The Potawatomi, Winnebago, and Ojibwe nations, particularly, gave them elevated roles: doctors, peacemakers, mediators, matchmakers, and name-givers. Tribal chiefs were often asked to surrender their two-spirit people to save the rest of their tribe. These promises were usually broken. Many two-spirit people were brutalized, tortured, and murdered. Some were actually fed to dogs.

on sexual orientation with the Equal Opportunities Ordinance in 1975.

David Clarenbach, a former Dane County supervisor and Madison alder, joined the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1974. He is remembered as the most liberal candidate, in the most liberal district, of a famously liberal city. And he used that opportunity to get right to work.

Clarenbach and Barbee collaborated on an extensive sexual reform bill that would introduce same-sex marriage; overturn obscenity, abortion, and prostitution laws; reduce incest

laws; lower the age of consent; and achieve sexual freedoms for consenting adults. The bill received national press coverage, including *The Advocate*, which called it "too radical to have a chance." At the same, he quietly tried to add "sexual preference" as a non-discrimination category in an open housing bill.

Clarenbach's strategy was sound: Compared to same-sex marriage, anti-discrimination protections would seem far more acceptable. His work focused on civil rights as part of Wisconsin's proud progressive tradition, aimed for bipartisan support, and employed gay and lesbian activists to do the street-level work. Over time, he shifted the state's legal language from "sexual preference," which seemed a controllable choice, to "sexual orientation," which implied an innate and unchangeable assignment.

By 1977, sodomy was reclassified as a misdemeanor, penalized with up to nine months of jail time and a \$10,000 fine. In response, Alyn Hess formed the Wisconsin Alliance for Sexual Privacy.

In 1980, Milwaukee introduced its own Gay Rights Ordinance, protecting homosexuals from discrimination from city employment and from private employers who did business with the City of Milwaukee. The ordinance did not protect against discrimination from other employers, or in the areas of housing or public

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

PROUD TO SUPPORT VIVENT HEALTH COMMUNITY SHARES

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



accommodations. One of the opponents, Alderman Richard Spaulding, said the bill automatically turned anyone who wasn't a homosexual into a bigot. He inspired an amendment that basically said, "Extending these protections to homosexuals doesn't condone their sexual behaviors." Activist Leon Rouse said, "Whether homosexuals are discriminated against or not, they will exist in our society and to deny them human rights will not make them disappear." Reverend Frazer Lawton of the Milwaukee Baptist Church, another opponent, announced that the ordinance must be repealed to avoid an act of God's wrath. "Earthquakes, drought, pestilence, atomic bombs....we'll see an act of God in Milwaukee." No such act is known to have occurred.

The Dane County Board of Supervisors also adopted an anti-discrimination ordinance protecting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in 1980.

The Minneapolis ordinance was amended in December 1975 to further protect against discrimination based on "having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness," making it the first transgender protection in the nation. However, transgender protections were still four decades away in Wisconsin.

THE BIRTH OF THE GAY RIGHTS STATE

In 1977, Anita Bryant led the Save the Children campaign, which successfully overturned Dade County's anti-discrimination ordinance with homosexual hysteria. Bryant famously labeled gay people "human garbage," claimed that gay rights would lead to rights for "people who sleep with St. Bernards," and accused that homosexuals recruited children because they couldn't have children of their own. Succeeding in Florida, Bryant targeted all the cities in America with gay rights ordinances.

In 1978, St. Paul voters repealed the protections passed four years earlier. Eugene, Oregon; Wichita, Kansas; and Washington, D.C. were declared as targets. Locals feared



On February 25, 1982, Republican Governor Lee Dreyfus signs AB70 into law with Leon Rouse and David Clarenbach at his side. The law added "sexual orientation" to the list of non-discrimination categories in Wisconsin.

that Madison would be next. Madison's gay and lesbian community was totally unprepared for a threat of this level.

"Yes folks, Anita Bryant IS coming to Madison—in the form of a short, fat, blonde man, Pastor Wayne Dillaugh," wrote *Take Over* magazine. Pastor Dillaugh, who had rallied against St. Paul's ordinance, announced his campaign to repeal the Madison ordinance and "enforce natural laws." He saw gay rights as "supernatural privileges" and sought to "clean up the city" with a three-day God and Decency Rally.

Dillaugh was not only seen as a danger to the city, but a symbol of the conservative backlash sweeping the nation. The mindset of "it can't happen here" was replaced by the subtle panic that it was already happening. Madison activists sprung into action, forming The United to "affirm the civil rights of gay men and lesbians and to support in its totality the equal rights ordinance." Rodney Scheel formed the MAGIC Picnic to unite the community against hate. While over 600 attended the gay rights rally in Brittingham Park, only 180 attended the Dillaugh rally. In the end, the Madison City Council revealed that only the council could repeal an ordinance, not a community referendum. Dillaugh withdrew his repeal efforts, but Madison's gay revolution was now awakened.

Leon Rouse was just a 21-year-old UWM student when Anita Bryant's attempts to repeal gay rights inspired him into action. He considered himself a "rather boring person." First, he convinced the UW system to include "sexual preference" in their non-discrimination policy. Then, with a \$1,204 grant from the UWM

Student Association, he began working with Clarenbach on drafting, driving, and passing Wisconsin's first gay rights bill.

The bill would protect gays, lesbians, and bisexuals from being discriminated against in housing, employment, and public accommodation. It did not include education or jury selection. Those would be handled by later actions.

The Minneapolis ordinance was amended in December 1975 to further protect against discrimination based on "having or projecting a self-image not associated with one's biological maleness or one's biological femaleness," making it the first transgender protection in the nation. However, transgender protections were still four decades away in Wisconsin.

Rouse's approach was brilliant. By earning support from interfaith leadership, he would beat the conservatives at their own game. He formed a Committee for Fundamental Judeo-Christian Rights, which eventually included over 1,000 clergy members.

"If you give ministers a chance, the overwhelming majority of them will come through and support gay rights," said Rouse. With so much ecumenical support, the bible-based opposition never had a chance to present themselves. This was deliberately planned.

From the beginning, he was cautious to ask the right question—not whether homosexuality was right or wrong, but whether *discrimina-*

tion was right or wrong. It wasn't a gay rights issue, but a *human rights* issue. This approach was especially helpful in gaining his greatest faith-based ally of all: Archbishop Rembert Weakland. Alyn Hess, who'd mentored Rouse, encouraged him to speak with the Archbishop. Rouse spent months in the front row of Weakland's masses before approaching him.

In a historic shift, the Archbishop lent his voice to the campaign. He wrote a letter to state legislators encouraging their support. His 1980 column in the *Catholic Herald* called for compassion for the gay community and support for their civil rights.

"There has been no change in the Catholic position concerning homosexual activity, which has always been considered as morally wrong; on the other hand, it has also been consistent with Catholic teaching that homosexuals should not be deprived of their basic human rights," he wrote.

"Experience shows that very few, even with the best therapists, are capable of changing their sexual orientation...We have to see gay people then, not as an enemy to be battered down, but as persons worthy of respect and friendship," said Weakland.

Christian conservatives viciously disagreed, stating that freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution for all citizens; therefore, gays and lesbians should have to compete like everyone else, not be guaranteed anything. Conservatives also believed that gays chose immorality, as nobody was "born that way."

While Rouse worked on the faith community, Clarenbach tackled another unlikely ally: the police union. Considering the reputation of Harold Breier's Milwaukee Police Department, gaining police support seemed unlikely to laughable. Clarenbach pulled off a trade: In exchange for the union's support for the Gay Rights Bill, he would vote for the repeal of city residency requirements.

"If there weren't some votes being traded, the bills wouldn't have passed. Sometimes, you have to get down and arm wrestle with some sons of bitches," said Clarenbach.

Another challenge came from lobbyists seeking a "teacher amendment" that would have excluded all teachers from non-discrimination protections. Dick Flintrop, a gay man chairing the Assembly Education Committee, also decided it was time to arm wrestle. "I went to the lobbyist, advised him to fold up his amendment, put it in his pocket, and say there was no support for it at the Capitol. Because if he didn't, I would ensure none of his bills would ever see the light of day again."

Why wasn't gender identity listed alongside sexual identity in any version of the bill? Perhaps Clarenbach had learned to focus on

one win at a time. Perhaps there wasn't a street-level advocate, like Rouse, to be the face and voice of the issue. And perhaps Clarenbach made note of the failed Minnesota hearings of 1975. The bill was intended to include gender identity, but radical demands and extreme behavior from "men in drag" at the state house alienated legislators. (Clarenbach kept similarly extreme groups away from the Wisconsin Capitol, including groups seeking to educate the Assembly with S&M magazines.)

Relations between Rouse and Clarenbach were challenging at best. Rouse was seen as confrontational, controversial, and even slightly dangerous. He chose the high-pressure approach: harassing people by phone or in person, issuing demands and ultimatums, even threatening to out closeted legislators and clergy. He wasn't well-versed in political protocols; moreover, he didn't care to learn them. At times, he accused Clarenbach of trying to steal the movement for his own personal glory. With many versions and authors, there is still some debate about whose bill actually passed. In the end, neither Rouse nor Clarenbach could have achieved these results without each other.

Assembly Bill 70 sailed through the legislature with surprising ease. It's possible that most Wisconsinites weren't really aware of the bill or its long-term implications. The bill passed the Assembly on February 9, 1982 and the full Senate on February 16, 1982. State legislators expressed concerns that adding sexual orientation as a protected category would result in affirmative action quotas. In response, Governor Dreyfus required an amendment prohibiting such action. Clarenbach said this was neither a concession nor a compromise, as he was sacrificing something that nobody had ever asked for. On February 18, the bill went back to the Assembly for amendment. It went to the Governor's desk on Thursday, February 25.

The Religious Right showed up to disrupt the proceedings. Twice every three hours, public service announcements ran on Christian radio stations throughout the state, imploring the governor's veto. The Capitol received tens of thousands of letters, calls, and personal complaints. WORT, Madison's liberal left-wing station, launched a counter-protest encouraging the governor to sign.

Governor Dreyfus, although Republican, was seen as a political outsider by most. He was advised not by the party line, but by a group of younger, more progressive Republicans (including Steve Gunderson). He could easily have left the bill unsigned, to become law a week later, with or without his signature. Instead, he signed the bill and issued an explanatory statement.

"I have decided to sign this bill for one

basic reason, to protect one's right to privacy. As one who believes in the fundamental Republican principles... I feel strongly about governmentally sanctioned inquiry into individual thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Discrimination on sexual preference, if allowed... goes beyond reasonable inquiry and in fact invades one's privacy."

Oddly, the Governor added, "I feel very strongly that one's sexual preferences, either homosexual or heterosexual, have absolutely no place for expression in our classrooms."

Photos of the Gay Rights Bill signing were published nationwide: in *The Advocate*, in the *San Francisco Examiner*, in *The Village Voice*. However, Leon Rouse was cropped out of photos distributed later—and his name was often left out of the headlines. Even now, some scholars credit Clarenbach single-handedly for the passage of this bill, which he has denied time and again.

"There were a lot of people involved in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement in Wisconsin," said Dan Curd, his legislative assistant. "The gay organizations really were not involved, and that was part of the plan. There were a lot of people at the time, especially people in Milwaukee, who felt shut out of the process. And they were. Because we didn't want the TV camera to be focused on them. David was very much worried about staying in con-



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



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

GOODMAN'S Jewelers
The Diamond Store of Madison Since 1953



trol. A lot of people interpreted that he didn't want to share success with somebody else. But it wasn't that. It was just his personality."

Clarenbach shared, "Relying only on gay rights activists on the outside is a very bad mistake. You need an insider to do some of the dirty work that has to be done, to engage his colleagues in rational debate. And that insider has to be respected and be willing to use some of his chips to get the bill passed."

As gays and lesbians celebrated this victory around the country, they didn't hear Leon Rouse's name. Yet, in Milwaukee, he received the lion's share of the praise.

"Rouse has been a major steering force in the movement of this legislation. Nothing short of amazing and fantastic. We will never fully appreciate the work he has done on our behalf," said *Our Horizons* magazine.

In a historic shift, the Archbishop lent his voice to the campaign. He wrote a letter to state legislators encouraging their support.

"The gay community needs to thank this gay hero who sacrificed and did the work that enabled Wisconsin's gays to hold our heads high and legally say WE HAVE RIGHTS," said *Escape*.

"Without Leon's hard work and dedication, Wisconsin would not have had a gay rights law in 1982, and we would not have been the nation's first gay rights state," said Mark Behar of Gay People's Union.

"No state has ever approached the magnitude of Wisconsin's protections," wrote attorney Ron Ehemann in *Escape* magazine. "No longer will the threat of exposure threaten your job. What's even more unbelievable, given recent campaigns by Anita Bryant and California Senator John Briggs, teachers are protected. Law students, medical interns, all licensed professionals, you needn't fear your board of examiners anymore. My gay awareness tells me that kind of change won't come easy. Better count on a lot of resistance and

plenty of lawsuits. The eyes of gay America are upon this state. Wisconsin has given hope to citizens in 49 states. If you believe Wisconsin isn't being watched, think again."

Did the community feel cheated that sexual identity received protections, while gender identity did not?

"Look, we took what we could get," said Lisowski, "and frankly, this was a big win for the time. I don't recall any pushback at all. I remember a lot of pride, hope, and celebration. But remember, there wasn't the internet or social media. Nobody was asking for our opinions. We weren't always entitled to have one."

FROM CONTRADICTION TO CLARITY

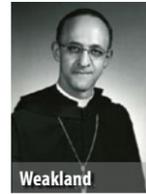
Clarenbach and Rouse had faced down a conundrum: How could you end discrimination against homosexuals if homosexual acts were still technically illegal? Clarenbach recommended they focus on sexual freedoms first, but Rouse disagreed. Rouse was vindicated when the Gay Rights Bill passed first.

In 1983, Clarenbach introduced the Consenting Adults Bill (Assembly Bill 250) to great public debate. The Bill decriminalized sodomy and legalized private, non-commercial acts between consenting adults.

AIDS was already looming over America, but in Madison, it was still perceived to be a faraway problem in coastal cities. Reverend Richard Pritchard, forever the moral crusader, argued, "I can't understand how the Assembly or Senate could rush through a bill like this without giving it further thought, in light of new evidence about lethal diseases linked to the homosexual lifestyle and promiscuity." Pritchard argued that the bill's passage would lead to "San Francisco levels of homosexuality" in Wisconsin.

Other complainants felt that public sex would run rampant. "Tailgate parties are about to become indecent," argued one advocate for banning sex in vans, campers, and parked cars.

AB250 passed the Assembly, but with the provision that sex with someone aged 16-18 remain a felony. The amended bill passed the Senate on May 3, 1983. The votes were only



earned by adding a moral footnote that "Wisconsin does not approve of sexual conduct outside the institution of marriage." Curiously, Weakland and many of the religious leaders who called for gay civil rights were silent on AB250.

Governor Tony Earl signed the bill on May 5, 1983. Finally, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people were decriminalized in Wisconsin. Gay People's Union, while still technically incorporated, began a slow dissolve after the Gay Rights Bill passage. *GPU News*, their national publication, was discontinued in 1981,

and many of their other "firsts" (i.e., crisis hotline, VD Clinic, youth program, community center) were spun-off or absorbed into other organizations. Today, almost every LGBTQ organization in Wisconsin can trace its roots back to Gay People's Union.

Editorials warned the gay community not to become complacent, as true liberation was still far away. (These echo the tone of today's editorials, warning that marriage equality is not the end of the battle for true equality.) Unfortunately, the AIDS epidemic began to ravage Wisconsin, and survival and stability became the community's greatest needs.

TRANS LIBERATION NOW

As unusual as it seems today, the LGBT/LGBTQ acronym is a fairly new creation. Until the 1990s, the word "transgender" was not commonly used—nor were transgender people explicitly included.

"The Great March," otherwise known as the 1987 Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, inspired the birth of pride organizations around the country, but neither the march nor most organizations mentioned trans people. In 1993, leaders sought to add the word "transgender" to the next march, but they were denied by the "March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights."

Milwaukee Pride originated in 1987 as the Lesbian & Gay Pride Committee. After a few years as a "LesBiGay" organization, they began using "LBGT" in 1997 and "LGBT" in 2004. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force added "transgender" to its mission statement in 1997, PFLAG in 1998, Human Rights

Campaign in 2001 and GLAAD in 2013. Still, many felt that "T" stood for "token" as their inclusion was far from inclusive.

Five major events elevated national transgender awareness throughout the 1990s: First, the availability of queer studies, and later transgender studies as a unique and separate discipline; second, the 1993 murder of Brandon Teena exposed widespread violence against the trans community; third, the 1994 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival surfaced simmering transphobia and inspired a coordinated response; fourth, HRC's 1994 attempts to exclude trans people from ENDA caused a national backlash; and fifth, ever-increasing access to high-speed internet connected, educated, and activated trans people of all ages, races, and experiences into an online collective.

Transgender people in Wisconsin long ago reached self-consciousness as a community. FORGE estimated in 2020 that there are 34,800-69,600 transgender and non-binary people in the state. A recent Public Religion Research Institute poll shows 73% supporting greater protections for trans people and 62% being more comfortable with trans rights than they were 5 years ago. More Fortune 100 companies than ever—85%—offer gender identity protections.

Forty years after its historic achievement, Wisconsin is now one of 30 states that have legal protections based on sexual identity. However, Wisconsin is the only one of those states that doesn't also include gender identity. And the need is painfully there:

- 82% of surveyed trans people in Wisconsin reported harassment on the job; 54% were not hired, 34% lost an existing job, and 22% were denied a promotion because they were transgender. The Wisconsin Fair Employment Act does not specify gender identity.
- 25% of surveyed trans people report police harassment; 52% report verbal disrespect in a place of public accommodation.
- Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* prohibits discrimination based on "sex," but this is left to interpretation: biological gender or gender identity? Past hearings applied a biological understanding to exclude trans people.
- Transgender individuals are five times as likely to be incarcerated, but Wisconsin's Department of Corrections does not have clear guidelines around trans segregation.
- Hate crime laws use perceived sexual orientation to prosecute crimes against gender identity. This is not a true protection.
- GSAFE reports that 230 school districts have approved gender-inclusive policies against discrimination, but few have implemented.
- Voter ID laws increasingly disenfranchise

transgender voters by making impossible documentation demands, i.e., updated IDs unavailable without gender-confirmation surgery.

- Although legislation has been introduced to end it, Wisconsin is one of 39 states that still allows the "trans panic defense." This defense justifies violence as a reaction to gender identity.

Worst of all, 28 states—including Wisconsin—are voting on anti-transgender legislation in 2021, with most bills affecting trans children.

In June 2021, Wisconsin legislators passed a bill to legally ban transgender individuals from female sports, athletics, or Olympic competitions. Bonnie Blair, former Olympian, supported the bill. Governor Tony Evers called the bill "inappropriate" and signaled that he would veto the laws.

"My message to Wisconsin transgender kids and students is simple: I see you," he said. "You are welcome, you are wanted, you belong." In response, State Representative Barbara Ditttrich called him a "sexist" who "doesn't really care about women."

IS HOPE FINALLY ON THE HORIZON?

With the Equality Act back on the national agenda, it seems that transgender rights are finally moving to the frontline of the fight.

Dutcher

PHOTOGRAPHY
SINCE 2002



robandsamphoto.com



MICHAEL TAKACH is a historian, author, reporter, and communications professional living in Los Angeles. He earned his master's in communications and history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a fifth-generation Milwaukeean, he supported various non-profit organizations over the past two decades, including Historic Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the Walker's Point Association, the Brady Street Association, United Performing Arts Fund, and Milwaukee Pride, where he was communications director for 10 years. Michail is currently the curator of the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project, a not-for-profit, all-volunteer, independent organization devoted to connecting local LGBTQ people with their hidden history and heritage. He is currently working on his second book, *The Golden Age of Milwaukee Drag*, an exploration of nearly 140 years of drag performances, with co-author Bjorn Nasett.

CHADS DESIGN BUILD

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

Building a Better World One Remodeled Home at a Time



QTBIPOC LATINX CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The Origin & Complexities of Latinx

Years ago, “Latino” was replaced by “Latinx” in an effort to remove gender, but this well-meaning switch is not embraced by everyone.

Diego Campoverde Cisneros explains.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN introduced or heard this term, “Latinx” is a gender-neutral term for people of Latin American and Hispanic heritage. There is a long history of discrimination toward women and LGBTQ communities. Using the term “Latinx” covers persons outside of the gender binary, those who are gender fluid, as well as those on the binary.

In September of 2018, Merriam-Webster added “Latinx” to its dictionary. It is a word that some Latinos and Hispanics embrace while others adamantly despise. Some describe the term as an anglicism of the Spanish language, while others say the term is not representative of a broader Latino and Hispanic communities. Those that embrace it often identify inclusion as a reason for using it, compared to those who dislike it stating it is political correctness gone awry.

Regardless of your thoughts on it, it is a term that is likely here to stay and is a reflection of the multicultural history of the Latino and Hispanic communities and the future of the United States.

Those who do not like the term “Latinx” are often ambivalent with pan-ethnic labels, push back on the idea of adding another label, and/or are from older generational groups. Additionally, those who believe it is part of a political ploy often don’t support the term.

Latino Gen Y (Millennials) and persons from Gen Z seem to like it, seeing it as standing in solidarity with queer and trans people. U.S.-born people tend to be more likely than foreign-born people to have heard the term, and Hispanics who predominantly speak English or are bilingual are more likely than those who mainly speak Spanish to have heard the term.

What’s interesting is that being aware of “Latinx” doesn’t translate into using it. Within Hispanic and Latino communities, controversy surrounds its use, with some saying that it is culturally offensive. It has

been argued that the use of “Latinx” is U.S.-driven and sometimes seen as U.S.-centric and, as such, causes a divide with those who are Spanish speaking or with limited English proficiency.

Personally, I use the term “Latinx.” I find that using “Latino” excludes women and several members of the LGBTQ community. It is an inclusive term for those who don’t identify as male or female or don’t want to be identified by their gender.

For romance languages, like Spanish, gendered words are often used. Using the term “Latinx” also gives us a moment to pause and think about homophobia, transphobia, and negative attitudes and feelings toward the LGBTQ community. Also, as the use of gender pronouns is becoming more a part of our daily lives, and a way to acknowledge and respect the many spectrums of our LGBTQ+ community, the term “Latinx” just fits. ■



DIEGO CAMPOVERDE CISNEROS is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager for Quartz Health Solutions.

Forty years after its historic achievement, Wisconsin is now one of 30 states that have legal protections based on sexual identity. However, Wisconsin is the only one of those states that doesn’t also include gender identity.

- In 2015, Wisconsin passed Chapter 440, governing “passenger transportation networks” such as Lyft and Uber. The language of the statute banned discrimination against any passenger for a variety of reasons, including gender identity. This was the first and only mention of gender identity in a Wisconsin state statute, and it passed with bipartisan support. Sponsors would later say “we don’t know how many Republicans realized they were voting for that, but a precedent has been set.”
- In 2017, Ash Whitaker won a \$800,000 case against the Kenosha Unified School District, who violated his rights under the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The school district had appealed, saying “harm to other students outweighs harm to Whitaker.” A unanimous U.S. Court of Appeals disagreed. “The harms identified by the school

Where are they now?

After a failed run for the Milwaukee County Board, **Leon Rouse** left Milwaukee in the late 1980s. Ironically, he was arrested in the Philippines in 1995 for violating the country’s sexual consent laws. Although he claimed innocence, faced trial, and presented evidence suggesting he was framed by a police set-up, Rouse spent eight years in jail.

“It is a shame that someone who was so responsible in getting the law changed in Wisconsin is rotting away in prison in a foreign country,” said Eldon Murray in 2002.

Since his 2003 release, Leon Rouse has been living in Hawaii. He could not be reached for comment.

David Clarenbach left politics in 1990. In 1995, he moved to Washington, D.C. to work for the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. He returned to Madison in the mid-2000s. He volunteers for the ESL Institute, supports fundraising for OutReach Inc., and worked for Representative Chris Taylor, who holds his former seat.

Today, Clarenbach is openly gay, something that was not publicly known during his political

career. “Even in the liberal stronghold of Madison, it would have done more than raise eyebrows. It would’ve hampered a person’s electability,” he told a reporter in 2001. One wonders how it would have affected the passage of this historic legislation.

- In 2018, a Wisconsin state employee and a UW-Madison student received a combined \$780,000 when the state ban on insurance coverage for gender confirmation surgery was found to violate their rights. “Discrimination comes with a cost, and for the state of Wisconsin, the bill has come,” said Larry Dupuis, legal director of ACLU Wisconsin.
- In January 2019, Governor Tony Evers issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity in government employment. Tired of waiting for an official state law, many municipalities—including Appleton, Cudahy, DePere, Janesville, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Racine, Steven’s Point, Sun Prairie and Verona—had already passed specific trans protections of their own. “This executive action sends a strong message about this administration’s commitment to affirming the dignity of every Wisconsinite,” said Evers spokesperson Melissa Baldauff.
- On June 15, 2020, a conservative U.S. Supreme Court voted 6–3 that “an employer who fires an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions” it would not have questioned in straight or cisgender employees. This was a landmark ruling for transgender workplace

discrimination.

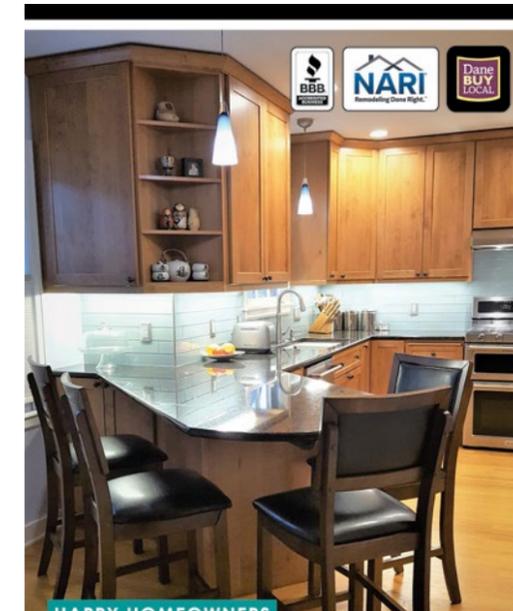
- Following four years of punitive policies, the Biden Administration rolled back many Trumpisms with an executive order on January 20, 2021. “All people should receive equal treatment under the law, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation,” read the order, which amplified the importance of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and extended protections beyond the workplace into schools, health care, and housing.

Finally, State Representative Mark Speitzer (D-Beloit), who co-authored a 2017 bill to add gender identity to the Wisconsin antidiscrimination law, plans to reintroduce a “comprehensive non-discrimination bill” aimed at reducing the everyday burdens of transgender life.

“We need to make sure we are protecting the most vulnerable,” said Speitzer. “Wisconsin needs to come back and catch up on this issue.” It’s 40 years past due. ■

“The trans community has allowed the gay and lesbian community to speak for us. Times are changing. Our armies are rising and we are getting stronger. And when we come a-knocking, they’re going to know that you don’t fuck with the transgender community.”

—Sylvia Rivera, “Bitch on Wheels” speech at NYC Pride, June 2001.



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

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



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

Es el momento de brillar

Tu experiencia de bienestar es exclusivamente tuya. En Quartz, estamos aquí para ayudarte a recibir atención médica de la más alta calidad al menor costo posible.

Es hora de elegir Quartz.

Quartz

QuartzBenefits.com



DRAG ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MENTORING PRIDE

It Takes Water for Flowers to Grow ...

... or how the support 14-year-old **Andy Schueler** receives from performing in drag has shown him ways to actualize his dreams.



I ONCE HID BEHIND THE WIG, using the makeup and garments as a shield. I used them to compensate for an essential quality I was lacking — confidence. The scope of this abysmal cavity is nearly untraceable, the cause equally as uninspired. An unfortunate retelling of an all-too-familiar tale explains that as a queer person in an unfortunately conservative town, I was the victim of seemingly endless bullying and ostracization. The words of those I thought should dictate my life chipped away at my once fragile self-esteem like a blade against a wall of cheap paint. As this continued, my pigment was poisoned by external voices that became internal. I was convinced my words were nothing more than ejected lead.

In the summer of 2018, I attended PrideFest Milwaukee. This was my first true taste of a new world, free of the toxicities that made my origins so dark. Alongside other valuable experiences, I was fortunate enough to meet the one-and-only Cass Marie. This symbol of glamour and kindness in my life took me under her wing with the intention of adding light and perspective.

As our relationship blossomed, Cass slowly but surely had me performing at drag shows across the Madison and Milwaukee areas. What I wanted my drag to be was not equivalent to my presentation. I brought what I could, and put my whole being into performing. The crowds cheered me on to an extent I thought was reserved for icons like Gaga. The first time I experienced this love and rush of endorphins, my understanding started to shift — these people weren't excited to see expensive costumes. They were excited to see a young person performing to their hearts content. That external validation gave me permission to give myself the same.

After a few shows, the pandemic struck. The inevitable lack of external validation tested my ability to love myself. This gave me time to assess what aspects of drag were important to me. As I analyzed each aspect with the caution of an archeologist, I realized that it wasn't the money, the glamour, or the celebrity status. It was what drag had taught me about taking up space in this world.

On the less philosophical side, those 11 months allowed me to come back with new intentions and a fresh set of eyes. When I returned to the scene in May of 2021, I brought the same pieces I used to hide behind. However, during that first show, everything clicked. The audience was excited to see a young queer person rising above malicious forces pushing them into a place of darkness. They were excited to see a narrative so polar opposite of the one we know too well. However, that show taught me more. It taught me that I did not need more than what I had. That the wigs, the makeup, and everything else should not be the attraction, but a compliment to what I am. That is not to discredit the talent and care used when crafting the art I wear. Once I recognized that, I allowed more and more people to recognize that as well.

The knowledge that my mind is more powerful than any garment, any hair, and any glitter that I could cover it with is power. Still, that thought persists. I want my drag to be more than what it is. The key to that shadow is not to let it take over the light. My external presentation will continue to grow with my sense of self and the security that I deserve to take up the space I am given. That's inevitable. ■



Get A Rate You'll Love Coming Home To.

At UW Credit Union, we work hard to make homebuying easy. Our intuitive online application process, fast preapprovals and trusted team of experienced mortgage loan officers help keep the process simple and stress-free, so you can spend more time focusing on the important things. Find out what a top Wisconsin lender can do for you by applying online today.

Mortgages For Every You. | uwcu.org
800-533-6773



UW Credit Union is ranked among the top ten home loan lenders in the state based on information from county Register of Deeds offices, CoreLogic.

MADISON OPERA



Andres Acosta and Ben Edquist in
Madison Opera's 2020 production of *Fellow Travelers*

2021/22 SEASON

POWERFUL STORIES TOLD THROUGH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC



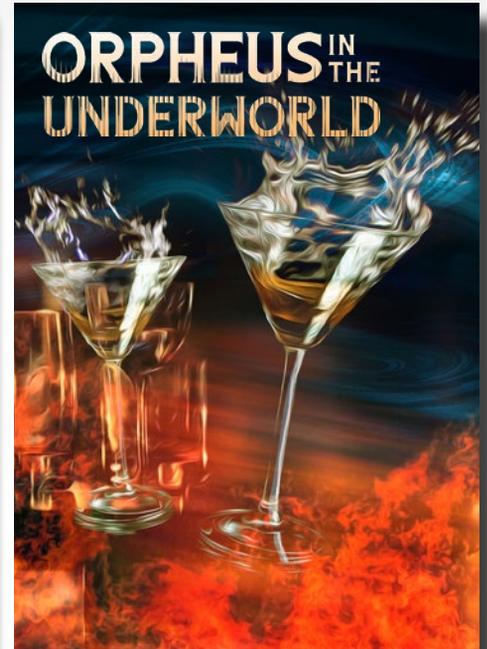
Lucia
DI LAMMERMOOR

NOVEMBER 5 & 7
OVERTURE HALL



**She
Loves
Me**

FEBRUARY 18 & 20
CAPITOL THEATER



ORPHEUS IN THE
UNDERWORLD

APRIL 29 & MAY 1
OVERTURE HALL

Discover all the drama at madisonopera.org