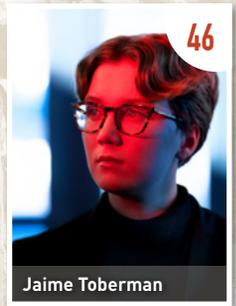


our lives



# HOME & DESIGN

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

LGBTQ spaces & places to spark your own inspiration



March / April 2023

GET AWAY TO A

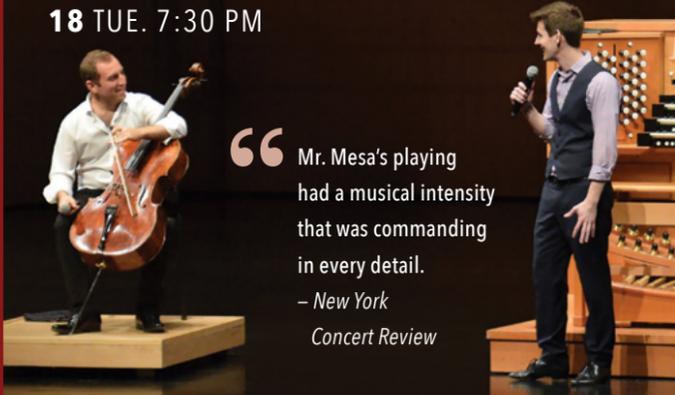
## RURAL OASIS

**Matthew Trotter** is building a queerer version of up-north culture in **Princeton, Wisconsin.**



APRIL

18 TUE. 7:30 PM



“Mr. Mesa’s playing had a musical intensity that was commanding in every detail.  
– New York Concert Review

## greg zelek & thomas mesa

After our first performance together back in 2019 and a solo performance of Dvořák’s *Cello Concerto* with the MSO, Thomas Mesa returns as we collaborate once again in a program of organ and cello music. Mr. Mesa and I will both perform works by women composers, such as Nadia Boulanger’s gorgeous *Trois Pièces*, as well as a solo cello work written for him by Spanish composer Andrea Casarrubios. We will close this exciting evening with a commissioned work written for the two of us, Daniel Ficarri’s *Sonata in C minor for Organ and Cello*, which was inspired by our first performance at Overture Hall. You won’t want to miss the world premiere of this incredible piece!

– Greg Zelek, Principal Organist and Elaine and Nicholas Mischler Curator of the Overture Concert Organ

Greg Zelek, Organ  
Thomas Mesa, Cello

PRESENTING SPONSOR  
William Steffenhagen

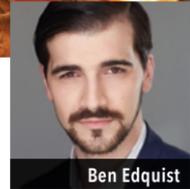
MAJOR SPONSOR  
Jane Hamblen and Robert F. Lemanske

PROGRAM  
Jules Massenet,  
*Méditation from Thaïs*  
Nadia Boulanger,  
*Trois Pièces*  
Andrea Casarrubios,  
*Seven*  
J.S. Bach,  
*Fugue in D major, BWV 532*  
Daniel Ficarri,  
*Sonata for Organ and Cello*  
(world premiere)

All tickets \$25:  
[madisonsymphony.org/zelekmesa](http://madisonsymphony.org/zelekmesa)

MAY

5 FRI. 7:30 PM  
6 SAT. 8:00 PM  
7 SUN. 2:30 PM



## renaissance & passion

Enjoy an all-out thrilling climax to our season with audience favorite *Carmina Burana* with its highly rhythmic and primitive score performed by Beverly Taylor’s MSO Chorus and three dynamic soloists (whom many of you will know from their recent work with Madison Opera). And MSO audiences will get to know Florence Price, a highly popular composer from the 1930s, who is having a major renaissance in the symphonic world.

– John DeMain

John DeMain, Conducting  
Jeni Houser, Soprano  
Justin Kroll, Tenor  
Ben Edquist, Baritone  
Madison Youth Choirs,  
Michael Ross,  
Artistic Director  
Madison Symphony Chorus,  
Beverly Taylor, Director

PROGRAM  
Florence Price,  
*Symphony No. 3 in C minor*  
Carl Orff,  
*Carmina Burana*

Tickets \$20-\$98:  
[madisonsymphony.org/carmina](http://madisonsymphony.org/carmina)

MAJOR SPONSORS  
Madison Media Partners,  
the Wisconsin State Journal, The Capital Times,  
and Madison.com  
Carla and Fernando Alvarado  
Diane Ballweg  
Janet Hyde

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS  
Robert Benjamin and John Fields  
Ann Lindsey and Charles Snowdon  
Stafford Rosenbaum LLP  
Wisconsin Arts Board



## 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

© 2021 MINI USA, a division of BMW of North America, LLC. The MINI name, model names and logo are registered trademarks.



Karl Barton  
Mini Motoring Advisor  
608-729-6444

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



Unique framing designs worthy of your most cherished moments – and those yet to come.

OPEN  
Tues – Sat, 10am – 5pm  
Schedule an appointment or drop by

MONROE STREET FRAMING

Buy single tickets in-person at the Overture Center Box Office, 201 State Street, by phone (608) 258-4141, or online.

Programs, dates, and artists subject to change. Please note: additional Overture Center fees apply to phone and online orders (no fee for in-person purchases at the Box Office).



“Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing we’ll ever do.”

- Brené Brown

TABLE OF CONTENTS HOME & DESIGN MARCH / APRIL 2023

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 ADVERTISER DIRECTORY
7 PUBLISHER'S LETTER
7 CONTRIBUTORS

FEATURES

- 32 A RURAL OASIS
38 THEIR SHOW ISN'T OVER YET

CONNECT

- 9 THE PRETENDIAN AMONG US
15 NEWS BRIEFS
20 OUR ORGANIZERS
22 OUR ORGANIZERS
24 OUR AUTHORS
26 OUR ADVOCATES
28 OUR ADVOCATES
30 OUR EVENTS

IMPROVE

- 42 OUR ISSUES
44 OUR TASTE
46 OUR YOUTH



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Patrick Farabaugh
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief
Virginia Harrison
Copy Editor

Doug Rowe
Features Curator
Online Jobs & Events Curator

Contributing Writers

Alissa Gauger
Frederick Harris
Melanie Jones
Emmett Lockwood
Nadine Mobley
jilip nagler
Akshat Sharma
Michail Takach
Jaime Toberman
Karin Wolf

Contributing Artists

Ian DeGraff
Melanie Jones
Andy Quint
Samantha Waldron

Social Media Curators

Jill Nagler
Doug Rowe

Webmasters
design.garden

National Advertising Sales
Rivendell Media Inc.

Subscribers in 450+ Wisconsin cities & towns

©2023 All Rights Reserved.
March / April 2023, Volume 16, Issue 5
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.

Cover photo by Melanie Jones.



ADVERTISER DIRECTORY



Our Lives is a 100% ad-supported publication. We are able to exist because you support our dedicated advertising partners.

ARTS

- p. 20 Madison Opera
p. 2 Madison Symphony Orchestra
p. 10 Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

ART / ARTISTS / ART SUPPLIES

- p. 3 Monroe Street Framing
p. 14 Bruce Seeds

ATTORNEYS

- p. 41 Balisle Family Law

AUTOMOBILES

- p. 3 MINI of Madison

BANKING / FINANCIAL ADVISING

- p. 21 Shannon M. Anderson
Ameriprise Financial
p. 15 Mike Fumelle, Associated Bank
p. 41 Summit Credit Union
p. 48 UW Credit Union

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- p. 14 Dane Buy Local
p. 18 New Harvest Foundation
p. 29 OPEN
p. 16 OutReach
p. 11 StageQ
p. 12 Wisconsin LGBT Chamber

COUNSELING / SUPPORT

- p. 42 Alexander Einsman, MS MFT
Atlas Counseling

FASHION

- p. 25 Madison Optical Center
p. 45 Ulla Eyewear

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- p. 17 Capitol Centre Market
p. 11 Delta Beer Lab
p. 44 D'Vino
p. 44 The Sow's Ear
p. 45 Willy Street Co-op

HEALTH/WELLNESS

- p. 40 Dental Health Associates
p. 21 Forward Fertility, LLC
p. 4 Inner Fire Yoga
p. 15 New Health Chiropractic
p. 47 Smart Dental
p. 30 Vivent Health
p. 19 Wisconsin Fertility Institute

HIGHER EDUCATION

- p. 25 Madison College

INSURANCE

- p. 5 Colleen Frentzel Agency
American Family Insurance
p. 5 David Ryan-Sukup
American Family Insurance
p. 31 Jim Hartman, State Farm

INTERIOR DESIGN / HOME

- p. 26 Bethke Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.
p. 17 Chad's Design Build
p. 36 Kool View
p. 33 MaraLee Olson Design Studio
p. 33 Quigley Decks & Cable Rails
p. 35 Sunset Ridge Exteriors
p. 35 Time 2 Remodel

JEWELERS

- p. 42 Goodman's Jewelers
p. 39 Jewelers Workshop

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- p. 13 Rutabaga

PAPER SUPPLIES & CARDS

- p. 44 Anthology

PETS

- p. 23 Angel's Wish
p. 22 Bad Dog Frida
p. 23 EarthWise Pet Supply

PHOTOGRAPHY

- p. 18 Dulcy Dog Photography
p. 42 Dutcher Photography

REALTY

- p. 25 Vivienne Anderson
p. 27 Lauer Realty Group

SPIRITUAL

- p. 30 Holy Wisdom Monastery

TRAVEL

- p. 37 Madeline Island Ferry Line

UTILITIES

- p. 8 Madison Gas & Electric



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
cfrentzel@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 - 15616751

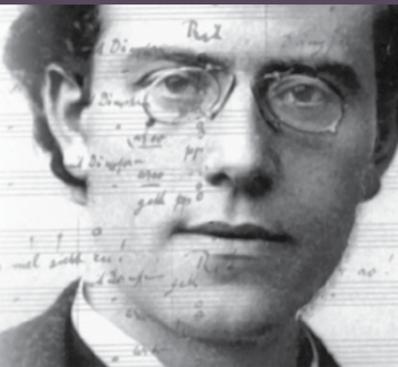


INNER FIRE YOGA Madison's Original Hot Yoga Studio Since 2002. Includes contact info for East and West Madison locations and website URL.



**MARCH**

19 SUN. 2:30 PM  
SINGLE PERFORMANCE



A multimedia presentation in the first half featuring American Players Theatre actors, with the entire work performed after intermission.

**Beyond the Score®**

Mahler: Symphony No. 4 – Heaven or Earth?

Beyond the Score®, again conducted by our wonderfully talented Kyle Knox and supported by three star actors from American Players Theatre plunges into the depths of this deeply romantic work. Emily Secor, who has the voice of an angel, and who delighted us on our streamed Christmas concert of 2020, returns to sing the angelic last movement. –John DeMain

- Kyle Knox,**  
Conducting
- Emily Secor,**  
Soprano
- Dan Lyons,**  
Piano
- James Ridge,**  
Actor
- Colleen Madden,**  
Actor
- Gavin Lawrence,**  
Narrator



Kyle Knox



James Ridge



Gavin Lawrence



Colleen Madden



Dan Lyons



Emily Secor

EXCLUSIVE SPONSOR  
Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation

Tickets \$18-\$74:  
[madisonsymphony.org/beyondthescore](http://madisonsymphony.org/beyondthescore)

Beyond the Score® is a production of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Gerard McBurney, Creative Director for Beyond the Score®

**APRIL**

14 FRI. 7:30 PM  
15 SAT. 8:00 PM  
16 SUN. 2:30 PM



Photo: Lauren Hurt

“This performance by the violinist [Blake Pouliot] was one of the best I've ever seen here. He was terrific.”  
–MSO subscriber

**dazzling violin & spring**

Canadian virtuoso Blake Pouliot, who dazzled our audience with the Mendelssohn violin concerto, turns his musical acumen to Saint-Saëns' third violin concerto. Britten's mesmerizing sea interludes from his operatic masterpiece *Peter Grimes* opens the program, and another personal favorite of mine, and I hope yours, the second symphony of Brahms, will help usher in the spring. –John DeMain

**John DeMain, Conducting**  
**Blake Pouliot, Violin**

PROGRAM  
**Benjamin Britten,**  
*Four Sea Interludes*  
**Camille Saint-Saëns,**  
*Violin Concerto No. 3 in B minor*  
**Johannes Brahms,**  
*Symphony No. 2 in D major*

MAJOR SPONSORS  
Scott and Janet Cabot  
Capitol Lakes  
Kay Schwichtenberg  
and Herman Baumann  
Fred Wileman

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS  
The Burish Group at UBS  
Rodney Schreiner and Mark Blank  
Wisconsin Arts Board

Tickets \$20-\$98:  
[madisonsymphony.org/pouliot](http://madisonsymphony.org/pouliot)

OUR LIVES EVOLVES



**BACK IN EARLY 2020**, I used this space to talk about my intent to move *Our Lives* to becoming a more robust statewide news and media source for Wisconsin. We've been the only LGBTQ media in the state since the last publication in Milwaukee shut down after the 2018 midterms. Then March 2020 brought the hard COVID lockdowns and collapse of life as we knew it. What was meant to be a time of growth for us quickly flipped. It became about survival. And what a slog the last few years have been. We managed to get the new website developed and launched. And the other half to that—converting *Our Lives* into a nonprofit—has taken significantly more time. I'm happy to report though that by the time you read this, that nonprofit, **Our Lives Media**, will have had its first official board meeting. What's felt like years of work to get to this moment is here, and it's a kind of slow, measured rebirth for us. It'll take some time for this board to find their feet and get the groundwork done, but I feel proud of the direction we're heading, both for the legacy of *Our Lives* and for the ability to provide LGBTQ Wisconsinites a sustainable LGBTQ news source. At more than 15 years old, we're already one of the longest-running LGBTQ publications in our state's history. With this next step, it's my hope that we're paving the way for the next 15+ years.



**AKSHAT SHARMA**, a proud Badger and current New Englander, earned his PhD in Immunology from UW-Madison. He is a Gemini, a Trekkie and a Wharton/James fanboy who spends his days coaxing tumour-dwelling T-cells to choose violence. Outside the lab, you will find him, book in hand, riding the Orange and Red lines of Boston's infamous MBTA or gazing wistfully at the many brownstones peppered across the city.



**ANDY QUINT** is a photojournalist documenting the lives of marginalized people with a focus on activism and empathy. As a disabled and queer woman who grew up in poverty, she has a unique insight into the struggles and triumphs of oppressed existences. Andy wants to aid people in telling their stories that aren't usually heard and does so with respect and compassion. She has a vested interest in not exploiting her subjects. Andy's talent lies in being able to be a fly on the wall and capturing candid moments that represent people as their whole, beautiful, complicated, and human selves. Andy has photographed many protests, events, and members of her Madison community.

Join us for a special social gathering at our 4/14 April concert! Connect with members of the LGBTQ+ community and friends at **Out at the Symphony**. This special event offers an opportunity to meet MSO Musicians, Music Director John DeMain, and other special guests.

All tickets are \$50 and include a **Circle-level concert ticket**, plus an exclusive **post-concert reception** with hors d'oeuvres and complimentary beverages.



Photo: Lauren Hurt

**OUT**  
AT THE SYMPHONY

FRIDAY, APRIL 14  
7:30 PM CONCERT  
& AFTER-PARTY

**dazzling violin & spring**

John DeMain, Conducting  
Blake Pouliot, Violin

Buy tickets online only:  
[madisonsymphony.org/out](http://madisonsymphony.org/out)

OUT AT THE SYMPHONY PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS:



Love great music. Find it here.

Learn more: [madisonsymphony.org/pouliot](http://madisonsymphony.org/pouliot)

FIND  
YOUR  
DRIVE



GENRE 20|30

# EV LAND

MADISON GAS AND ELECTRIC IN ASSOCIATION WITH BACKFLIP PRESENTS A GENRE 2030 FILM EV LAND  
MGE BACKFLIP ev MGE.COM/LOVEEV GENRE2030.COM

EV FOR SCENES OF SINGING AND DANCING, ALL INVOLVING ELECTRIC VEHICLES  
All Ages Admitted



OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM

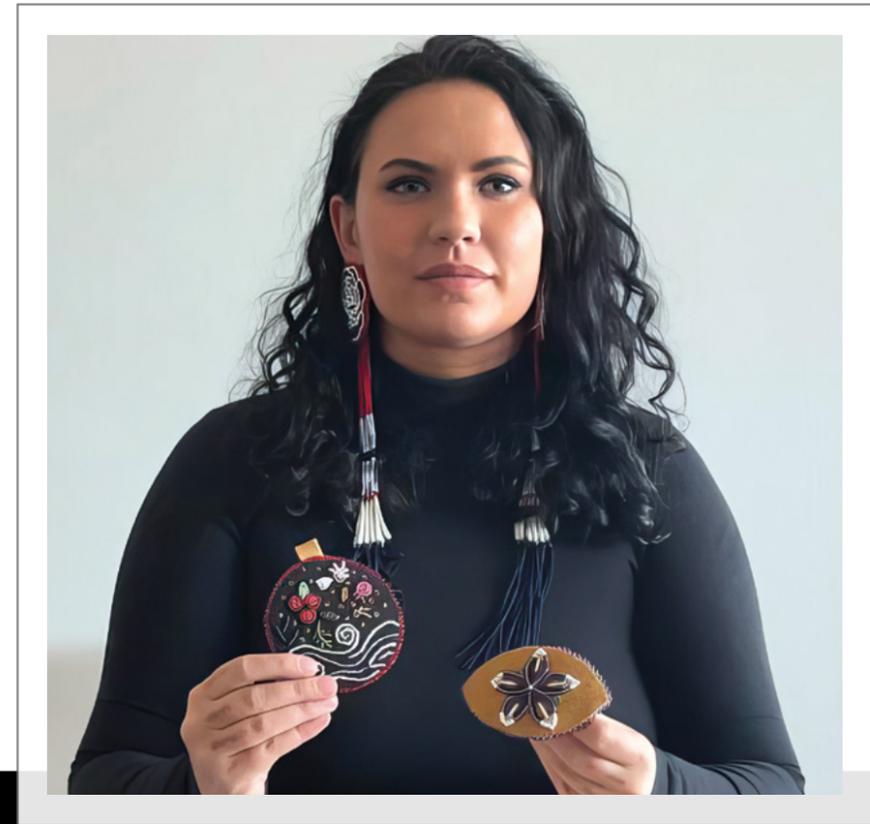


CONNECT



OUR NEWS

Leading News & Local Stories



## The Pretendian Among Us

Another race-faker was outed late last year when [newagefraud.org](http://newagefraud.org) exposed local activist **Kay LeClaire's** familial lineage. Kay was proven to be German, Swedish, and French Canadian—not the Indian tribes they claimed, including Métis, Oneida, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee.

RACE-FAKING QTBIPOC INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

**MY FIRST ENCOUNTER** with Kay LeClaire, formerly known as nibiiwakamigkwe, was mid-October 2019 when they were lobbying The Bur Oak (then The Winnebago) to change their venue name. My band The Hasbians had just played Gender Fest at The Winnebago which sparked conversations in the queer community over social media regarding the problematic nature of the venue name in connection to local Indigenous communities and calls for accountability and a venue name change. I was easily drawn into the conversation and didn't question the information that LeClaire was providing, in part due to my own ignorance on local/regional/national Indigenous cultures, as well as their own posturing as an expert on the historical

implications of the use of the venue name and their connection to local queer and Indigenous activists.

I did not meet LeClaire in person until this past fall when they were a speaker at the OPEN Annual Dinner where they spoke on Indigenous ways of being, their experiences growing up, and their experiences as a Native American artist, activist, and co-founder/co-owner of the anti-capitalist, queer, and Indigenous-owned tattoo healing collective giige (now Red Clover Tattoo Collective). They were in regalia, were accompanied by other Indigenous folks, and spoke with confidence and conviction. I felt honored that I was present for such a gift of insight into the intimate experiences of an Indigenous Two-spirit artist and activist. I never would



## Spanish Guitar

March 24 at 7:30 PM

**Mabel Millán**  
guitar

Mabel Millán performs Manuel Ponce's *Concierto Del Sur*, and flamenco dancer Tania Tandias accompanies the two opening works. Halffter's *Sinfonietta of 1925* is a forgotten gem of the early-twentieth century.

...

## Banfield & Beethoven

May 12 at 7:30 PM

**Michael Mizrahi**  
piano

## Single Tickets

608.258.4141

[overture.org/wco](http://overture.org/wco)



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

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



have expected or anticipated that by the end of the year we would all learn they had fabricated their Indigenous Two-spirit identity. They were a Pretendian, a fraud, and were going to be exposed before the end of 2022.

I was alerted to LeClaire's deception through posts on social media in late December 2022. The posts included links to the forum [newagefraud.org](http://newagefraud.org) which showed extensive research of LeClaire's ancestral claims done by an anonymous, Indigenous, self-described "hobbyist genealogist" using the handle [advancedsmite](https://www.instagram.com/advancedsmite). The detailed forum showed LeClaire had no ancestral ties to the Native American Indian tribes they claimed, including Métis, Oneida, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee, as their familial lineage was proven to be German, Swedish, and French Canadian. Additionally, LeClaire's claims to having grown up in Northern Wisconsin were shown to have been fabricated. LeClaire was actually a white person from Sussex, Wisconsin (near Milwaukee).

The forum also revealed they had been intentionally altering their appearance by dyeing their hair black and darkening their skin. They had been masquerading as an Indigenous

In the ultimate act of neo-colonialism, they had taken opportunities that were intended for Indigenous artists and activists, and had spoken about ethnic trauma they never experienced, all while claiming an anti-colonial platform.



Photo of LeClaire in 2012.

person, collecting Indigenous artifacts, sacred items, cultural history and practices, regalia, and art, and were profiting from the ruse materially, socially, and academically. They presented on panels that focused on issues unique to Native American communities, including involvement with Wisconsin's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force. In the ultimate act of neo-colonialism, they had taken opportunities that were intended for Indigenous artists and activists, and had spoken about ethnic trauma they never experienced, all while claiming an anti-colonial platform.

It was also uncovered that much of the art that LeClaire claimed to have created, art that had propelled their image as an Indigenous artist, had actually been purchased by LeClaire from Native and non-native artists. Most notably a ribbon dress that they had sold to the Overture Center and presented on as their own creation was actually bought off Etsy.

LeClaire's ethnic fraud has been reported in detail by *Madison365*, *The Cap Times*, and *WPR*, and has spread to national and international news outlets, with friends, colleagues, and community members weighing in on their experiences with LeClaire. Native American leaders not connected to LeClaire have also weighed in on the continued conversation regarding white appropriation of Indigenous identities and tribal affiliations.

Since the revelation of LeClaire's ethnic fraud, they have been legally removed from [giige/Red Clover Tattoo Collective](https://www.instagram.com/giige), have resigned from their position at UW-Madison's School of Human Ecology, and according to



Photo of LeClaire in 2021.



LeClaire out in full regalia.

a statement they made to the media they have stopped using the name *nibiwakamigkwe* and have removed themselves "from all community spaces, positions, projects, and grants and will not seek new ones."

### COLONIZATION'S DEEP IMPACT

There is undeniable generational trauma from settler colonization, including forced removal and criminalization of Indigenous tribes and traditions. Residential schools and child welfare removals, as well as forced assimilation have disconnected and displaced many ethnically Indigenous people from their tribes. Only since 1978 with the passage of the Indian Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) have Indigenous people in the U.S. been able to legally and openly practice traditional beliefs and receive recognition of the harm of forced removal of Indigenous children along with legal dedication to tribal rights over their welfare. These landmark laws undoubtedly led to many displaced Indigenous folks seeking to authentically reconnect with their tribe(s) and reintegrate their ancestral identity. But false claims to Indigenous ancestry, and ethnic frauds (now commonly referred to as pretendians), have occurred for centuries, requiring some federally recognized tribes to rely on blood quantum in order to prevent outsider exploitation and to ensure tribal sustenance.

Blood quantum, or the amount of Indigenous blood an individual possesses based on genealogy and ancestral tribal enrollment, was invented in the 18th century as a tool of colonization used to place limits on the citizenship rights of Native Americans, and later was used to limit the availability of benefits to Native Americans. Blood quantum is used by some federally recognized tribal nations to decide



Much of the art that LeClaire claimed to have created had actually been purchased by LeClaire from Native and non-native artists. Most notably a ribbon dress that they had sold to the Overture Center and presented on as their own creation was actually bought off Etsy.

who is considered a citizen, able to be formally enrolled and added to tribal membership rolls. Use of blood quantum to establish tribal membership varies by tribe and is considered highly controversial by some, as it relies on genea-

APRIL 28 - MAY 13, 2023

# Laced

written by  
**Samantha Mueller**

directed by  
**Chris Diorio**

partial funding provided by  
Evjue FOUNDATION

TICKETS ON SALE NOW:  
[WWW.STAGEQ.ORG](http://WWW.STAGEQ.ORG)  
BARTLETT THEATRE

partial funding provided by  
DANE ARTS



# BLACK LIVES MATTER



Supporting  
LGBTQ+ and  
allied businesses

Join more than  
670 businesses  
as a member



Learn more:



WisLGBTChamber.com



logical records which can be difficult to trace accurately, but is also a protective measure as a means of preserving tribal history and traditions, a way to pass their cultural legacy on to future generations, and to limit tribal exploitation and appropriation by outsiders. Qualifications for enrollment vary across tribes and it is not necessarily uncommon for Indigenous folks to be members of more than one tribe. Contrary to popular belief, DNA testing is not sophisticated nor accurate enough to provide information regarding specific tribal ancestry.

Blood quantum, genealogy, and DNA are not the penultimate deciding factors on tribal affiliation, as evidenced in many of the articles covering LeClaire's deception where it is cited that tribal affiliation is dependent on whether or not the tribe claims you. In some Indigenous cultures direct blood ties are not required for an individual to be claimed, but rather they are a member based on their actions, connections to the land and community, and a kinship-like sense of belonging. Being claimed by a tribe does not necessarily equate to tribal enrollment or membership, or give an individual full access to tribal rights or to elevate themselves into positions of leadership or tribal expertise. There has been no evidence that LeClaire was ever claimed by any tribe.

ACADEMIA'S ROLE IN ETHNIC FRAUD

Academia is rife with fraud, including several instances of ethnic fraud being uncovered in 2020 alone. Academia favors a positionality that is not usually accessible to those with the lived experience that culture commodifiers

Academia favors a positionality that is not usually accessible to those with the lived experience that culture commodifiers crave. Academia prizes the individual and individual achievement, which is more difficult to access without racial and financial privilege, power, and status.

Academia prizes the individual and individual achievement, which is more difficult to access without racial and financial privilege, power, and status. Success in academia also depends on maintaining inequitable relationships with esteemed professors, making exploitation of marginalized academic hopefuls more accessible. Ethnic frauds have access to whiteness which can help them exploit white people, regardless of power imbalances, and Black and Indigenous people without fear of recourse; they always have whiteness to fall

back on. Several articles on ethnic frauds have stated these frauds could have had successful careers in ethnic studies and could have been fierce allies. Instead they chose ethnic fraud and stole opportunities from the communities they claimed.

Known racial/ethnic frauds Jessica Krug, CV Vitolo-Haddad, and Kay LeClaire were all connected to the UW-Madison. Unlike Krug and CV, LeClaire was not a student at UW, but



rather their connection to the university was educational, representative, and ultimately performative. While both Krug and CV altered their appearances to appear more racially ambiguous, LeClaire also wore traditional regalia. Additionally, while Krug, CV, and LeClaire exploited their stolen identities to advance their careers, LeClaire seems to be the only one of the three to have also participated in plagiarism by passing off artwork created by others as their own. While it should have been relatively easy for the UW, the Overture Center, and other institutions to research the items that LeClaire passed as their

own original art, it took Indigenous people to do the research to expose LeClaire's plagiarism. And while I do not condone unnecessary investigations of Black or Indigenous folks, one would think there would be reasonable standards in place for ensuring that educators and exhibitors are not passing off work done by others as their own.

QUEERNESS' ROLE IN ETHNIC FRAUD

We must reckon with the fact that CV and LeClaire were both members of the queer community. We must recognize the impact that claiming multiple marginalized identities had on their ability to exploit white folks and communities of color. White queer folks are culpable. White queer multiple marginalized folks are culpable, because our marginalized identities do not cancel our whiteness and we are just as guilty as cisheteronormative white folks of promoting whiteness, tokenizing LGBTQ+ communities of color, and performative allyship. We cannot distance ourselves from our complicity in racism and colonization especially when Black and Indigenous queer and transgender women continue to be

the most vulnerable members of our community.

ACCOUNTABILITY & MOVING FORWARD

Solutions to the occurrences of racial/ethnic fraud in academia, activism, and in the queer community require a dedicated community response. As white folks we need to put in the work in cultivating meaningful relationships with the communities most impacted. It takes time and energy to foster trusting, authentic relationships, which includes doing the work to be anti-racist and to unlearn the revisionist history regarding colonization, enslavement, and white supremacy. It requires a willingness to be uncomfortable, to be challenged, to be called out and called in, and to be left out/excluded from certain aspects of the lived experiences of Black and Indigenous folks (and marginalized communities we are a part of in general). While it is not the responsibility of white folks to question Black and Indigenous folks racial/ethnic identities without undeniable and overwhelming evidence, we are responsible for the fallout. Regardless of our relationship or proximity to the white person and their deception, we must hold ourselves accountable to do better by our communities of color. Imagine if Indigenous folks who had doubts about LeClaire felt safe enough to entrust white folks with their concerns without fear of repercussion or exploitation.

It is not the responsibility of Black and Indigenous people to provide solutions to the problems of whiteness, it is our responsibility considering how we benefit from racial/ethnic representation within primarily white organizations and institutions. We cannot continue to do this work in silos and absolutely need to engage Black and Indigenous communities beyond tokenization and performativity in order to create meaningful and sustainable change that is not centered in whiteness, while also not placing the burden of educating us without equitable compensation when we have already been given access to knowledge, insight, and tools on how institutions need to change and how to fight racism for decades. We must find ways to meaningfully address the continued white commodification of racial/ethnic identities without general suspicion, the use of surveillance, or invasive and racist vetting processes.

We must unlearn our entitlement to traumatic



JILLIP NAGLER is President of the Board of OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center, member of OutReach's Madison Area Transgender Association Leadership Team, a musician, and a community activist and organizer dedicated to collective liberation. Everything ze knows about justice ze learned from Angela Davis, bell hooks, and queer/trans People of Color.

World's Largest Paddlesports Expo  
**CANOECOPIA 2023**

March 10-12 • Alliant Energy Center

kayaks • canoes • paddling gear  
cartop racks • fishing kayaks  
camping gear • outdoor clothing

**THE BEST PRICES OF THE YEAR!  
BE READY FOR SPRING PADDLING!**

Over 100 clinics and seminars on paddling and outdoor skills, and paddling destinations.  
**Come and learn!**



presented by  
**rutabaga**  
PADDLESPORTS



**www.canoeecopia.com**



"Seeing our customers smile makes all the hard work worth it. We love our community."

**Dane BUY LOCAL**

-Brittany, Owner Ulla Eyewear, Madison

Find 600+ local business owners that you can support!  
www.DaneBuyLocal.com

follow us on



CONNECT → OUR

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



LeClaire presenting on indigenous issues at the 2022 OPEN Annual Dinner.



It is not the responsibility of Black and Indigenous people to provide solutions to the problems of whiteness, it is our responsibility considering how we benefit from racial/ethnic representation within primarily white organizations and institutions.

stories of racism and do the work of dismantling the systems built on and benefitting from racism and colonization. We have to do this work not only with the communities most impacted, but also by giving marginalized communities resources without expectation of performance instead of elevating and centering individuals. Our overreliance on personal clout and individual expertise, as well as the tokenization and commodification of racialized identities will continue to result in the platforming of problematic people and the flattening of racial/ethnic identities and lived experience.

While not every institution and organization is ready to embrace decolonization, land back, reparations, or other justice-centered solutions, these are not the only ways in which there can be meaningful progress made toward equity, parity, and rematriation. There is not one perfect way to make progress; it takes many people working from many different angles to make meaningful and sustainable change.

Red Clover Tattoo Collective has been doing some amazing community work as a

After ousting LaClaire, the anti-capitalist, queer, and Indigenous-owned tattoo healing collective giige rebranded as Red Clover Tattoo Collective.



way of healing from the wreckage LeClaire left behind. Co-founder/co-owner, Indigenous artist and tattooer Nipinet Landsem, along with collective members Mar, Bear, Ari, and Harlowe, has been working to sort through, rematriate, and redistribute LeClaire's relinquished Indigenous art, crafts, crafting supplies, and other sacred items within the indigenous community. Landsem has also been holding community spaces with other Indigenous artists and activists in order to foster deeper and intentional Indigenous community connections and healing.

These actions are part of the accountability that the collective called for in a statement released following LeClaire's separation from giige that detailed what happened, how they were holding themselves accountable for the harm they unwittingly participated in, how organizations that had given LeClaire a platform could show accountability through public statements and donations to Indigenous organizations that were harmed, and included accountability measures for LeClaire demanding a formal apology detailing their fraudulent actions to everyone impacted by their ethnic fraud. There have been calls by other Indigenous folks who were harmed by LeClaire to pay reparations for the money they received for their fraud, in addition to calls for actionable, sustained, and dedicated accountability to the organizations and individuals they exploited.

LeClaire has since disappeared from the public eye and social media. To date they have only released the aforementioned ambiguous statement to media outlets seeking comment and have not yet admitted to nor given any explanation for their ethnic or art fraud. Hopefully they follow through on calls for accountability and reparative actions from Red Clover Tattoo Collective, the Indigenous communities they defrauded, and those closest to them. There is no blueprint or checklist on how to work to repair the harm of ethnic fraud; however, it could help bring closure to the community if LeClaire shared the truth regarding their actions, the full extent of the harm they caused, and why and how they did what they did. ■

*Author's note: The ICWA mentioned is under attack by the conservative Supreme Court. It is essential that this act is upheld in order to ensure that Indigenous children are raised within their tribes. We can all take action to reach out to our political representatives in support of upholding the ICWA, trans rights, and reproductive rights.*

## NEWS BRIEFS

WRITTEN BY MELANIE JONES

### FIRST OPENLY GAY WISCONSIN CABINET SECRETARY APPOINTED

ON JANUARY 9, Governor Tony Evers announced the appointment of James Bond to the position of secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, making him the first openly LGBTQ+ person to lead one of the state's cabinet agencies, according to a press release from the Office of the Governor. Bond, who is himself a disabled veteran, "served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps. from 1983 to 1988 with assignments home and abroad," according to the Office of the Governor. This appointment is a promotion after Bond served as the deputy secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) under Secretary Mary Kolar, who has retired.



Bond

From 2010 to 2019, Bond served as the administrator of the Divisions of Veterans Benefits and Veteran Services. He was appointed to the position of deputy secretary in 2019. Bond was previously employed at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development as the deputy division administrator in the Divisions of Employment and Training and Family Supports, and as the bureau director of management services in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

In the press release, Gov. Evers praised Bond for his service and experience: "James has been a dedicated leader at DVA for over a decade and has served the Department and Wisconsin veterans well as deputy secretary," said Gov. Evers. "As a veteran himself, along with his decades of state service, I have no doubt he will bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, and expertise to this role as secretary. I look forward to continuing our work together to serve Wisconsin's more than 300,000 veterans and ensure they receive the benefits, support, and resources they have earned through their service to be successful in their civilian lives."

The press release continues with Secretary-designee James Bond thanking the governor for the appointment. He continues with, "I have built a career in service—service to my country, the state of Wisconsin, and to fellow veterans. As secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, I will continue in this vein and work with veteran advocates across 72 counties and 11

Tribal Nations to deliver benefits and services veterans have earned, tell their stories, and honor their contributions. Together, we will forge a better future for all Wisconsin veterans and their families."

### WISCONSIN REPUBLICANS STRIKE RULE BARRING 'CONVERSION THERAPY' BY LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

ON JANUARY 12, the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules repealed a rule implemented in December that had effectively outlawed conversion therapy in Wisconsin. According to the *Wisconsin State Journal*, "Following roughly four hours of testimony Thursday, with the majority of those speaking in opposition to the use of conversion therapy, the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules voted 6-4 along party lines to strike the rule, which went into effect in December and defines intervention by a marriage and family therapist, counselor and social worker to try to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity as unprofessional conduct."

According to the same article, Republicans



**Do you suffer from joint pain, headaches, or neuropathy?**

We can help you achieve better health without drugs or surgery!

Now offering:



**MLS Laser Therapy, ARPwave Therapy, & Regenerative Medicine**

Call for a free consultation!

**608-273-2222**

2690 Research Park Dr., Ste A  
Fitchburg | newhealthmadison.com

## Achieve the dream of home ownership

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

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



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

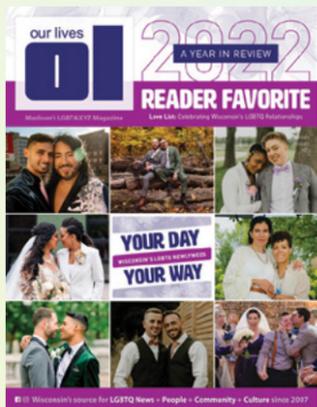


Subject to credit approval. Equal Housing Lender. Associated Bank, N.A. is a Member FDIC and Associated Banc-Corp. (4/12) 1336

AssociatedBank.com

YOUR  
**Connection**  
TO LGBTQ WISCONSIN

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



CONNECTING &  
INFORMING SINCE 2007



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



justified this repeal as saying that it “was not about the controversial and scientifically discredited practice of conversion therapy, but whether the state Department of Safety and Professional Services or the counselors examining board are allowed to implement the rule under state law.”



McDonnell

Fair Wisconsin, who was tweeting quotes from the event, stated after the vote that, “After listening to hours of personal and professional testimony on the harm caused by conversion therapy to LGBTQ+ youth, legislative Republicans just voted to repeal the rule that banned the practice in Wisconsin. This is a major setback

for our state, but we’re not giving up.” Their executive director, Megin McDonnell, questioned the motive of the Republican legislators, asking, “How can it be considered arbitrary and capricious when there is clear consensus that this is a harmful practice?”

Casey Pick from The Trevor Project, was quoted by Fair Wisconsin as saying, “LGBTQ+ youth are more than 2.5x more likely to attempt suicide. Suicide is multi-faceted, but we do see these correlations. The data is consistent, and it does not lie.” Other speakers, including a behavioral healthcare professional named Tim, also raised concerns about suicide and suicidal ideation in youth. Dr. Tammy, from Oconomowoc, testified that, “All medical professionals have an overarching duty to do no harm. Any professional who seeks to change someone’s sexual orientation is acting unethically and engaging in harm to clients. I can’t be more clear about that.”

The committee also heard from victims and survivors of conversion therapy, including Mathew Shurka, who, as quoted by Fair Wisconsin, gave an example of the harm this “therapy” can do. “At the age of 16, I came out to my father. A licensed professional told him that there is no such thing as being gay. My diagnosis was that I was not allowed to speak to my mother or sisters for three years.”

Brian Juchems of GSAFE pointed out that several municipalities have banned conversion therapy, adding that, “You as a legislature would not be ‘going rogue’ by voting to keep this rule. Conversion therapy does not work, and it causes harm to already vulnerable youth.”

**COURAGE MKE EXPANDING INTO TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR LGBTQ+ YOUNG ADULTS**

**THE NONPROFIT COURAGE MKE**, an agency “dedicated to the development and support of LGBTQ+ youth co-founded by Brad Schlaikowski and his husband, Nick,” according to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, purchased a second property with the intention of helping LGBTQ young adults who have aged out of foster care but who might not yet be ready for fully independent living. The first property, Courage House, is a home for LGBTQ+ youth ages 12–17 experiencing homelessness.

The new property, which will be called



Brad Schlaikowski



Nick Schlaikowski

C2 Apartments, will be two stories tall, is newly renovated, and will house up to seven young adults ages 18–24. There will also be “trauma-informed, around-the-clock staff [who] will fulfill the duties of a typical landlord and also help the youth cultivate daily living skills,” according to the article.

The original Courage House takes in referrals from social welfare

systems and helps those youth deal with past traumas while also giving them stability to attend school and participate in volunteer opportunities. After its success, “the idea of working on a youth center to help LGBTQ youth transition into more independent living bloomed,” according to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. “On paper, they’re an adult now because it says they’re 18, but these children have not had the luxury of people training them and getting them ready for adult life,” Brad Schlaikowski told the *Journal Sentinel*.

The property, which needs some rehabilitation and conversion to accommodate seven young people to live there, will function as transitional housing for people coming out of Courage House, and is expected to open in the fall of 2023, with the help of partners such as a carpenters union and Kohls, who will help furnish the property.

**BOARD CHANGES AT CREAM CITY FOUNDATION**

**THE CREAM CITY FOUNDATION**, the nation’s second oldest philanthropic organization serving the LGBTQ+ community, announced Charlie Nash as the new Board Chair and President and Laura Mayerle as the new Board of Directors Vice Chair, effective in February. In a January press release, the outgoing President and CEO DJ Quam said, “The Cream City Foundation Executive

**Award-winning Projects**

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

**Call Today!**  
**608-221-1799**

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



**SAVE THE DATE!**

Madison Area Transgender Association Presents

**Trans Joy!**



**VILAS PARK!**

**SUNDAY APRIL 23RD 2023! 1-4PM!**

Contact AJ at [ajh@lgbtoutreach](mailto:ajh@lgbtoutreach) or Gabe at [gabel@lgbtoutreach](mailto:gabel@lgbtoutreach) for more info!



- 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](http://CAPCENTREMARKET.COM) • 608-255-2616



funding wisconsin's LGBTQ+ communities since 1984

### RAISING MONEY

tax-deductible donations, community fundraising events, workplace contributions, and planned giving

### GIVING BACK

awarded over \$375,000 to organizations promoting LGBTQ+ rights, services, culture and community development in Wisconsin

contact us to learn how you can make a difference

info@newharvestfoundation.org  
www.newharvestfoundation.org

PO Box 1786  
Madison, WI 53701-1786



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



Board selected Charlie and Laura because of their demonstrated enthusiasm and actions to support the LGBTQ+ Community — both in their most recent roles as board members, but also in their personal and professional lives.” He continued, “Since joining our board, both Charlie and Laura have taken active roles in promoting Cream City Foundation both in the LGBTQ+ community in Milwaukee, but also among the corporate community, spanning multi-national corporations to locally owned businesses. In a time when Cream City Foundation seeks to cement our impact in our community, Charlie and Laura are well suited to lead us into the future.”

Charlie Nash, who has been on the board of directors since January of 2020, is the Senior Director of Digital Technology for GE Healthcare’s financing arm, and helps lead GE Healthcare’s LGBTQ+ resource group, called Pride Alliance. He also serves



### CREAM CITY FOUNDATION

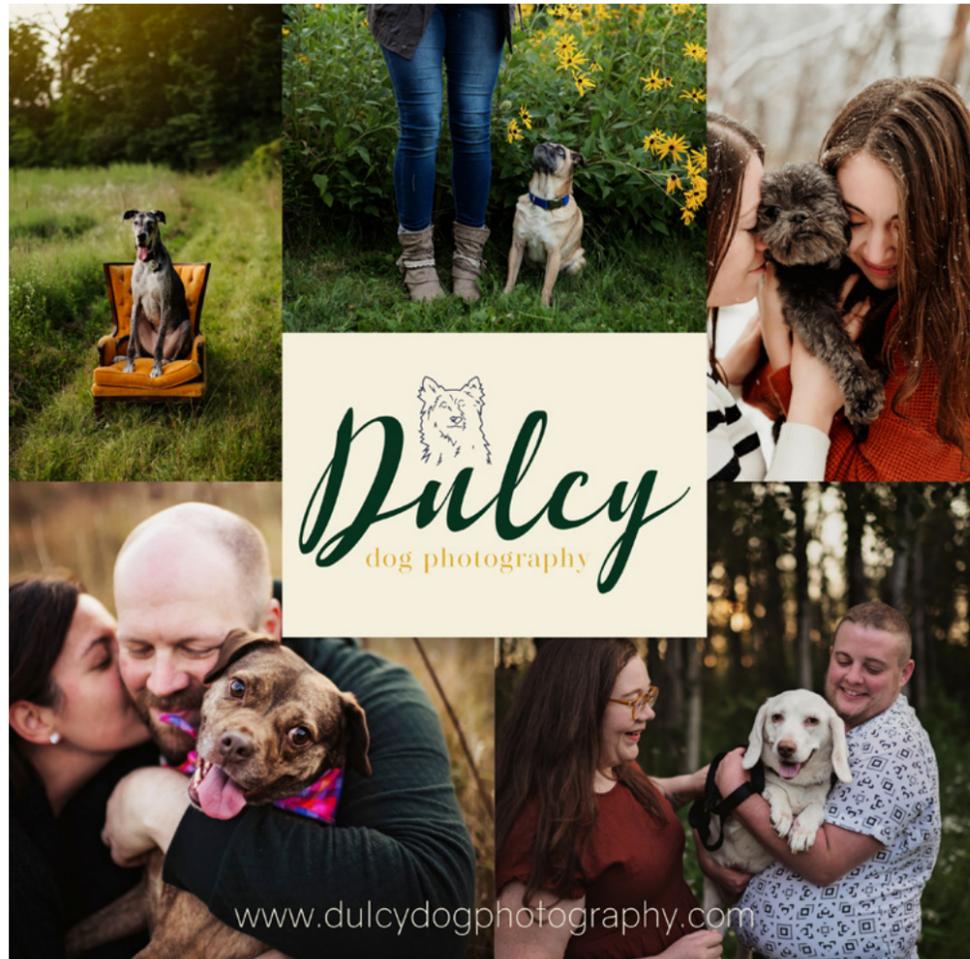
on the board of adoption agency Adoption Choice Inc, according to the release. “I am honored to have been given the opportunity to continue the nearly 40+ years of work of Cream City Foundation and thank DJ and Angie for their leadership and dedication,” Nash said. “We are very excited about continuing our marquee scholarship program, events, and work to support the funds and organizations within the Foundation and partners in the LGBTQ+ community of SE Wisconsin.”

Laura Mayerle joined the board in January of 2022 and is the Director of Corporate Training at Natera. Before working at Natera, she was a Performance Consultant and Coach for U.S. Bank.

According to the release, Nash and Mayerle will succeed DJ Quam and Angie Harden, who will remain members at large of the board of directors. ■

After the third Black transgender woman was found killed in Milwaukee in the last nine months, the Overpass Light Brigade gathered for a national solidarity light vigil in front of Lady Forward at the Capitol on March 3.

Photographed by Melanie Jones.



www.dulcydogphotography.com

# GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS, STRAIGHT.

Honestly, the only label we care about is

# FAMILY.

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

wisc**o**nsin fertility INSTITUTE

wisconsinfertility.com  
3146 Deming Way, Middleton

photo: bornarchivalco.com



PERFECT MUSIC. IMPERFECT HUMANS

# THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

BY W.A. MOZART

TICKETS START AT ONLY \$20!

Don't miss Mozart's sublime comedy, in which the flaws of humanity give way to the beauty of compassion.

APRIL 28 & 30, 2023

OVERTURE HALL

Sung in Italian with projected English translations

608.258.4141 | madisonopera.org/Figaro



CONNECT → OUR ORGANIZERS



LESBIAN ORGANIZERS POP-UPS

## A Space for Sapphics to Socialize

In the past, there were hundreds of lesbian bars in the United States. Today, there are just a handful of spaces left for queer women and allies to connect. To fill that void, **LPub** is a "pop-up" bar that moves every month to a different establishment in the Madison area to facilitate queer women meeting each other in person.

**MADISON'S LPUB** was founded by Kat Kosmaule in December 2015 after she attended an LPub in a different city. She had a strong mission and vision around creating community in our city, too. And, after seven years of planning great LPubs, Kat decided to shift her focus.

The three of us (**Heather Long, Alissa Gauger, and Jennifer Smith**) volunteered to step up and run the LPubs going forward. Heather and Alissa are friends who met working at Dean Health Plan, and Alissa and Jen have been a couple for 28 years, married since 2014. We are all queer women from the Madison and Mount Horeb area who believe in creating safe spaces for other queer women, and allies, to socialize and create connections.

We also share a passion for community building and feel strongly about helping to reduce isolation and loneliness by bringing people together in a positive way. We see 30–50 people come out for these events to make new friends and more. In an online world, and with the pandemic's isolating effects, we feel that seeing people in person is really critical. Now, we're finding that holding these events sparks the idea in other cities, too!

### HOW IT WORKS

Our team contacts local bars and establishments to schedule at least one LPub each month (on a Saturday at 6 p.m.). We rotate around to various LGBTQ+ supportive businesses that we feel are a safe space. Safety is paramount! It is our number one concern, and it's hard not to think about it. Because we're not holding the events in a dedicated space, we feel that there is some safety in changing locales regularly.

Given the rise in violence, it's more important that we support and keep an eye out for each other. We are often specifically asked if the events are open to trans women—absolutely yes! We intend for the space to be very inclusive of all queer women as well as their allies. The bars remain open to the public so no one needs to identify a specific way to attend.

Once we coordinate the details for an event we post the events in the Facebook group. It's helpful when people click "Going" or "Interested" to the events so that the bars can staff accordingly. We're expanding this summer to "bonus" LPubs outside of the city to reach more people in different areas. We may even explore different days of the week and collaborate with other LGBTQA+ organizations. We are always open to suggestions and ideas.

### JOINING

Search on Facebook for "**Lesbian Pop Up Bar // Madison Edition**" and follow us. We post at least one event per month—usually on a Saturday at 6 p.m. Let us know if you plan to come. We hope to see you out! ■

We are often specifically asked if the events are open to trans women—absolutely yes! We intend for the space to be very inclusive of all queer women as well as their allies.



Heather Long, Alissa Gauger, and Jennifer Smith.

do you dream of a



but you only have



Christie Olsen, MSN, NP

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

EGG DONATION AND SURROGACY  
PROVEN RESULTS IN THIRD-PARTY FERTILITY



## 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.



**Shannon M. Anderson, CFP®, APMA®, ADPA®**

Financial Advisor

Eventus Wealth Advisors

A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

608.819.0520

2916 Marketplace Dr, Ste 104, Fitchburg, WI 53719

shannon.m.anderson@ampf.com

ameripriseadvisors.com/shannon.m.anderson

**Not FDIC or NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value**

CA Insurance #0G04178  
Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S. Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser.  
© 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.





one basic premise: every animal deserves basic medical support. Right now, in the United States, there are an estimated 50 million companion animals who have never received veterinary care. This number includes all the strays and barn cats but also all the animals that are owned by those who can't afford veterinary care. If all of these animals were to only receive the very basic care they need this would cost \$11 billion per year. If we also wanted to solve some basic medical problems for them it would bring that total up to \$20 billion. At WisCARES, we are tackling a tiny sliver of that problem through innovative means.

A UNIQUE SERVICE

ORGANIZERS PETS VETERINARY

# Equitable Pet Care

Queen-founded project WisCARES has been providing veterinary care to vulnerable pet families in Dane County for 10 years.

WISCARES IS HEADING INTO our 10th anniversary as a Madison institution. This is exciting news, and yet most people, especially those in our community's middle and upper classes, don't know much about us. WisCARES is an extension clinic of the University of Wisconsin Madison's School of Veterinary Medicine, and we provide veterinary care and social services to people experiencing homelessness and poverty in south central Wisconsin.

Our clinic works to keep animals and their families together when finances threaten that stability. We do this by providing veterinary care and social services to resource-constrained families, and by teaching students how to be better practitioners when clients have limited financial resources. In this way, we help our clients and their families in the present, and train veterinarians who will help families for decades to come.

The reason this work is so important to us is because we start with

Even those who know about WisCARES may not realize what a unique service we are providing on the national level. Providing access to basic veterinary care to owned companion animals is not a new field, but it is a field that is currently expanding at a rapid pace. Many minds in the U.S. are percolating on ways to supply more care for more animals with less money while also trying to solve the contradictory goal of keeping the veterinary profession financially solvent. In 2013, when the UW School of Veterinary Medicine realized the need for programmatic change, there were still relatively few organizations trying to crack this code. WisCARES began seeing patients in 2014, and from the very beginning operated in alliance with the School of Social Work, even more rare at the time. Currently, there is a growing but small niche of social workers who focus on veterinary medicine and the human animal bond.

LGBTQA+ folks have been at the forefront of creating the culture and intention behind WisCARES from the very beginning. Over time, our staff has been composed of a higher percentage of out LGBTQA+ than in the general population and while this hasn't been an intentional part of our growth, it has been an essential part of our culture. It means that the tone we set comes from a place of understanding how privilege and disadvantage can impact the lives of our clients, and words like "intersectionality" and "equity" are part of our vernacular. Cultural humility has been a touchstone as we continued to grow and evolve our workplace culture and drives our continued learning.

OVERLAPPING MARGINS

Cultural humility is important at WisCARES as people from marginalized communities in Dane County are also overrepresented in our clientele. As is true across many social services and institutions, this speaks to several complex, interwoven factors. All of our clients are experiencing poverty and about 20-40% are currently unhoused. Roughly half of our clients identify as people of color, a particularly striking number given only 15% of Dane County (WisCARES primary service area) residents identify as people of color. About 10-12% of our clients identify as LGBTQ+. Within our client base, 60-70% self-report that they experience one or more disabilities.

If you skimmed over that last number, go back and read it again.

These statistics speak to the intersecting identities and impacts of systematic disenfranchisement and oppression experienced by many of our clients. In the face of these challenges, it is important to consider the immeasurable comfort that we can receive from our fiercely loyal pet companions. That loyalty can be expressed through the general love and comfort animals give. In addition, for many people who feel unsafe, pets can also help them feel more protected. This is why WisCARES' work is so essential—helping to keep these furry family members healthy not only supports the animals, but our human community members as well.

If you have never thought about veterinary care and poverty, you are likely asking yourself the question we hear frequently, "Should our clients even own animals if they can't afford to take care of them?" It's a common question, and one that warrants digging deeper. First, we know that roughly the same percent of people own animals regardless of the social class they come from. This suggests that there is an innate desire in about 2/3 of us to share our lives with non-human companions for all the reasons one chooses to get a pet. Second, many of our clients come by their animals through a wide array of situations. Some animals are found on the street, or taken from a relative who was not caring for the pet, or inherited when a friend or family member dies, or wandered into the client's life, or came from accidental litters or are adopted from local rescues (who shipped many of these animals from stray situations in the south).

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

For a significant subset of our clients, their lives were significantly different, their finances more stable when they initially got their companion animal, and that animal has stuck with them as times have changed. In 2022, 63% of Americans self-report living paycheck-to-paycheck. An unfortunate reality in our country is that just one or two serious financial setbacks (an expensive repair, a serious medical diagnosis) can ruin you financially. At WisCARES, we have clients who got their pet before their chemo started or before their husband's stroke, and will never abandon their furry family member, even when they are losing so much else. Some of our clients also purchase their pets at great expense, and understanding the layers of chronic poverty in the U.S. also calls us to understand that everyone gets to decide how their resources are allocated.

This is why WisCARES' work is so essential—helping to keep these furry family members healthy not only supports the animals, but our human community members as well.

Regardless of how they are obtained, many animals keep their owners on their feet during the bad times, encouraging them to get up and walk them, change the litter, and offer unconditional affection. Some of our clients have told us that they are kept grounded or even alive because they have their friend to tether them to this plane. It's an honor to get to provide care to these furry family members, and to work with clients on treatment plans that serve the animal while also meeting constrained finances. Our students often return to this rotation in their veterinary training programs because of the interesting caseloads and the opportunity to work with our clients. We are always impressed with their levels of compassion and professionalism at our clinic.

Right now, WisCARES is starting some new initiatives and heading strong into our 10th year of services. We've seen nearly 15,000 appointments in that time and given nearly 10,000 vaccines to those in need. We only ask our clients to cover about a third of our revenue. Grants and stable funding cover another third, and we need community support to boost up that last third. So, if you would like to help our community thrive, please consider making a donation at: wiscares.wisc.edu/donate-money. ■

# Pets Are Family



EARTHWISE Pet SUPPLY • GROOMING • WASH LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED

## SHOP OUR TWO MADISON LOCATIONS

MADISON EAST 6071 GEMINI DRIVE MADISON, WI 53718 (608) 230-6210

MADISON WEST 3260 UNIVERSITY AVE MADISON, WI 53705 (608) 284-9007

EarthWisePetMadison.com

purrrrrsonal matchmaking for every family!



# Angel's Wish

WWW.ANGELSWISH.ORG

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

## bad dog frida

has really cool things for good dogs, cats, and their people

upcoming events

- Ask the Trainer
- Nail Trim Clinic
- Ask a Holistic Vet
- Meet-N-Greet
- Adoptable Dogs

Your local source for healthy foods and treats, nutrition advice, great gear, and unique toys.

Shop in-store or online. \$5 same-day delivery!\*

\*See website for details.





QTBIPOC CREATIVE WRITING SOUTH ASIA UW-MADISON

# The Bonds that Sustain

Akshat Sharma talks with Taymour Soomro, a Pakistani writer here on a Creative Writing Fellowship at UW-Madison, about his debut novel *Other Names for Love*, and telling authentic South Asian queer love stories.

**TAYMOUR SOOMRO** is 2022–23’s James C. McFreight Fiction Fellow at UW-Madison and author of the breathtaking novel, *Other Names for Love*. It would be facile to call it a Pakistani novel or a queer novel because while it is all these things, it is so much more. It explores masculinity, family and, really, what is it about gay dudes and their dads? There is, however, a tendency to pigeonhole writers of color as writing about one thing and speaking for an entire culture or subcontinent. “We are read differently,” as Soomro says. So we, an Indian and a Pakistani, talk about reading. Not the *Drag Race* kind, though you might be forgiven for thinking so given the seemingly perdurable animosities of our respective countries, but of reading as an act of empathy and a means of bridging gaps in how we, as a species, understand each other.



The first thing I ask Soomro during our conversation is about the provenance of the title of his novel:

“Is it in reference to how we, in Hindi or Urdu, have so many other names for love? *Preet, pyar, ishq, mohabbat*...?”

Soomro’s answer goes deeper than that. His is a novel about how men learn to love, how our relationships with our fathers may go on to define how we show affection to lovers, friends, family. The title is also in a way an indictment of Western media which doesn’t often associate Muslims and love.

“I didn’t want to write a terrorist novel...an extremist novel...there’s so much of *ishq* and *mohabbat* in Pakistan, and I wanted to write about that.”

This philosophy of multifariousness pervades Soomro’s teaching of creative writing at UW-Madison.

“What’s really important to me when I’m teaching writing is to be sensitive to [the] kind of multiplicity, the fact that we are coming from

His is a novel about how men learn to love, how our relationships with our fathers may go on to define how we show affection to lovers, friends, family. The title is also in a way an indictment of Western media which doesn’t often associate Muslims and love.

different cultures...of storytelling, that we want different things from the writing process, that we want different things from our fiction.”

If you could see the Zoom recording of this conversation, you’d see me as a bobblehead given how fervently I agree with him. He’s right, you know? Desi queer folk are susceptible to being misread, be it our etchings on a page or our lives.

As an example, the *New York Times*’ review concludes that the message at the nucleus of Soomro’s novel is “You will never, no matter how far away you get, be beyond your family’s power to wound.”

“Is this what we are supposed to take away from it?” I ask, almost timidly, fearful that I may have completely missed the point.

“Not at all!” Soomro exclaims. “It isn’t about wounding at all.”

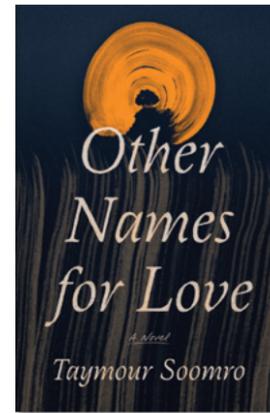
I’m glad to hear it because to me, to steal from the writer himself, the novel is about “bonds that sustain.” Certainly, those bonds have the capacity to wound, but family, I’m sure you’ll agree, is complicated.

I am reminded of the very real worry that my friends express when I travel to New Delhi or to Dubai to visit my family:

“It must be so hard for you, going to a place where “it” is still a crime...” Will you be okay?” As if a public stoning at the airport is imminent.

Soomro is kinder than I am. “I understand there is a lot of sympathy or empathy in that question, but there is also a kind of condescension...a kind of judgment.”

Soomro came out to the warm embrace of supportive parents, but we both know white gay men who are estranged from their families. Thus, the idea that this implacability regarding queerness is somehow exclusive to orthodox South Asian cultures feels like something out of Coleridge’s opium-addled imaginings. It’s vindicating for someone like



me who has long held the same delusions of a coming out conceptualized by Norman Rockwell.

Yet, cultural exchange does present itself as a bit of a two-body problem. While misreading non-white queer folk is informed by imperialist (and—fuck, I’m just gonna say it—Orientalist) biases, how are we conveying our stories?

Soomro tackles this in an upcoming anthology, *Letters to A Writer of Color*, where he and his co-editor Deepa Anparra

imagine what a creative writing program would look like were it taught by a multicultural faculty. Translation, for example, would be one of the focuses of this program.

“Translation is...something I am doing when I am writing because some of my characters...are speaking in Urdu, but I am writing what they’re saying in English.”

And it’s so much more than just words, isn’t it? How much of culture needs to be subject to translation?

Jokes aside, the point Soomro makes is an astute one because what and how much we translate when telling a story from one’s culture is an immanently political decision, “because those choices center or prioritize a certain kind of reader.”

“Do I need to explain to someone what Eid is or what Ramadan is? Or what a gulab jamun is?”

Personally, I think anyone who is in ignorance of gulab jamun should change that immediately. Seriously, put this magazine down and deal with this. Jokes aside, the point Soomro makes is an astute one because what and how much we translate when telling a story from one’s culture is an immanently political decision, “because those choices center or prioritize a certain kind of reader.”

Furthermore, I daresay it can get cringe-inductive and strangely sterile if you take, say, Khushwant Singh’s tack of using words like “clarified butter” or “onion fritters” for *ghee* or *pakora*, respectively. This also has the effect of turning a story from Pakistan or India or what have you into “a guide for a tourist...a piece of ethnography,” as Soomro puts it “as though it is to be mined for data that will then tell you something about Pakistan.”

Soomro himself faced some of this when in conversation with publishers for his novel. One of them told him that he’d have to explain what feudalism was. This is, of course, absurd. The characters in his novel, who have grown up within this system, wouldn’t bring their story to a crashing halt to stage an afterschool special about feudalism in Pakistan. Real people don’t talk like that.

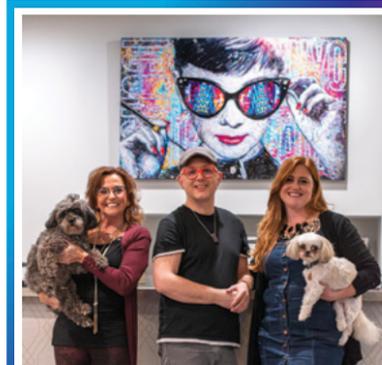
And I think that is the very nusus of Soomro’s writing: to show us as the real people we are by challenging foggy, mossbacked notions about Pakistan, queerness and desi, Pakistani queerness. There are other names for love, and you’re gonna learn today! ■



**AKSHAT SHARMA**, a proud Badger and current New Englander, did his PhD in immunology from UW-Madison. He is a Gemini, a Trekkie and a Wharton/James fanboy who spends his days coaxing tumor-dwelling T cells to choose violence. Outside the lab, you will find him, book in hand, riding the Orange and Red lines of Boston’s infamous MBTA or gazing wistfully at the many brownstones peppered across the city.

VIVIENNE ANDERSEN  
REALTOR®

V@VIVIENNEANDERSEN.COM  
608 425 0929



MOC  
Madison Optical Center

658 W. Washington Ave  
Madison, WI 53703  
608.251.2020

With over 500 unique frame styles we are here to help you find the perfect compliment to your own personal style.

DON'T JUST GO TO COLLEGE



MAKE IT YOURS!

AT GOODMAN SOUTH CAMPUS

Join the diverse, tightly knit community on our newest campus and find support for what matters most to you. Apply today.



Visit [TryMadisonCollege.com](http://TryMadisonCollege.com) or have your questions answered at 608.243.4200



# MADISON'S FIRST SHOP LOCAL TOUR!

10 shopping tour destinations throughout the year

Swag bags • Store specials • Food & Drink • Transportation



Sponsored by

**madison top company**  
your promotional products headquarters

**Dane BUY LOCAL**

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [DANEBUYLOCAL.COM](http://DANEBUYLOCAL.COM)



CONNECT → OUR ADVOCATES



ADVOCACY | PERSONAL JOURNEY | SMALL BUSINESS

## Perfectly Queer

Embracing queer celebration as a core tenet of their business, **Auntie M's Creations** owner **Nadine Mobley** has been recognized as the **Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce's 2022 Business of the Year.**

**I MET MY WIFE** in October of 2013, and we had our official first date in November of 2013. When you hear folks talk about how they “just knew” they wanted to spend the rest of their life with someone they just met, I have told folks it was likely indigestion. Well, contrary to my personal belief, that’s exactly what happened to me. I had never dated a woman before, and that was followed by nervousness with how to tell folks that after 30-some years of my life, I finally figured out the reason no other relationship worked – because I’m gay.

### HARD TO TELL

Telling my pre-teen/teen kiddos was the easiest, as they just wanted me to be happy. Telling my friends was not difficult either, as they also either wanted me to be happy or made it easy to identify folks who were not supportive. It was telling my family that was the hardest.

Several family members claimed to be supportive, until we decided to get married; these family members refused to attend our wedding because our relationship went against their religious beliefs. That moment was the first time I remember feeling raw and exposed for being who I authentically am.

A few years later, I decided to start my own small business, Auntie M’s Creations, and made it part of our vision to make sure folks felt included for being their authentic selves. I started out making handmade soaps.

After attending several artisan events, we began to add more products to our repertoire, including bath bombs, shower bombs, and shower steamers.

### MORE THAN RAINBOW WASHING

The bath and shower products eventually took center stage, and our supporting product lines pivoted to focus on affordable, luxurious, self-care and inclusivity. For example, in several of our bath bomb shapes, we have airbrushed them with rainbow colors, and they have rainbow colors inside that will spin out of the bath bomb, in the bathtub. We have done the same for several other LGBTQ+ flags, too. We also created ginger-persons, and grouped them together in pairs for same, non-binary, and opposite gender equality.

Inclusion is incredibly important to our family, as we have a very diverse household. I grew up next to a Native American reservation, immersed in Native culture, and as an adult birthed three Native American children. I’ve had my DNA reviewed through 23 and Me, and although I have 0% Native American in my DNA, most of my family is Native American, and they call me their Sister, Daughter, Mom, or Auntie.

My bi-racial children have encountered many situations with a lack of acceptance for who they are. Throughout their lives, I’ve had to show up in situations and educate folks (even teachers) on how their behaviors were contributing to a lack of inclusivity and other issues, to ensure my children (and others) were being treated fairly. This passion for inclusivity translates into my professional life with Auntie M’s Creations.

### LET YOUR FLAG FLY

The Auntie M’s Creations logo is in rainbow colors, however, that doesn’t automatically mean someone is LGBTQ+. My wife and I work most of our events together, and being our authentic selves, we 100% fit at least one of the lesbian stereotypes, so most of the time folks catch on. Despite this, there have been times folks would come to our booth making ill-placed comments regarding many current events and the LGBTQ community.

As a businessperson, it can be difficult to make that spur of the moment judgment call to educate folks, or to just decide to let it go because you can’t change someone’s mind who isn’t looking for change. Our invisible Wonder Woman cuffs aren’t as effective as they should be—and the comments still sting. So, I made the business decision to hang a flag from the side of our canopy that says, “Let Me Be Perfectly Queer.”

Over the last several years, we realized some folks were not thrilled about our flag, and there were times we received rude comments which made us think we should take it down. But we didn’t. This flag was about being a LGBTQ+ business and creating a safe space for anyone who needed to feel accepted. It is heartwarming to see folks stop by just to tell us they love our flag, or to hang out and chat and share their story. Folks just need to know they are welcomed and included, and these comments supported this part of Auntie M’s Creations’ vision.

As LGBTQ+ businesspersons, we joined the WI LGBT Chamber of Commerce and OPEN, and built relationships with other LGBTQ+ artisans and allies. Our business doesn’t have a brick-and-mortar retail location (yet); however, we still attend select events throughout the state. We have the support of our inclusive family, friends, and customers, so we can be perfectly queer. ■



Some folks were not thrilled about our flag, and there were times we received rude comments which made us think we should take it down. But we didn’t. This flag was about being a LGBTQ+ business and creating a safe space for anyone who needed to feel accepted.

# 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**

**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.**

**LAUER REALTY GROUP**

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



ADVOCATES ATHLETES DISABILITY

## Trans, Disabled, & a College Athlete

**Emmett Lockwood** holds the distinction of being the first openly transgender player on **University of Wisconsin-Madison men's water polo team**.

He is also a Disability Justice Activist with an advocacy that originates from coming to know he had no one else to be but himself.

**UNTIL I STARTED COLLEGE** never in my wildest dreams would I see myself at nineteen being a leader in Disability Justice Activism on a college campus, creating a coalition to push for a Disability Cultural Center, serving as a community builder in a queer living-learning community, or being an openly trans athlete.

I came of age in a small private school in rural New Hampshire. When you look at Phillips Exeter Academy's website, they claim a lot of lofty goals for their students such as "knowledge and goodness" and instilling students with the value of lifelong generosity through the motto "non sibi," translating from Latin to "not for one's self." It isn't written that the school turns students into disability justice activists,

or queer community builders, but attending a school that was not built for a transgender, disabled student made me realize activism is the only way I will survive in academia.

### UNCHALLENGED ASSUMPTIONS

Throughout middle school, I was an oddity to most of my teachers and peers. I was a student with an optic nerve disorder and a hearing loss. I was illiterate until the second grade, but by the time I reached middle school, I was excelling in my classes. This was in part due to my mom's fervent belief that placing me on an IEP plan or noting to teachers in any way that I was disabled would cause them to discount my abilities. That is a belief I am conflicted about but am sure if put to the test would have held true at least some of the time with the widespread ableism of the early 2000s and 2010s.

I also found my way around being labeled. I remember my peers noticing I was reading fiction books they had read a year or two prior, so I switched to exclusively reading nonfiction to hide my reading deficits. I crafted myself into a medically abnormal student instead of a disabled student. While being in non-accommodating classrooms protected me from institutional ableism, it also stripped me of a community and the ability to claim my disabled identity. In turn, internalized ableism festered.

People are now shocked that I didn't first identify as disabled until I was nearly 16. My understanding of disability was seeing the students in my non-accommodating class talk about their involvement with Best Buddies or other organizations aimed at getting able-bodied and able-minded kids to socialize with their disabled peers. I always felt alienated when students talked about these programs because many spoke of our peers like charity cases. I learned quickly that I needed to erase any sense of disability from myself to pass as able, to be seen by them as a person.

While the development of my trans identity was more subtle, I reached a similar conclusion. After a trans girl who was two years



I can exist in this system because I have a community, a community that helps me find resources and professors who will allow me to exist in their classroom.

younger than me came out and was mercilessly bullied, I knew that as much as my friends labeled me an "honorary boy," it would be a dangerous step to claim my identity as anything more than a tomboy. While growing up being labeled as a girl led me to face misogyny, this same misogyny which makes it socially acceptable for young girls to exhibit what are deemed as boyish interests gave me a space to hide as a young trans man.

### DROPPING THE ACT

In middle school, however, I couldn't hide. My peers and I began puberty, and suddenly it was becoming odd that with my physical changes, I wasn't forming an interest in wearing makeup or skirts. I realized people were expecting this of me, so I started seeing my wardrobe less as what I was comfortable in and more as a costume closet. I incessantly watched YouTube videos and read information about female puberty, because in my mind, if my body was beginning to change in ways that made me uncomfortable, I wanted to be armed with a war chest of information on how to handle it.

This all culminated in September 2017 when I entered Phillips Exeter Academy. Exeter is a highly selective-by-application private high

school, with a 10% acceptance rate (even lower for students like myself at the time who needed financial aid). I thought I was entering a school that had the best students from their middle schools, a school that by definition was built by and for the oddball nerds like me. I thought I could finally drop the act. I was so convinced of this that my last day of eighth grade felt like the curtain call at the end of a musical. I was ready to stop putting myself in a role that my body was increasingly not able to perform.

Yet, I did not know the power of old institutions. Until 2016 Phillips Exeter Academy formally had in its student handbook that it did not think Exeter was the best fit for students with disabilities due to their unwillingness to make simple administrative changes to allow for academic accommodations. In the deed of gift the founders of Phillips Exeter Academy, Elizabeth and John Phillips, state that Phillips Exeter is meant to be a school for "youth from every quarter." Yet with the most recent data from the CDC claiming that 26% of American adults are disabled, Phillips Exeter Academy is meant for only three-quarters of the population.

### I AM ME

I came to quickly know that even on a campus full of nerds, I was still one of the few students who outwardly called myself trans and disabled. And I understand why between debating science teachers about the fact that their biology degrees hadn't taught them about my disabilities didn't mean my conditions don't exist, to having students wait outside my accommodated testing spaces to ask me if I was faking my disability to get into college, to having the faculty head of my dorm tell us that we needed to ask our friends about their genitalia to determine whether we were allowed to have them in our rooms, to having a school nurse while helping me administer my HRT shot repeatedly calling me "Emma" and using she/her pronouns when referring to me.

I had multiple adults tell me it would be easier if I just waited till college to get accommodations in the classroom and be open about my gender identity, but I had already hidden for too long and frankly did not have the energy required to falsely present as an able, cis female anymore. Left with the choice between facing transphobia and ableism but pretending I wasn't, or making it everyone's problem, I chose the latter. I got tried by fire advocating for disabled and trans students in an institution that valued itself on creating Ivy League graduates and Wall Street professionals.

I don't think I ever made the conscious choice of becoming an activist. It just all got to a point where I felt like I couldn't exist at this institution knowing that if I silently went

through, then another student after me would face the same harm. I scraped together enough students to form the Exonians with Disabilities Association (EDA) and met with any teacher or administrator who would give me their email or 30 minutes of their time. I got told by our campus learning specialist that he thought "disabled students don't need community." I finally got the school to extend the five-minute passing period on our multi-building campus to 15 just for them to announce they were changing it back the week after I graduated.

### I CAN EXIST HERE

I find it odd now when people come up to me and tell me I am "brave," "outspoken," or "doing such good work" because I was doing that work in high school yet instead of being "brave," or "outspoken," the work I was doing was seen as "unnecessary" or "destructive to institutional prestige." I remember the only openly identifying disabled teacher—Mrs. LaPointe, a cis female health teacher who continues to try to improve how she teaches gender-inclusive sex education—took me and my then-partner out to barbeque during my final week of senior year. Mrs. LaPointe reassured me that college couldn't be worse than high school because at least they had to follow the Americans with Disabilities Act. And Mrs. LaPointe was right.

While UW-Madison is a university built on stolen Ho-Chunk land, exists in the system of academia that privileges knowledge and ways of knowing that have been cultivated by cis, straight, white, abled men—and has actively and recently perpetuated harm against marginalized students—I can exist in this system because I have a community, a community that helps me find resources and professors who will allow me to exist in their classroom. I can say in class that I am trans and disabled. My outspokenness comes from a place of a 16-year-old who knew they needed to be himself. ■



# NETWORK WITH US

### MISSION

OPEN welcomes diverse LGBTQ+ and allied professionals to share perspectives and experiences in connecting, developing, and building a vibrant community.

### VISION

OPEN believes in demonstrating personal and professional leadership as stewards of an inclusive community where all are equal and valued.

Career Resources

Exclusive Events

Discussion Boards

Job Board

Featured Members

Networking

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.

LEARN MORE AT

**OPENMADISON.ORG**



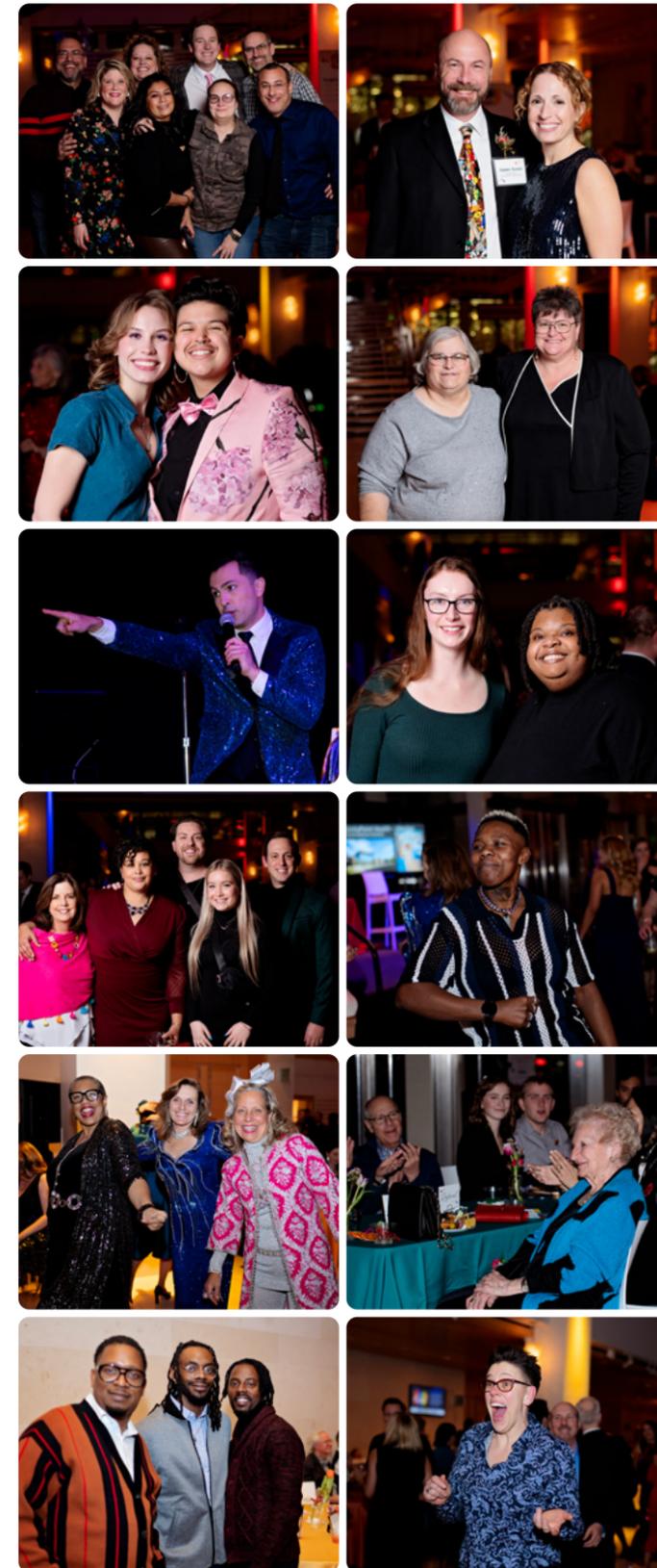
HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

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



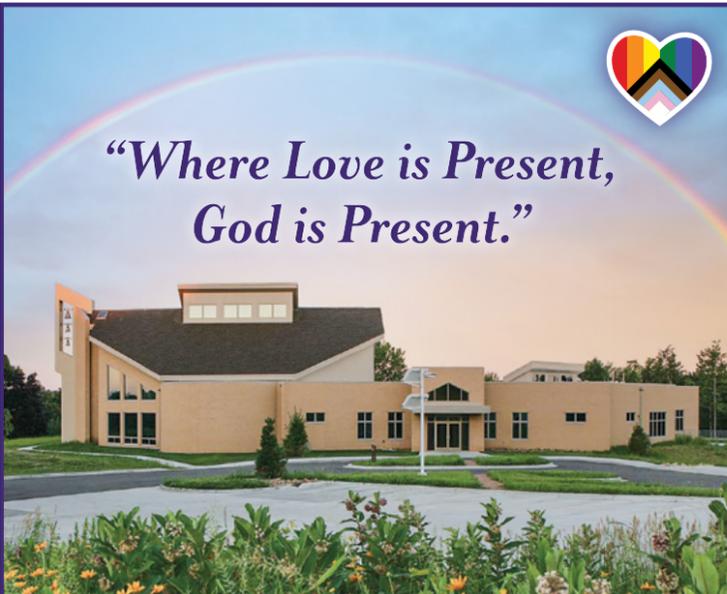
Looks like it's...  
**TIME 2 REMODEL**  
time2remodel.com

FEBRUARY 3 Love is Love at Overture Center



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

Vivent Health is steadfastly dedicated to serving anyone and everyone affected by HIV through our comprehensive prevention, care and treatment programs. **Learn more at [ViventHealth.org](http://ViventHealth.org)**



*“Where Love is Present,  
God is Present.”*

### All are welcome...

- Walk 4 miles of trails
- Weddings
- Baptisms
- Prayer & worship
- Retreats
- Meetings & events

[HolyWisdomMonastery.org](http://HolyWisdomMonastery.org)

  
Holy Wisdom Monastery  
  
Find us on Social Media  
Middleton, WI

# It's our differences that make us great.

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



**Jim Hartman Ins Agcy Inc**  
Jim Hartman, Agent  
5706 US Highway 51  
Bus: 608-838-4171  
[www.jimhartman.com](http://www.jimhartman.com)





Inside the Parlor Hotel.



# A Rural Oasis

Princeton-raised **Matthew Trotter** is building a purposefully curated ecosystem that both lifts up his home town's history and celebrates a queerer version of up-north culture.

ARTS & CULTURE TRAVEL ACCOMMODATIONS FOOD & DINING

**LESS THAN AN HOUR AND A HALF NORTH** of the Wisconsin State Capitol, between Montello to the west, and Ripon to the east, past a number of Trump signs, a green "Princeton: Population 1267" marker, and a giant chicken atop a shed with the word "Liberty" painted on the side, you will find a surprising host of handsome, Wisco-hip businesses.

The primary visionary behind these hidden gems is Matthew Trotter (Matt to his friends, and no relation to Charlie). Before he made his place, growing up in rural Princeton had some challenges for Trotter. He was different from most of his peers, as he was heavily into art and music. It turns out those are precisely the interests that have made him the success he is today.

For Trotter, as for many creatives, age is just a number, and from a young age he forged friendships with cool people who brought funky businesses to town, places like Twister and Mimi's, for example, whose proprietors employed and mentored Trotter, valuing him for who he is, since he was 15 years old. Many are familiar with what it feels like to be outside the mainstream during those adolescent years, but as Trotter knows, "It gets better."

## RETURN TO RURAL ROOTS

According to Trotter, his mother thought that of all her four children, he would be the first one to move as far away as possible. Instead, his siblings have all relocated elsewhere, and he is the one who returned home after college to re-establish roots in the area.

Trotter attended UWM where he primarily focused on art and design, beginning with film then exploring fiber arts, jewelry, and graphic design. He studied under esteemed fiber artist, Kyoung Ae Chow, jewelry and metalsmithing professor Yevgeniya Kaganovich, and many other

The lovely thing about Trotter's assortment of establishments is that it has everything one could ask for in a "branded immersive experience" including: great arts and culture, a coffeehouse and farm-to-table restaurant, necessities and niceties.

important Wisconsin teaching artists. He learned a lot in Wisconsin's biggest city, and in 2012 moved back to his hometown to start his first business, a retail store he named Teak & Soxy.

Trotter is somewhat of a contemporary regionalist, using his artistic talent to celebrate the return to rural and to highlight Wisconsin's agricultural and industrial roots. He makes small town living look highly inviting and effortless—even enviable. He disputes the stereotype that small towns are inhospitable to LGBTQ folks. In the spaces he manages, all are welcome. Trotter's skilled training, strong sense of place, and

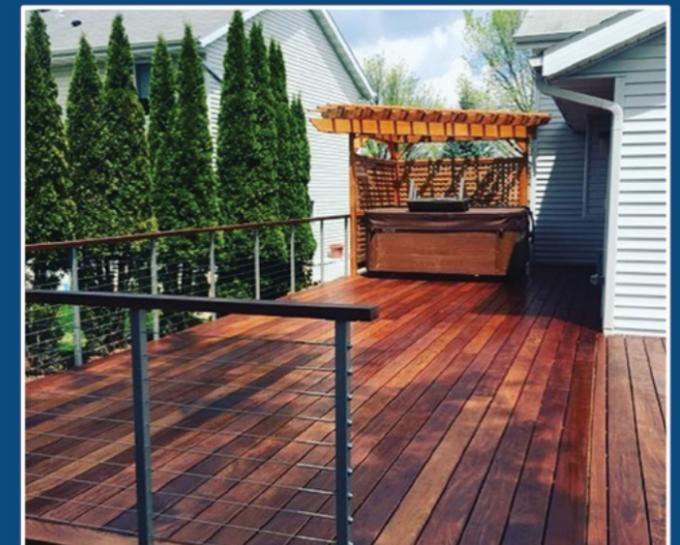
*Make Room for Love*



*Mara Lee Olson*  
DESIGN STUDIO

maraleeolsondesignstudio.com

WHEN CLEANLINESS, POLITENESS AND TRUST MATTER.



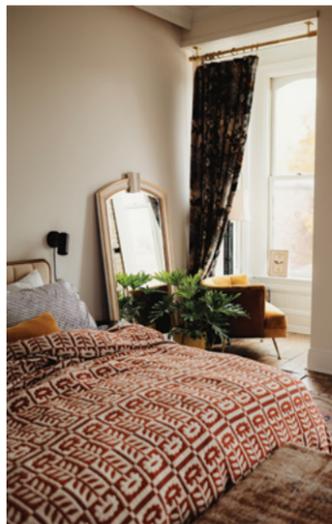
**QUIGLEY** **FREE**  
Decks Onsite Consultation to readers of OL Magazine!

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

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



Scenes from inside the Parlor Hotel.



close friendships are proving to be a winning combination. The resulting businesses that he has established over the last 10 years (especially with the boost that bringing on new business partners, Alex and Sarah Pearsall, gave them) are a perfectly curated, comfortable, eclectic, and versatile mix of spaces and functions that are tough to describe.

Remember the queer owned and run “Rose Apothecary” in the sitcom *Schitt’s Creek*? That store could have been inspired by Trotter’s business model. In one scene, *Schitt’s Creek* character David Rose, played by Dan Levy, explains why he will succeed running a store where others have

failed. David boasts that it is because he is, “Someone with faultless taste who understands what people want and need.” The same could be said for Mathew Trotter, though to be clear, he opened his first retail space long before *Schitt’s Creek* was even a fragment in Dan Levy’s imagination.

To continue borrowing the fictional “Rose Apothecary” as a metaphor for Trotter’s conglomeration of businesses, at one point David Rose’s boyfriend, Patrick Brewer, a character played by Noah Reid, is helping David fill out the paperwork for a loan that calls for a “brief description

of the business.” David replies, “It’s a general store, but it’s also a very specific store. It is also not just a store. It is also a place where people can come and get coffee or drinks, but it’s not a coffee shop, nor is it a bar.” He goes on to say, “It’s an environment, and yes, we will be selling things, but it’s more like a branded immersive experience.”

**NEEDFUL THINGS**

“Branded immersive experience” is a perfect description for Mathew Trotter’s budding emporium which includes retail, food, performance space, and lodging. The combo forms a lux, queer-friendly oasis smack dab in the middle of rural Wisconsin. At 505 W. Water St., Horseradish Kitchen + Market (K+M), Teak & Soxy, and The Merchant Room are a restaurant/summer music venue, retail space, and Airbnb, respectively. They are all on the south side of the road, abutting a horseshoe curve in the Fox River. Across the street, at 544 W. Water St., The Parlor Hotel, is a small, freshly renovated, boutique hotel that can accommodate 16 people for overnight lodging, and far more in the multi-purpose parlor.

Teak & Soxy, the charming retail space Trotter opened in 2012, is now being absorbed into Horseradish K+M, but those who knew Trotter when he began that first business, know the distinction. Now occupying a small white storefront between the restaurant and a neighboring property, the small but mighty Teak & Soxy hits the spot for those who desire aromatic candles and handcrafted goods from independent makers and designers. The merch’s contemporary palettes add to the appeal for people who follow current trends and those whose tastes, preferences, values, and lifestyles lean unconventional.

A striking art collection by a variety of artists abounds, from Manlio Guberti-Helfrich, a highly exhibited Italian modernist, to the works of Wisconsin-connected artists such as Maura Koutoujian, Raphael Salas, and Lauren Paradise (LP), all personal friends or acquaintances of Trotter’s.

Horseradish, opened in May of 2018, has a similar lush vibe. What started in 2015 as the cutest little yellow awning-clad food truck serving specialty sandwiches, evolved into a bricks-and mortar-restaurant with a full kitchen when Alex Pearsall came on board and brought with him the Chicago-based architectural firm Filoramo Talsma. As soon as you enter, you are greeted by a distractingly large Jim Dine print of Pinocchio. A striking art collection by a variety of artists abounds, from Manlio Guberti-Helfrich, a highly exhibited Italian modernist, to the works of Wisconsin-connected artists such as Maura Koutoujian, Raphael Salas, and Lauren Paradise (LP), all personal friends or acquaintances of Trotter’s.

Paradise, one of Trotter’s favorite local artists, and one of his many mother figures, lives nearby. She grew up in Italy because her mother worked in Europe as an archaeological restorationist. Some of the most impressive works in the buildings are from Paradise or her mother’s collection. Paradise and Trotter even made collaborative works of various tropical leaves reflective of plants in the space. These simple pieces in which Paradise made the primary gestures and Trotter filled in those outlines with pastels, are cleverly clipped to peg boards and hung above the wainscoting in the dining area.

Scottie, at the front of the house, is credited by Trotter as being “the personality of Horseradish,” serving up what Trotter describes as “lighter, fresher, healthier” fare. Below the counter an old Princeton Population sign says 1504, which is a couple hundred inhabitants higher than the current population, a depopulation trend Trotter would like to see reversed.

Free consultation  
608-838-2500  
trysunset.com



From design, to materials, to master craftsmanship... we do it right and give you Peace of Mind, Every Time!

- Siding
- Roofing
- Ice Dam & Repair Services
- Windows
- Doors
- Decks
- Gutters

4761 McFarland Court, McFarland, WI 53558

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



Trotter with staff at the Horseradish Kitchen + Market.



Horseradish Kitchen + Market.



Teak & Soxy.

Toward the back of the building, the owners opened up the back wall, replacing it with a screened deck and full glass garage doors, unmasking a million-dollar view. From the deck, one can look out at the Fox River and the adjacent nature preserve. By orienting the space toward the Wisconsin wilderness instead of the street, visitors, especially in summer, get what Trotter calls “a huge hit of green.” The porch also includes a small stage where they host a popular summer music series called “Sunday Sessions” from June through August, on Sunday evenings 7 to 9 p.m.

Upstairs, Trotter and his partner live in one apartment, with their dogs Felix, a pit/boxer mix, and Benny, an adorable black lab puppy. On the other side of the hall is a spacious, well-appointed two bedroom (three bed) Airbnb replete with river views, retro modern kitchen, transom windows, functioning vinyl record player, and of course great artwork on the walls along with a collection of photos related to Trotter’s great grandparents’ factory.

His great grandmother, Martha, started knitting wool socks and adding leather soles to them almost 100 years ago. Her slipper socks were

eventually sold as Muk Luks. The patent to her design was sold before Trotter was born, leaving him with no stake in the modern day company, but Muk Luks were once big business in Princeton. The knitted footwear looked much like the mukluks of arctic indigenous peoples, which were traditionally made out of caribou or sealskin. Muk Luks original designs mimicked their similar function and appearance in a way that today would be challenged as appropriate. Hopefully, acknowledging this opens a conversation about our colonial legacies and their influences on shaping our current society.

**STEP INTO THE PARLOR**

The night I visited, Trotter and his partner, Greg, were preparing for a Phil Cook concert at The Parlor Hotel. The main floor was set up with an eclectic mix of seating, from a stuffed brown leather couch to 1970s orange lounge chairs with chrome frames, all oriented toward the piano in the front corner. Cook was warming up just as the afternoon’s golden light bounced off a disco ball, creating gumball-sized yellow polka-dots



Trotter with his partner, Greg Wright, in the Parlor Hotel lobby.

The Parlor Hotel occupies a former dry goods store that was built in 1868. The rooms are spacious and inviting and hold king and queen beds with fine linens. The architect and design team capitalized on the flooring’s natural patinas when selecting the wallpaper and paint colors. The bathrooms use classic black and white tiles. Antlers, vintage objects, old books, and a framed retro bowling score card, are blended with modern conveniences in a seamless fashion.

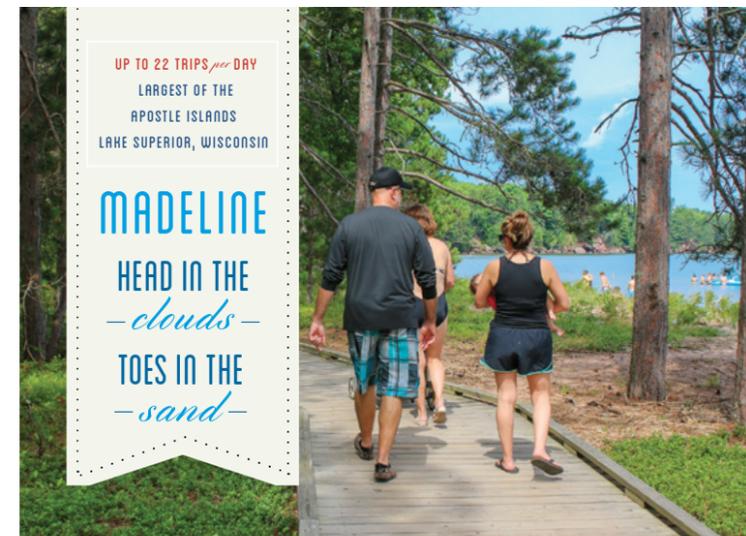
that matched both Cook’s shirt and the mid-century mustard-cushioned dining chairs that made up part of the evening’s ticketed seats. Trotter and I squirreled away on the second floor of the hotel so our conversation would not interfere with Cook who was warming up ahead of his gig.

The Parlor Hotel occupies a former dry goods store that was built in 1868. The rooms are spacious and inviting and hold king and queen beds with fine linens. The architect and design team capitalized on the flooring’s natural patinas when selecting the wallpaper and paint colors. The bathrooms use classic black and white tiles with locally made synthetic marble caps from Elite Marble, Montello. Antlers, vintage objects, old books (grouped by color, of course), and a framed retro bowling score card, are blended with modern conveniences in a seamless fashion. The Parlor Hotel even has a small gym where Trotter plans to add a cross-trainer and other equipment in the near future. A private offshoot from that room has a bodywork table for guests who want to hire an in-house massage therapist for a spa-like experience.

Matthew Trotter, his business partner, and his many friends are bringing new life to Princeton with these community-centered enterprises. The lovely thing about Trotter’s assortment of establishments is that it has everything one could ask for in a “branded immersive experience” including: great arts and culture, a coffeehouse and farm-to-table restaurant, necessities and niceties. It is perfectly located near nature and reflects the area’s rich and complex heritage. For those who seek a taste of nostalgia with au courant design, Horseradish and The Parlor Hotel are a must-visit destination. The pilgrimage to Princeton, from wherever you hail, is well worth the trip. Keep in mind that the concerts sell out and word is spreading about the hotel’s soft opening, so you should probably plan your getaway soon. ■



**KARIN WOLF** is an arts administrator, freelance arts writer, and consultant. She likes to get deep and try to understand complex art, people, and ideas. Writing about them is her favorite way to do so. She has a M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and undergraduate degrees in History, History of Cultures, and Afro-American History.



**MADLINE ISLAND** *come over*  
 HIKE • BIKE • SWIM • HAYAK • RELAX • CANOE  
 MADFERRY.COM 715-747-2051  
 MADELINEISLAND.COM 715-747-2801  
 20 MINUTES: BAYFIELD, WISCONSIN TO MADELINE ISLAND

Get a New View from  
**Kool View** PRE-SEASON SALE - 15-25% OFF



**PERGOLAS**



**SUNROOMS**



**SCREEN ROOMS**

**SCREEN ROOMS - PORCH ENCLOSURES - DECKS - PERGOLAS - AWNINGS - SUNROOMS**  
 SHOWROOM HOURS - MONDAY- FRIDAY 8-4, SATURDAY BY APPOINTMENT  
 4701 TRIANGLE ST. MCFARLAND, WI 53558  
 FINANCING AVAILABLE  
 608-222-7777  
 WWW.KOOLVIEW.COM



DRAG HISTORY MILWAUKEE NIGHTLIFE

## Their Show Isn't Over Yet

Remembering Jackie Roberts (1972–2017) &amp; Rudi D'Angelo (1972–2014).



Jackie Roberts



Rudi D'Angelo



*"We think about you always, we talk about you still. You have never been forgotten, and you never will."*

### JACKIE ROBERTS

**JACKIE ROBERTS (1972–2017)** was born John Paul Jaccard. While attending Milwaukee High School of the Arts, she and classmate Rudi D'Angelo hung out at Club Marilyn's Teen Night. One fateful Sunday in May 1989, they were invited to join a group of Milwaukee Ballet employees who could "get them in" at La Cage (801 S. 2nd St.) They returned two weeks later with friends from school, and in many ways, never really left.

"I was fascinated with the star performers of that era: Holly Brown, Goldie Adams, Mimi Marks. You didn't see drag queens on TV. YouTube wasn't teaching kids how to contour and blend make-up. The scene was SO much more underground," said Jackie in 2009. "I just stood against a wall at the front bar, which was very dark, and took it all in!"

One week, Jackie was pulled from the audience to work the spotlight. From there, she worked her way through every job in the bar, until finally becoming a showgirl herself in February, 1990.

"Coming out to La Cage used to be such an event," she said in 2009. "People worried about their outfits all week. Was it enough? Was it ever enough? People really dressed up just to be here. This was THE original S&M bar—Stand and Model. Now, everything is too casual. I mean, sweatpants? At La Cage? That would have been unthinkable."

Jackie became the Queen of La Cage, leading its house review, and winning multiple state and regional titles over the next two decades. She is remembered for blockbuster shows at PrideFest, Brady Street Festival, and many other venues over the years.

"Drag in Milwaukee isn't what it used to be, but it ain't dead," said Jackie in 2012. "There aren't the sequins, beads, or feathers you used to see. It's not as costumey, not as grand. You used to have to earn the right to be onstage. It was a rite of passage to be accepted by your sisters for your talent and your delivery. It meant they accepted you into their circle, which was sometimes very difficult for a girl to break into. Nowadays, it seems anyone can show up in a feather boa and get booked."

While Jackie's stage performances were always stunning, many remembered her as the "Door Girl" first and foremost. She had a "love-hate" relationship with that legacy. "So many shows, so many stages, over the past 20 years, and I still have people coming up to me, saying 'you're that Door Bitch who took my fake ID away!'"

In 2013, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award and asked, "Does this mean I'm done?" But Jackie's story was far from over.

### RUDI D'ANGELO

**RUDI D'ANGELO (1972–2014)** was born Rudolpho Rogelio, Jr. She became close friends with Jackie while both were attending Milwaukee High School of the Arts in the late 1980s.

"I don't remember the first time I met Rudy Rogelio, but I know I loved him instantly," said Tiffany Herrera. "The big smile, the big laugh...I was an instant fan. Rudy and I met as teenagers, when there was still so much to figure out."

"Lots of people now see La Cage as just a club. They don't respect its impact. They don't realize what being gay in Milwaukee would have been like if there hadn't been La Cage. A lot of us would not be here today." —Jackie Roberts

"Our friends had an apartment where we all hung out. It was there Rudy put on one of my old prom dresses, a completely shapeless baggy black velvet number. I think there may have been a bad wig involved, but add some cute earrings and a hat, and off we went!"

"We were invincible back then, and boy did we act like it," said Tiffany. "Walking home at 2 a.m. after being out, mainly because we didn't have a car or any cab fare. Somehow though, with Rudy, I was never worried. Rudy and I were the same height ("5 foot short!") but both with big enough mouths to take care of ourselves, and each other, if needed."

Rudi quickly followed Jackie's lead into the showgirl life. She was nicknamed "Rudi Rudi the Mexican Beauty," "fresh and fruity," and "the girl so nice they named her twice."

"What can I say about my best friend Rudi D'Angelo?" said Gia "Lady Gia" Salazar. "I had the honor of having her in my life for 17 years. Everybody knew her as the onstage entertainer, but to me, she was a real friend who I could always count on when I needed her. She was one of the most loyal people I've ever met."

"I remember the first night we met at Club 219," said Lady Gia. "We both had our eye on the same guy. I remember we made a bet on who would land him—but oddly enough, neither of us wound up pursuing him, because we were too busy hitting it off together as instant friends."



**YOU DREAM IT  
WE MAKE IT!**

**EXPERTS IN CUSTOM DESIGN & REPAIRS**

2110 ATWOOD AVE. MADISON, WI 53704 | 608.251.7705 | JEWELERSWORKSHOP.COM

**PrEP**  
PRE-EXPOSURE  
PROPHYLAXIS

**ONE PILL,  
ONCE A DAY,  
HELPS PROTECT  
AGAINST HIV.  
REDUCE YOUR  
RISK STARTING  
TODAY!**





“She was one of the first trans women I ever met, and she taught me there was nothing wrong with being trans, and that living in my own comfortable skin was something that was meant for me,” said Lady Gia. “Thanks to her, I gained the courage to follow through with my own full transition.”

“She was the first to pull me aside and tell me my eyebrows were too thick,” said performer Jessica Daniels. “They’ve been thin ever since.”

“In hindsight, I don’t think she knew just how beautiful she was,” said Michael Todd. “She was beautiful on the inside, too. She was genuinely a nice person. In my 20 years of doing drag, Rudi was possibly one of the most beautiful queens I have ever seen.”

“I was blessed to have Rudi as a friend and in my life,” said David Kotke. “Rudi was one of the flower girls at my wedding in 2001. Their job was to delicately spread flower petals as they walked to the front. Except Rudi! She was so nervous, she wound up just taking handfuls of flowers out of her basket and tossing them at people. I’ve played that part of the wedding video many times. It brings back some laughs and tears of love.”

“A drunk Rudi was a handful,” said Adam Clasen. “Rudi usually came out with Jackie, and they stayed until closing. Rudi would insist on helping me clean up, but she kept dropping and breaking bottles behind the bar. I said, “Girl, thanks, but I think I’ve got this.”

While many remember Rudi working at a Mitchell Street thrift store, she later went back to school for nursing and found a real passion for the work.

“I lost touch with Rudi for a few years, and when we got back in touch, she was studying for her nursing degree and living right around the corner from me,” said Lady Gia. “We spent a lot of time together—

and it was like no time passed at all. I helped her study for her nursing tests, and I was proud to see her achieve her goal of a nursing degree. She was so excited and happy.”

“I remember her loving what she was doing,” said Kevin Smith. “She really had found her calling in caring for others.”

“Rudi would always find a way to stand with her head held high, strong and confident, rise above all the negativity around her, and find the goodness in life and people. She always found the goodness—sometimes after shots of tequila—but she never gave up trying.” —Lady Gia

“When I think of Rudi, I think of her support and readiness to help,” said Nova Beschta. “She always had her signature smile waiting for you—and a word of praise.”

Sadly, when Rudi’s mother died, Rudi really struggled emotionally to cope with the grief.

“She was crying on the phone, and I asked her why she was crying,” said Lady Gia. “She had an interview to join the nursing staff at St. Luke’s Medical Center, but she was sad because her mother was no longer here to see her achieve these dreams. Rudi had one of the biggest hearts you could ever find in a person. It was a blessing and a curse.”

Rudi passed away unexpectedly on February 1, 2014, leaving behind a lifetime of loving friends and fans who still miss Rudi today.

“I was able to pull together a very large memorial fundraiser at La Cage,” said Lady Gia, “but I was a little worried. In all honesty, I didn’t think many people would remember Rudi, or would come out to

celebrate her memory. To my surprise, the house was packed on every floor! There was an incredible show that evening, all the entertainers donated every single cent they made, the owners chipped in money, and there were a lot of private donations as well. The community really came together for a legend of our city. It was really a night like no other.”

CURTAIN CALLS

After Rudi’s passing, Jackie took a leap of faith and moved to Kansas City for a job opportunity. However, she was diagnosed with cancer and returned to Milwaukee in December, 2015. She bravely faced her situation, never losing her lust for life, or her gratitude for supportive and loving fans and extended family.

“Jackie was a larger-than-life person and personality,” said Nova Beschta. “Such beauty inside and out. As an entertainer, she morphed and grew with each passing year. I was so lucky to know Jackie prior to either of us starting drag. Our paths recrossed after Jackie had solidified her tenure as a queen. I had a lot to learn from her, but also a lot to teach. We shared so much that I hold dear.”

“Jackie was a force. You never had to wonder where you stood with her,” said Nova Beschta. “She was a dedicated and creative queen with a laugh that nobody could compete with. Jackie had a hard exterior with a heart of gold. Her last year of her life was her most influential and glowing year as a queen, as a friend, and as a human being.”

On January 5, 2017, Jackie was gone. A memorial service was held January 28 with a Life Celebration Memorial at La Cage on January 29. At Jackie’s request, there was no show, just a circle of friends remembering and sharing their memories of Jackie. Donations were made to Courage MKE in Jackie’s name.

On September 19, 2021, the second floor cabaret of La Cage was re-named the Jackie Roberts Show Lounge in her memory. As Jackie would say, “My show isn’t over yet.” ■

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

608-765-1001 | balislefamilylaw.com  
11 E. Main St., Suite 403 Madison, WI 53703

Dental Insurance You Can Smile About

LOCAL CLINICS. OUTSTANDING CARE.

**Momentum**  
DENTAL PLANS



Personalized and Affordable for Individuals & Families.

Enroll Online Today!  
MomentumPlans.com

608.729.6500

Locally owned and operated in Madison



7 Convenient Locations

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



Ridiculous, right?

Pay inequity makes zero sense.

Women earn only 83% of what men earn\*, with the gap often being worse for women of color. That’s more than just frustrating. It prevents women from achieving the success they are capable of. That’s why, at Summit, we’re championing pay equity, starting within our walls, and even publishing our own pay equity data on our website. When women reach their goals, it’s not just women who benefit from more stability, less uncertainty and a better quality of life – we all do.

Join us in creating a new financial future at [SummitCreditUnion.com/Equity](https://SummitCreditUnion.com/Equity)



\* Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022



Mind +  
Body Focus  
LGBTQ-  
Affirming  
Relationship  
Therapy  
EMDR  
Hypnosis



ATLASMADISON.COM  
608.535.9285

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



GOODMAN'S Jewelers  
The Diamond Store of Madison Since 1933

Dutcher

PHOTOGRAPHY  
SINCE 2002



robandsamphoto.com



MENTAL HEALTH SHAME

## Conquering Shame

Frederick Harris unpacks the impacts of queer shame and offers tools for overcoming it.

**ONE DAY**, I reached over to the water flowers that were in a beautiful, colorful vase. I accidentally knocked over the vase onto the hardwood floor, where it shattered into many pieces. Instead of discarding the shattered vase pieces, I placed them into my brown leather messenger bag.

As time went on, I realized that for every negative encounter I had with a friend, sexual partner, family member, co-worker, or stranger, I would leave behind a piece of that shattered vase. Then one day I reached into my messenger bag to grab a piece of the vase to give to someone, but my bag was empty. At that point I realized that each encounter that made me feel unworthy, inadequate, excluded, used, abused, and humiliated had received a piece of my vase. I was as empty inside as the messenger bag, with no more pieces to give.

### NAMING SHAME

This was the assignment I was told to write by my therapist many years ago. Allowing me to describe the “shame” I always carried around. I could not explain precisely what I felt, so I wrote this short story. By telling this story I could process my “shame” and realize what the shattered glass and broken pieces represented. As a young, gay, black man, I encountered people who encouraged me to change my face and body because it would make me more attractive; people who made me feel worthless because I was gay, and it was a sin, so I was going to hell; and people who told me I did not have the right to be a father because I chose to fornicate with men. I was not accepted by people I thought loved me unconditionally, but I realized my sexuality came with conditions.

There was a song I loved and hated by Christina Aguilera titled, *Soar*. In one of the verses, she says, “In the mirror is where she comes face to face with her fears. Her reflection looks foreign to her after all these years. All her life, she has tried to be something besides herself. Now the time has passed, and she’s ended up someone else with regret. What is it in us that makes us feel the need to keep



The benefits of unpacking shame allow us to feel alive again, start loving ourselves, stop seeking external validation from others, and stop just existing in life and start living with our purpose.

pretending? Gotta let ourselves be.”

The vase represented all the broken parts of myself and the person I became, whom I regretted. Giving away a piece of the vase allowed me to give away my power to those who hurt me. I realized I was beautiful through my healing journey, just like the vase. Why would I replace something that was perfect from the start? I began collecting all those shattered pieces from all those hurtful and vengeful people, putting the vase back together and reclaiming the power that was taken from me.

### POSITIVE FEELINGS INTERRUPTED

The definition of shame is “a self-conscious emotion; shame informs us of an internal state of inadequacy, unworthiness, dishonor, regret, or disconnection. Shame signals that our positive feelings have been interrupted” (Psychology Today, 2014). Shame continues to permeate throughout the LGBTQIA community. Shame within our community has created internalized hate, unworthiness, guilt, hopelessness, and fear, which leads to depression, anxiety, drug addiction, body dysmorphia, eating disorders, sexual promiscuity, traumas, self-harm, and a

drastic increase in suicide.

My story of shame began long before the shattered vase in my story, and this is true for many of us in the LGBTQIA community. I believe the time we feel we are “different” from everyone else is when the shame begins; mine began when I was around five years old. I was told I was “acting too feminine,” “boys don’t play with dolls,” “take off those heels,” and forced to play sports and speak with a deeper voice. Out of fear of being bullied, rejected by my family, and not having friends, I did what I was told. I was forced to dim my light to make others feel comfortable around me.

In the LGBTQIA community, we’re exposed to traumatic experiences in multiple areas. There are societal stigmas; discrimination; repression; rejection; and abandonment from family, friends, and community members. As we continue to be exposed to these traumatic experiences, it causes enormous stress levels, internalized shame, and internalized guilt that seriously impact our mental health.

Though we all may encounter exposures that cause trauma in the LGBTQIA community, our experiences differ in how shame has made us feel unworthy. Some religious ideologies, institutions, and communities still believe and promote the idea that being LGBTQIA is unnatural, a sin, or goes against God. Rejection or fear of rejection from friends or family can reinforce the societal stigma of being LGBTQIA. We tend to choose not to disclose our identity for fear of being rejected and losing not only the love and respect of those close to us but also the fear of losing housing, education, and financial opportunities.

To avoid societal stigma, discrimination, harassment, or assault, individuals choose to repress and not acknowledge their sexual orientation or gender identity. They chose to seek heterosexual relationships or to live as the gender they were assigned at birth despite knowing that these identities were not genuinely right for them. I can relate to repressing my identity as well. The shame I felt for the feelings I internalized about my identity forced me to seek out heterosexual relationships, which only caused me more pain, depression, and risky behaviors to survive my traumatic life.



**FREDERICK HARRIS** is the Founder and Clinical Director of New Beginnings Counseling Center. He began his career 19 years ago as a case manager at a maximum-security prison providing services to incarcerated men of color and reunifying them with their families. His direct, warm, and honest approach has been effective in building and maintaining therapeutic relationships.

I have encountered people that choose celibacy (to avoid awkward sexual encounters) or to only have sexual or romantic relationships in secret. Transgender individuals may live their day-to-day lives as the gender they were assigned at birth but then become their true identity in private. This ongoing discomfort and denial of the authentic self negatively impacts relationships with others and overall well-being, ultimately adding to any sense of stigma and shame we already feel.

### LETTING GO & NEVER GIVING UP

Mariah Carey wrote in her song *Can’t Take That Away (Mariah’s theme)*, “They can say anything they want to say. Try to bring me down, but I will not allow anyone to succeed, hanging clouds over me. And they can try hard to make me feel that I don’t matter at all, but I refuse to falter in doing what I believe or lose faith in my dreams. Cause there’s; there’s a light in me that shines brightly. They can try, but they can’t take that away from me.”

This song resonates with many in our community at some point in their lives. We have allowed people to succeed in hanging clouds over us and making us feel we don’t matter. The positive take-away from the song is not to allow anyone to falter our dreams or dim our light. The thought of unpacking shame can be scary, but it is very beneficial.

Unpacking the shame imposed starts with you, the one carrying all the shame and guilt. Shame can feel like you are carrying several bodies on your shoulders, weighing you down daily. Sometimes you feel as though it is better to give in to defeat. The benefits of unpacking shame allow us to feel alive again, start loving ourselves, stop seeking external validation from others, and stop just existing in life and start living with our purpose.

The hardest part of unpacking the shame that has manifested within yourself is deciding where to start and whom to trust. At the beginning of my healing journey, I found it challenging to look inward because I had lost so much externally. I had lost connections with family, friends, communities, and most importantly, myself. Finding a community and a chosen family (not biological) made it easier for me to process the shame. The importance of the community and chosen family allowed me to give myself permission to be vulnerable and trust again. I surrounded myself with people who understood and experienced the manifestation of shame and how that shame shaped me into a person I did not recognize.

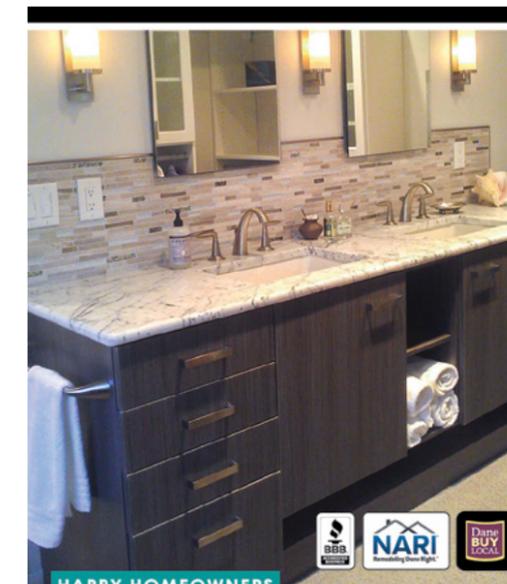
It is easier to love someone else but harder to love yourself. Finding a therapist that provided a safe place and unconditional positive self-regard was beneficial for me. I had never

shared my trauma history with anyone because I was ashamed of myself and my actions. I am not just saying seeking a therapist is beneficial because I am a therapist, but this shit works!

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALING

Therapy provided me with psychoeducation on my feelings, thinking, and the behaviors I was exhibiting. Therapy also provides support to feel less vulnerable and at-risk. People who experience trauma tend to become susceptible to being retraumatized. Identifying proactive coping tools and strategies to become less susceptible to being retraumatized, and processing the shame helps with improved mental health symptoms and effectively becoming more aware of the people we allow in our spaces.

To help elevate and manage the manifestation of shame, I recommend narrative therapy (journaling), support groups, reading about healthy and unhealthy relationships, healthy boundaries, self-esteem, and self-worth (reclaiming those parts of yourself). This part could be difficult, but I found it to be the essential part of my healing—only allowing people in my safe space that support and love me. Break away from the relationships that could continue to perpetuate the shame and guilt within yourself. For myself, it included family, friends, toxic relationships, and the wounded parts of me. ■



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

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

Looks like it's...  
**TIME 2 REMODEL**  
time2remodel.com



# D'Vino..



**APERTIVO/CICHETTI**

**BRUNCH/DINNER/LATE NIGHT**

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

116 KING STREET • RESERVATIONS@OPENTABLE

**STICKERS!!**

**Anthology**  
230 State Street, stop 1  
[www.anthologymadison.com](http://www.anthologymadison.com)  
on FB and IG @Anthology230

## The Sow's Ear



125 S. Main Street • Verona • [knitandsip.com](http://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*



CONNECT → OUR TASTE



FOOD & DINING CO-OP SPACE THIRD SPACE

## The Northside is Blooming

**Bloom Bakery** has expanded to join the new co-operative space **Northstreet**, at the intersection of Commercial Ave and North St.

**BLOOM NORTHSTREET**, a new offshoot of the popular Bloom Bakery on Monroe Street in Madison, opened in the latter half of 2022 and is a welcome addition to the ever-growing options on the northside of Madison. Traditionally a quieter side of town, the northside has seen many new additions in the past year, but Bloom Northstreet is singular in its welcoming spirit and gourmet offerings. It's also unexpectedly queer.

### SHARED SPACE

When you arrive at the space, shared with Cafe Domestique and Youngblood Brewing, you are greeted by a large, brightly colored mural exclaiming “Hey Neighbor.” Entering the building, you are directed to either the right (beer and coffee) or the left (bakery). From there, the large open windows and carefully curated decor make the new Bloom space a more welcoming and less frantic space than their original Monroe Street Location. Here, people casually sit on the vintage chairs or at the large retro table with seating that is reminiscent of days in school. It is a place to unwind, chat to your neighbor, take in the art, and take it easy.

Annemarie Maitri, the owner who just celebrated 15 years of Bloom Bake Shop, said she initially wasn't looking for a new location, but when she was working the farmers' market at Edgewood, she reflected on how much she loves the experience of connecting with people. She felt a particular connection to the northside and wanted to explore options for a permanent pop-up type space as a way to bring what was missing from the neighborhood.

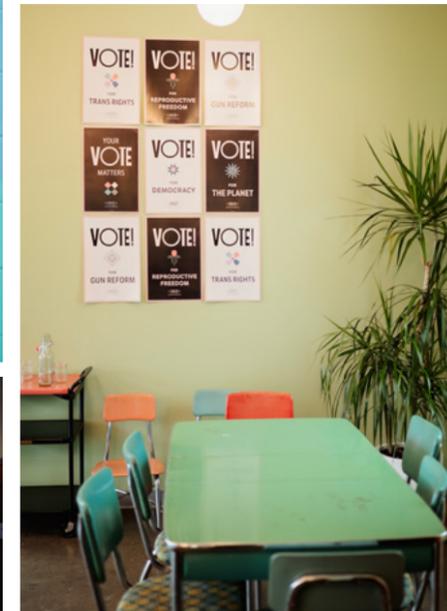
### ART, EDUCATION, AND DIALOGUE—AND PASTRIES

She was invited into the new Northstreet location, and felt it was the perfect opportunity. Bloom would only be responsible for nourishment, not beverage service, and therefore no competition between her and the other businesses moving in. She has since made the space into not only a welcoming place for people looking for quality pastries, but also artists looking to exhibit their work. She isn't afraid to put a progressive foot forward, with posters encouraging people to vote for the planet, trans rights, and gun reform. Her future vision for the space includes rotating exhibits, maker spaces, maker markets, and other activities to further education and dialogue.

Rebecca, the manager for the location, shares Annemarie's vision, saying she feels like everyone is so happy when they come in, and she really relishes the diversity of the neighborhood. The collective of businesses at Northstreet send out a vibe, she explained, that they are working together to celebrate nature, food, and local business. She can't wait for the weather to clear so they can start using their outdoor space for local vendors, flowers, and education. Rebecca reflected on the tough time we've all gone through these past few years, and wants to enrich people's lives on the northside with a welcoming space and delicious pastries. ■



Annemarie Maitri and Rebecca outside Northstreet.



Bloom to the left, Cafe Domestique and Youngblood Brewing to the right at Northstreet.

*“I love working at Ulla because I get to be part of an amazing team that is passionate about what they do. I have so much fun meeting members of our community and styling them with unique eyewear.”*

Alia Younes  
Optician



**ULLA**  
EYEWEAR

HILLDALE SHOPPING CENTER  
562 N Midvale Blvd  
MON-SAT 10a-7p : SUN 11a-5p  
[www.ullaeyewear.com](http://www.ullaeyewear.com)



# GOOD THINGS FOR PLAYING IN THE DIRT

**Seeds, seedlings, soil, compost, seed-starting supplies and more!**

Local & organic vegetable seedlings available this spring!



**VOTED:**  
**#1 Health Food Store**  
**and**  
**#2 Grocery Store!**

[www.willystreet.coop](http://www.willystreet.coop)

**willy street co-op**



**willy street co-op**



COMING OUT YOUTH ACTIVISM

## For the Better

**Jaime Toberman** is a member of **GSAFE's Youth Activist Council (YAC)** and wants us all to imagine embodying change.

**NOBODY EVER TELLS YOU** when you first come out of the closet that you're never done. Whether you discover you're not what you first thought or you meet new people, coming out can feel never-ending. I've had four big coming out moments, but in retrospect, I've come out several times a week since seventh grade when I first realized I wasn't straight.

VENTURING OUTSIDE THE HETERONORMATIVE

I first learned what gay was toward the end of elementary school when I went to my cousin's wedding. My parents tried to explain it to me, but I didn't understand. They recall me asking where the bride was during the ceremony. I didn't see any LGBTQ+ representation until middle school.

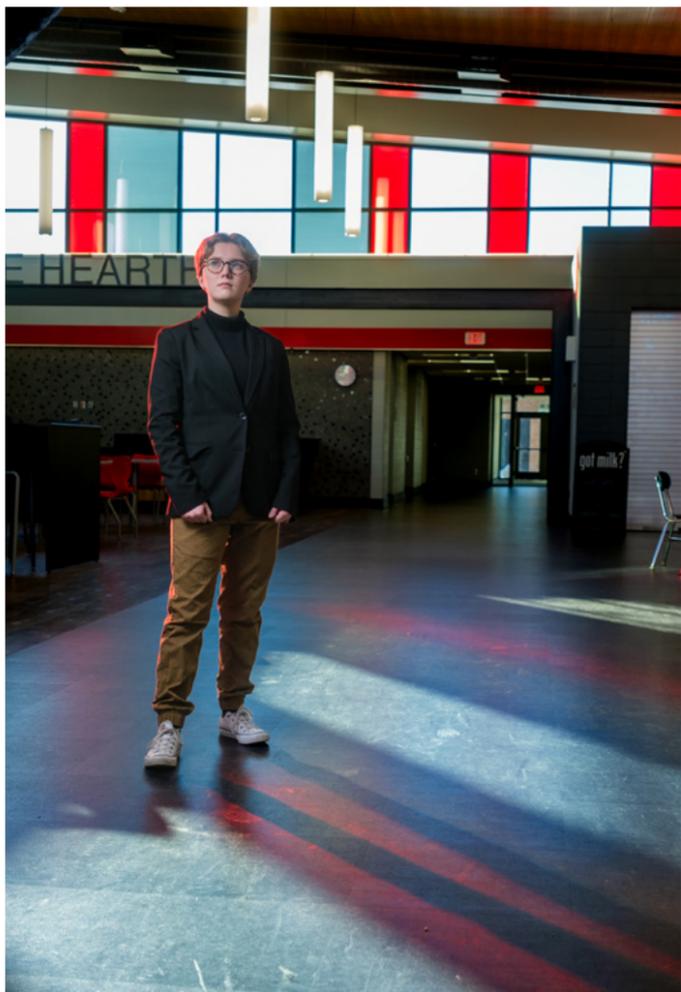
In seventh grade, a friend of mine came out to me as gay and wanted to join our grade's GSA but didn't want to go alone. We both went the following week. While our group only had a handful of members, I found a community of kids who didn't fit into our heteronormative society and didn't care. I found a home where I could be myself every Tuesday at lunch, a safe space to learn about the LGBTQ+ community without judgment or ridicule. Later that year, I realized that I was no longer a closet ally but a member myself, which was both a freeing and terrifying discovery.

CHANGE IS THE TRUTH

My identity bounced around the LGBTQ+ spectrum in eighth and ninth grade. I have identified as L, G, B, T, Q, and a couple more. It's something I wish was more normalized. Not everyone knows what they identify as from the beginning, some of us spend years or even decades trying to figure out who we are. I struggled to figure out my sexuality for years until I realized I was transgender.

Looking back on who I was as a freshman in 2019, I hardly recognize myself. I'm finally at a place where I feel comfortable in my own skin and feel safe speaking up and advocating for myself and others. Coming out as non-binary as a sophomore lifted a massive weight off my chest, but my most significant shift in life occurred in my junior year when I applied to be a member of GSAFE's Youth Activist Council (YAC). My GSA advisor heard about this new activist group forming and encouraged me to apply.

I never thought I would get in, especially because I haven't had the same opportunities students from the Madison area have had. I grew up in Baraboo and go to school at Sauk Prairie, a politically divided school in a rural community, where you can find a cornfield three blocks from the high school. How would I compare to kids at MMSD, a more progressive and urban environment? The thing is though, I was accepted. My membership in YAC changed my life and allowed me to meet so many amazing people. Together, we formed a community even more close knit than the one I found in seventh grade. YAC became my family.



LEADING TOWARD THE FUTURE

This past July, I was a peer mentor at GSAFE's Leadership Training Institute (LTI), and let me just say this: If you are an underclassman in high school who wants to become a better activist and change the world, attend LTI. It will change your perspective on life, you will meet people from all over, and you'll never want to leave.

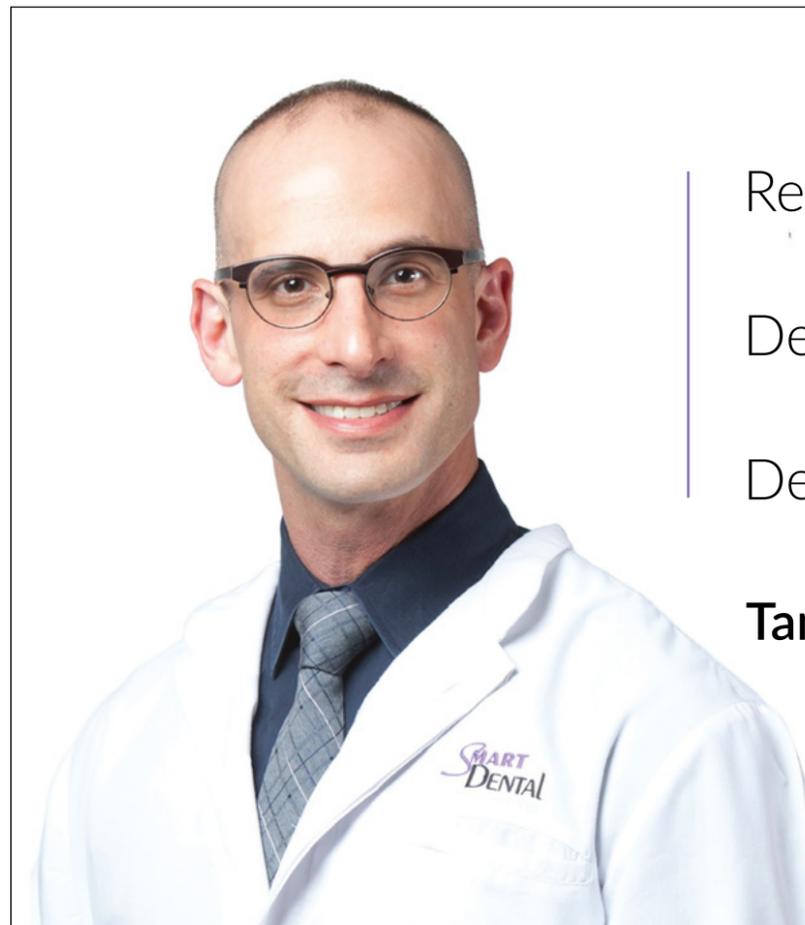
My group was the best, and I'm not saying that because I was in it. We were able to have such open and deep conversations about sexuality, race, and gender where everyone spoke their truth and learned from others' experiences. It's rare these days to have hard conversations without someone shutting down and tuning out.

These days though, I'm working on finishing up my senior year, spending most of my time focused on my college plans for next year, and applying for scholarships. I also want to leave this school knowing it has changed for the better because of me—and will continue to change after I'm gone. I'd like to think I've left my mark, not because I was president of GSA, not because I was the loud kid who called teachers out on the common microaggressions occurring in their classes, but because I made a real change. I hope I've inspired students to come out, and I sincerely hope our school is now a safer place for everyone to be authentically themselves. My life goal is to leave a legacy that inspires people to change the world, but first, I have to go and change it myself. ■

# TAKE A SMART STEP TO A HEALTHY SMILE

## SMART DENTAL

### CALL TODAY (608) 241-8782



Recruiting Top Talent!

Dental Hygienist

Dental Assistant

**Tamim Sifri, DDS**

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



# Home Equity Helps You Get Out Of Your Home What You Put In.

**Start enjoying the benefits of homeownership** with a home equity line of credit from UW Credit Union. Our low introductory rates allow you to quickly and easily access up to 100% of your home's equity, so you can get the funds you need, for just about whatever you need—including home remodels, debt consolidation, or school tuition. Apply online or talk to one of our experts today, and discover what possibilities your home could be hiding.



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

