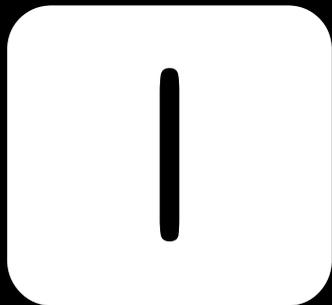


our lives



Plus:

The Soldier's Wife

An intimate insight into the life of a military family

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A couple on their open adoption process

Health Insurance Coverage

Tamara Packard on the cost of domestic partner benefits

January
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2010

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

THE SECOND ANNUAL LOVE ISSUE

How Love Felt

A Story About First Love

by Patrick Farabaugh



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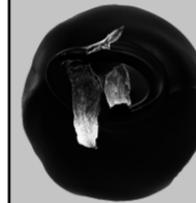
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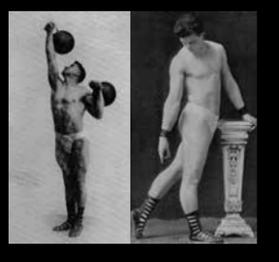
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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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January/February 2010 Volume 3, Issue 4
Life in the Middle Publishing, LLC
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Publishers. 215 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.,
Box 1202, Madison, WI 53701

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Gay & Lesbian Consumer Index™

Community Marketing, Inc. (CMI), the San Francisco-based gay and lesbian research, marketing and communications firm, released the most comprehensive LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) market research report ever conducted, the **Gay Consumer Index™** and the **Lesbian Consumer Index™**, in September 2009. The study was co-produced by Rivendell Media and sponsored by Absolut.

Community Marketing, Inc.'s **Gay & Lesbian Consumer Index™** study gathered a total of 30,338 complete responses. Over 400 respondents reside in the Madison area, and some of the respondents are bisexual, transgender or straight allies.

Our Lives Demographics

To request a copy of the full report (almost 100 pages), contact the publisher at pfarabaugh@ourlivesmadison.com. Please put **LGBT Consumer Index Results** as the subject of your e-mail.

Total Respondents	422
Sample Demographics Include...	
Median age	45
In relationships and living together	50.4%
Have a bachelor's degree or higher	73.2%
Have children under age 18 living in home	10.8%
Approx. annual household income	\$75,000
Is mid to senior level management at work	57.6%
Owens a single family home	59.0%
Rents an apartment	38.1%
Sample Key Findings Include...	
Probably/Definitely want to get married	64.6%
Already are married	15%
Works out 3+ hours per week	54%
Spends \$20+ weekly in restaurants	83.8%
Spends \$50+ weekly in restaurants	47.8%
Owens their car	85.8%
Took 2+ vacations or leisure trips in the past year	67.1%
Took 1+ round trip flights in the past year	70.5%
Lives with a cat	30.9%
Lives with a dog	27.3%
Responded from ZIP Code 53703	12.6%
Responded from ZIP Code 53704	15.5%
Responded from ZIP Code 53711	6.7%
Responded from ZIP Code 53713	5%
Responded from ZIP Code 53714	4.1%
Responded from ZIP Code 53719	3.8%

publisher

Love Conquers All



This is without question the most personal issue I will ever produce of this magazine. It's taken me years to find the courage to write about this one thing in my life that I think was a major catalyst for shaping me into the person I am today. I was incredibly close to running my piece anonymously until I backed away from it enough to see why it was necessary for me to write it in the first place.

Growing up, I lived in terror of my gay identity. All I had was absolute fear of who I was and of the life that was in front of me.

It wasn't until I fell in love (and most importantly, felt loved for who I am) that I felt like I had found the validation and support I needed to celebrate my life and the courage to embrace it.

Many in our community have been socialized to feel shame around our sexuality and that has had a very damaging effect on our health and our coming out processes. When I was closeted I needed to see others who were like me have the courage to live openly and honestly to show me life could be OK. Letting this story be told has been a very powerful and freeing act of self-liberation. It's my hope that putting my name on it begins a ripple that can have the same effect for some who choose to read it.



In the short life of this magazine I've only published two stories anonymously—almost three, if you consider my own in this issue. It's been an interesting realization that all three of them have been about love. I don't quite know what that means just yet, but I suspect that there is a reason things have worked out that way.

In the case of the story in this issue that *is* anonymous, my heart goes out to both the soldier and her wife. The story they tell is a gift to us all and offers a candid insight into oppression—and even more so the strength we have inside us to fight for what we believe is most worth fighting for ... our capacity to love.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. It's meant to be an affirmation to us all.

With love,

Patrick Farabaugh

PUBLISHER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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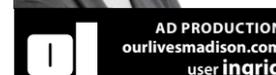
Linda Lenzke gratefully chose Madison as her home 35 years ago and has been an active member of its LGBT community. She is a Business Development Manager whose avocations are writing poetry and spoken word performance. Linda volunteers with OutReach and co-facilitates the Women4Women group. Her newest passion is her role as an interviewer for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Project where she is collecting personal narratives of Madison's lesbian community from the 1960s to the present.



Marcelle Richards loves to dish and tell. She sometimes even writes about it. In her quest for the best foodie hotspots in town, she has been known to endure grueling tests of will before deli cases, and feats of fortitude in chocolate consumption. In her spare time, she also writes a food column for Isthmus and hosts the Gastropocalypse Test Kitchen (gastropocalypse.com). She was a food crewmember for ACT 6 and ACT 7, and this year plans to put her hams to the test as a rider. She lives in Madison with her partner, Sid, and their well-fed dogs, Ringo and Claire.



Ingrid Ankerson grew up on a small farm in Washington County where she learned to bring a big imagination, strong work ethic, and an honest, optimistic approach to everything she does. After working as Fair Wisconsin's internet director for the campaign against the ban on civil unions and marriage, she established Ankerson Communications in early 2007 to provide professional, affordable graphic design to political, nonprofit, and social justice organizations. She lives on the east side in a 125-year-old bungalow with her partner Megan, and their son, Clyde.



Amber Sowards is a documentary photographer and a recent graduate from Maryland Institute College of Art with her MFA in photography. Her thesis was a year-long project of documenting her family. Amber photographs intimate portraits of people in their natural environments.

Originally from Baltimore, she moved to Madison with her partner Mel, a PhD student at the University of Wisconsin. When not hibernating from the snow and cold, she can be found walking around the East side's Willy Street neighborhood that she now calls home.



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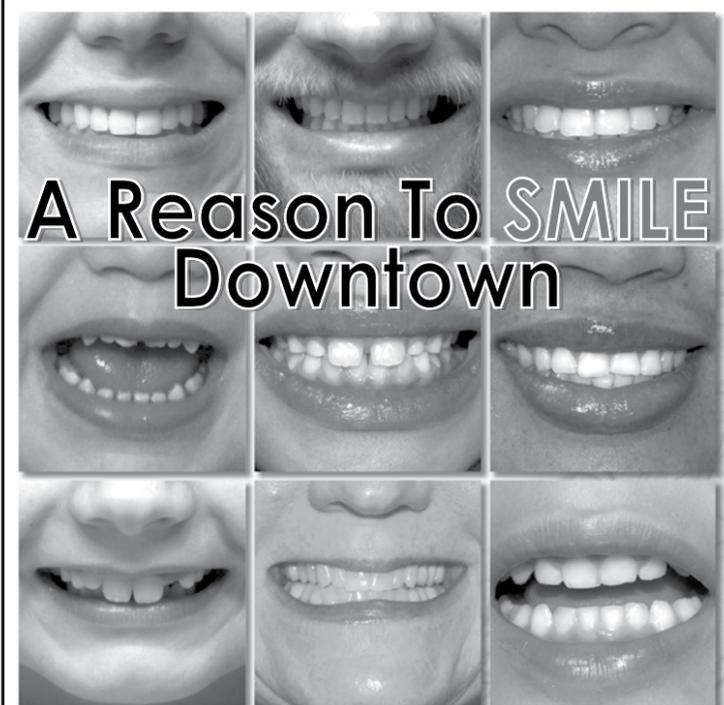
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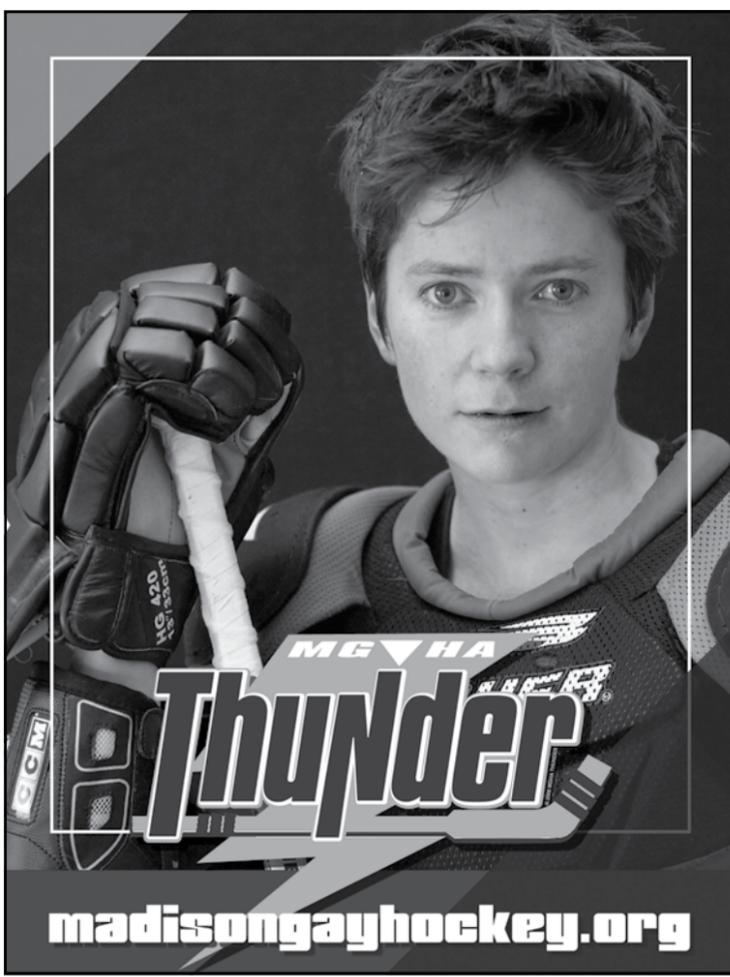
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Smells Like Team Spirit

Meet McGee Steffes of the Wisconsin Wolves Women's Football team. She and her teammates learn lessons on the field that apply off of it as well.

Where are you from? I am from Clear Lake, Minnesota. Yes, I am a Vikings fan.

How did you come to play for the Wisconsin Wolves? I played with the Minnesota Vixen for two years starting in 2002. During my second season, I realized the system the coaches were executing was not allowing me to contribute to the team to the degree I was capable of. So I contacted the head coach of the Northern Ice in Kenosha, Wisconsin to ask about tryouts and set my sights on making it onto the Wisconsin team roster. I made the 2004 team.

What's it like to be a part of an all-women's tackle football team? The friendships you make are unforgettable. The trust you need to develop on the field makes for incredible relationships off the field. Not to mention that when you have a really bad day at work you can go to practice and hit people. By the end of practice your "bad day" has melted away.

How has playing for the Wolves affected you? The biggest way playing with the Wolves has affected my life is that I have learned the importance of preparation, perseverance, and persistence. I have experienced things by playing with the Wolves that I may not have been fortunate to have had in my life otherwise. We get to travel the country playing teams in different states and meet new teammates and opponents each year. I have also learned that kids do look up to athletes. The Wolves strive to create a family atmosphere at home games and to give the kids strong, confident role models to look up to. The Wolves

organization wants to encourage women and kids in the community to not be afraid to try, because if they do, they will succeed in reaching their dreams.

What do you do when you're not playing football? I enjoy hanging out at home with my partner, Nantz (she also plays with the Wolves, #70) and our three cats: Booger, Gonzales, and Ciatti. I am a graphic artist, and I do computer design and freehand art. I also really enjoy smack talking to a good friend of mine on the team, Tiffany Loomis (#14). She just dishes it right back. Tiff is in the Army and is stationed in Kuwait right now. We can't wait for her to get home and back on the football field!

What are your hopes for the Wolves as part of the Madison community? The Wolves would like to develop a symbiotic relationship with the Madison community. We are planning football camps for kids, family fun at local events, and many other things as summer rolls around. The Wolves will also be doing events at various Madison establishments to promote awareness of the team and to bring people into the businesses in the community. The Wolves want to be a part of the community more than just during our football season. But once spring comes and it's Saturday night, where are you going to be? At the Wolves game, of course.

How can readers learn more about the Wisconsin Wolves? You can find us online at wiwolves.com, and we invite everyone to visit often. We have mini-camps and tryouts listed on the website. The camps and tryouts are open events. This means all women 18 and older can participate, and anyone can attend to take in the action. You have to be offered a roster spot to be a player on the team, and the only way to do that is to try out. Not everyone who attends tryouts will receive the offer. The mini-camps help potential players get ready for the tryout dates, help veterans knock the rust off, and are a great opportunity for our fans to get a mini-fix of football action live and in person.

Photographed by Lukas Keapproth

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The Cultural Advocate

Kelsy Schoenhaar brings the talents of the disabled to stage as the founding Artistic Director of Encore Studio for the Arts.

Kelsy Schoenhaar is the Executive and Artistic Director of Encore Studio for the Arts, a professional theater company for people with disabilities in Madison, which she helped found. Raised in what she calls “scary, conservative West Bend,” Kelsy describes not understanding how to be a “boy,” and getting beaten up for doing girl things and hanging out with girls as friends. The resulting isolation caused her to find solace in music; she listened to a LOT of music.

People came expecting Special Olympics, something warm and fuzzy. It was so far from that, dealing with sexuality, rape, and relationships.

An accomplished musician, Kelsy can play almost any instrument that she picks up. Her theater experience in school was limited to playing in pit bands. After high school, she pursued

a music degree at Northern Illinois University, where she got involved with the musician’s end of musical theater. She went into human services work, and did theater as a volunteer.

Kelsy married and fathered two daughters. She says that she never really grasped the “character” that she was supposed to play; that is, a male. She transitioned to female in her late twenties. She feels that her understanding of the various roles we all play contributes to her passion for theater, and to her desire to write honest, authentic work that expresses who people are, not who they’re supposed to be.

During her transition, Kelsy and her family were harassed in West Bend. She says, “Friends were getting death threats, we were worried about the kids’ safety.” They moved to Madison.

And then her vocation and her avocation collided: she took a position with REM Wisconsin, and two weeks after she started there, she learned that REM Director Olwen Blake (daughter of Madison theater legend Sarah Whelan Blake) had obtained seed money to start a theater company for people with disabili-

ties. Kelsy pitched her skills, and became the founding Artistic Director of Encore, which just began its tenth season.

Encore is a repertory company with a core troupe of paid actors, including several people who have been with the company since the first year. It is one of the only troupes in Madison that pays its actors. Kelsy says, “We have diverse people with diverse abilities and disabilities, so there are issues that don’t arise in traditional theaters. We’re such a hybrid: we’re a theater, and we’re a human services agency.”

The first work that Encore performed was a commissioned play, “To Love or Not to Love.” Based on the staggering statistic that 89 percent of women with disabilities have been sexually abused, the show shocked its audience.

Kelsy said, “People came expecting Special Olympics, something warm and fuzzy. It was so far from that, dealing with sexuality, rape, and relationships. It was unexpected, it challenged assumptions, and it was good theater. They expected cute people with disabilities and were blown away by the acting. I’d interviewed a woman who had been abused in a Catholic institution, and I incorporated it into the play. Some people were offended by our depiction of criminally abusive nuns. People with disabilities have sex, have love, have families, just like everyone else.

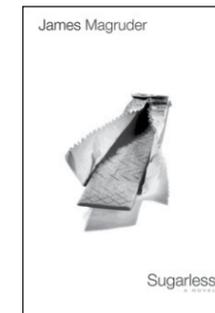
“It’s art, it pushes the boundaries. In the case of Encore, my political views and sexuality and gender lend themselves to the work that I do. In my case, I’ve always tried to convey the stories of the individuals. That’s an important part of what we do. That’s spiritual growth, that’s what theater is about,” she said.

As a hybrid human services agency and theater troupe, Encore does performances all over the country, educating and training on disability issues and awareness. Kelsy also consults nationally and just returned from helping set up a similar troupe in South Dakota. Like many nonprofits in tough economic times, Encore has been affected by funding cuts in both human services and the arts, so Kelsy has increased her work hours to do more consulting to bring additional revenue into Encore. She says that a 50-hour workweek feels like a vacation.

This season exemplifies the passion and talent that Kelsy brings to Encore: she is sharing writing and directing credits on each production this year. For more information about Encore Studio for the Arts, visit their website at encorestudio.org. ■

Already a Classic

Sugarless: A Novel by James Magruder



Rarely have I read a coming of age story as compelling as *Sugarless: A Novel*. Better known as a playwright and translator, Magruder’s most recent offering is his first novel. *Sugarless* never feels contrived. It carries all the angst of *Catcher in the Rye* without feeling forced. I expect it to win him a Lambda Literary Award.

Rick is a fifteen-year-old growing up in the late 1970s. His mother has married an educated but volatile man. With the marriage came a stoner stepsister, who becomes his nemesis and accomplice. The household is filled with drama,

causing Rick to take comfort in his music and caring for his baby stepsister. Unlike the protagonists in most gay coming of age novels, Rick has no problems with his orientation. It is his newfound talent for speech that catalyzes many of the changes in his life.

Readers may find Rick’s first boyfriend uncomfortable. He meets a school teacher who introduces him to life beyond his Chicago housing development. While I am not advocating such relationships, it should be noted that Rick is certainly not an unwilling victim in this relationship.

One of the themes of *Sugarless* is what happens when a family becomes consumed with their newfound religion. To Magruder’s credit, he doesn’t focus on the anti-gay views of some denominations. Instead, he studies how such an obsession changes relationships within the family.

The musicals of the era play a significant role in the story. While musical queens are almost a gay stereotype, one doesn’t have that feeling here. Rick sees his collection of cast albums as his friends, his comfort when life becomes overwhelming. The works of Sondheim are especially significant, repeatedly being used as symbols of the changes taking place not only in one boy’s life but also in the country.

Magruder has created what I believe will become a classic of gay literature. The quality of the writing and the resonance of the story are phenomenal. I urge you to seek out *Sugarless: A Novel*. —Ward Holz

A Mosaic of Pain and Humor

Sex Talks to Girls: A Memoir by Maureen Seaton



Sex Talks to Girls chronicles the outward antics of a woman on an inward journey to self through the routes of religion, sex, sobriety, and kids. Recasting herself as “Molly Meek,” Maureen Seaton interprets the emergence of Molly’s identity in luxurious and very funny prose.

Molly alternately finds herself in the surprising company of winos, swingers, and drag kings; in love with Jesus H. Christ and a butch named Mars; in charge of two children; writing stories that shrink painfully to poems without her permission; and incapable of figuring out

how she landed in any of this. She is, by turns, a little saint, a Stepford wife, a bio-mom, and a femme with super powers. Her transformation—from near-nun to full-fledged sexual being, accidentally becoming conscious in the process and delighting in the spree—is the story of a life set on play and a woman heroically committed to seeing it through.

Sex Talks to Girls won a Lambda Literary Award as best Lesbian Memoir/Biography. ■

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Our Journey to Jackson

Different backgrounds. Different personalities. One dream.
Petrovnia and Chris McIntosh share their story of two-parent adoption.

When we arrived at the hospital in Macon, Georgia, it was the first time we would actually meet Jackson's birthmother. Hours before, she called us and told us he's here and he's waiting to see his new parents. We were quite nervous meeting her. We were also nervous about the hospitality we might receive in Georgia, a state not favorable toward same-sex adoptive parents. To make matters more complicated, the social worker in Georgia informed us that the birthmother gave birth at a hospital that is not supportive of the adoptive process at all. "They'll be friendly," she said. "Just not helpful." That added more anxiety to an already anxiety-filled 15-hour drive to Georgia. After the cordial hospital workers left the room, we had several hours to get to know Jackson's birthmother. We held Jackson, fed him, and shared stories about us and our lives in Madison with her and she with her life in Macon and in Georgia in general. We had only talked with Joyce* twice: on the phone two days before and by e-mail just two weeks prior. The last e-mail before his birth, she wrote to us, "CONGRATULATIONS" and "HAPPY PARENTS' DAY!"

Petrovnia

I was the first to hold Jackson when he was 27 hours and 20 minutes old. From a very early age, I knew that I wanted to be a mother. As I got older, I became more and more interested in adoption, as well as wanting to be able to experience pregnancy and childbirth. It was important for me to find a partner who was as excited as I was to be a parent and raise a family. It was also important for me to find someone who would be open to building a family in different ways. As I said, my feelings for wanting a

family were very strong from a very young age. I knew that raising a family somehow had to be in my future. While going to high school in Queens, New York, and after moving here to Madison in 1995, my work always involved working with children, whether it was children with autism, children with emotional/behavior disorders, or children who were "developmentally appropriate." I enjoyed being with children, and I love watching their excitement as they explore and learn all about their environment!

I really started to think about adoption about 10 or so years ago. I worked in the Madison Metropolitan School District for several years. Working with such a diverse group of children taught me that there were also many children in our community who needed our help—my help—so that our community could be stronger. However, my biological clock was ticking loudly, and I felt very strongly about wanting to experience pregnancy and childbirth personally. After a lot of soul searching, I finally came to the conclusion that there was no reason for me to choose one or the other. I decided I would pursue both options.

It wasn't as easy as I expected to find a partner who shared my desire and dreams of building a family. I heard a lot of "Why would you want to do that?" [about childbirth] "There are too many abused and neglected children," "Our world is over populated anyway," "Kids are okay to play with for a while, but you won't be able to return yours to anyone." I was surprised, but it was difficult for me to find others who shared my excitement. I contemplated building my family as a single mother. The more I thought of this, the more I began to realize just how important it was for me to have a partner to help with raising our future generation. This would

not be a feat I felt that I could successfully manage by myself. As the years kept going by, I started to think that my childhood dream would remain just that. Then, I met Chris, who not only had the same dreams as I had, but also a family that was openly excited about expanding their family.

Chris

I met Petrovnia in 2005 when she was not looking for a relationship. She had made up her mind to focus her master's degree at the UW. We took things slowly and had good conversations about our hopes and dreams. We had one particular dream in common, that of motherhood.

Recently a woman shared with me her adoption story. Our conversation reminded me of why I started considering adoption as an option to my dreams of motherhood. Growing up in a close-knit farm family that truly valued instilling a positive self worth, I knew I had what it took to provide a nurturing home for a child. It was also important for me to be with someone who wanted to be a parent as much as I did.

I'm an introverted, shy person, so the idea of having a social worker come to my home asking all kinds of personal information and asking for references did not appeal to me at all. But watching a close relative who was having a difficult time parenting her first child made me face those fears head on. Adoption was an option and we started our journey in February of 2009. At that time we were set on adopting a newborn.

We'd been trying to conceive through insemination for a while by this time. The last try was so devastating to me. I needed to be left alone, to grieve and then move on. I shut Petrovnia out and cried for hours. We never achieved pregnancy but the last failed attempt really felt like I'd lost my child. The other attempts never had this much affect on me and we decided we needed to take a break from trying to start a family.

We wed in 2008. At the time, we lived in Sauk City. We held our ceremony in our backyard and celebrated in the park next to the assisted living center. I'm not sure, but I would bet we were the first same-sex couple to celebrate their wedding day in Junge Park. Many of my extended family, Petrovnia's cousins who came from great distances, and many of our friends from Madison and beyond were there. We didn't expect her parents to be there, and that was true. Oddly though, her mom seems to accept the fact that we are a couple, but be it the Haitian culture or her personality, she doesn't show a lot of feelings, and that is exceptionally hard for Petrovnia. She grew up with parents that didn't communicate with her or each other. Never knowing if she has acceptance or disapproval from her parents is a struggle that she continues to deal with in her adult life.

We struggled with how we would tell her mom that she is a grandmother; after all, they did not respond as to whether or not they would be at our ceremony. And they had no idea that we wanted to raise children. We ultimately decided to send her pictures and a card congratulating her. I wrote it. Would they accept him, being adopted? A few days later, her mom called. It was the acceptance Petrovnia deserved to hear and a sigh and a heavy weight of silence lifted, at least for a little while.

Chris and Petrovnia

The day we arrived in Georgia, we got placement of Jackson, which meant we were able to care for him during the waiting period. In Georgia, once the birthparent(s) sign relinquishment papers, they have 10 days to revoke their decision. It was going to be the 10 longest days of our lives. We stayed in hotels bonding with a child whom we may or may not parent. We were glorified babysitters during this period, yet we already fell in love with him and couldn't imagine ever being separated.

The last day was excruciating. It was Jackson's follow-up appointment, and we had made prior arrangements with Joyce to be there with us and to have breakfast afterward. While we were in the car driving to break-

fast, the social worker called us and informed us that Joyce was having a change of heart. Breakfast was difficult for everyone. Tears were shed.

Chris held on to Jackson as if to let go meant letting go of him forever. Joyce needed more time to think and would call us later. It was very difficult for all of us. She knew in her heart that we would be wonderful parents and would provide everything for Jackson.

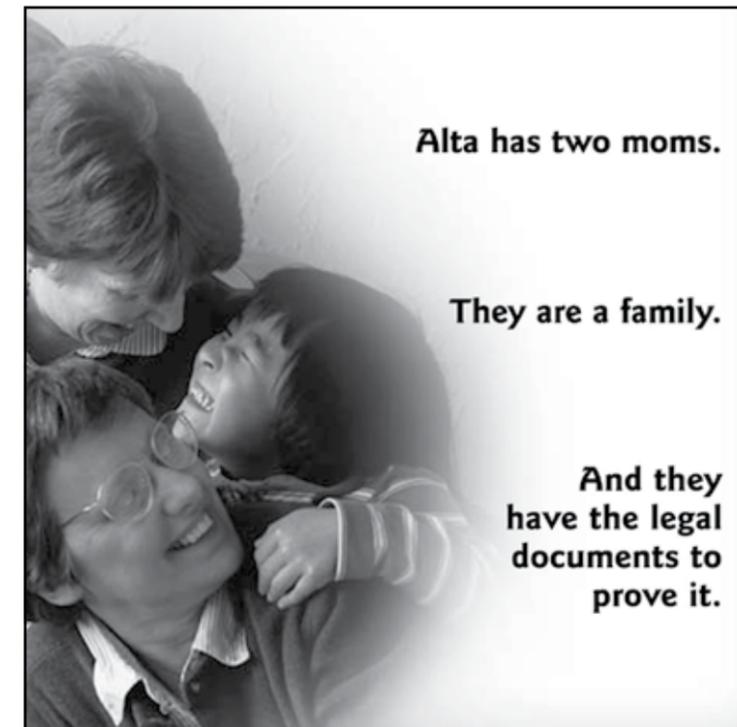
We stayed in hotels bonding with a child who we may or may not parent. We were glorified babysitters during this period, yet we already fell in love with him.

The time seemed to go backwards while we waited for her call. She called us a few hours later saying she made the right decision, but we were on edge till the very end. We believe that her seeing us so bonded with Jackson and Jackson so attached to us gave her the confidence that we will do everything for our family... not just Jackson, but his birthmother too, because we are all now connected as family!

Later, Chris woke up saying, "Good morning, Mama." We did it. Jackson was really coming home with us.

We feel blessed to have each other and we are so excited to have Jackson in our lives! We also feel so lucky to have found a community that has so many options for same-sex couples who want to raise a family. It has been absolutely wonderful to have so many people who are supportive of our efforts to build a family. Even though we are new moms, motherhood is the most amazing and precious experience we have ever encountered!

Back in Madison, we still talk with Joyce every few days and send pictures of how much Jackson is growing and changing! We are so happy our adoption journey led us to Jackson!! ■



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Cultural, Social, Service and Nightlife listings edited by Virginia Harrison



Camp Bingo
January 25 and February 22,
The Edgewater Hotel, Madison

Join hostess Cass Marie Domino for Wild West Bingo in January (Representative Mark Poca will be the ball caller) and Disco Inferno Bingo in February with WMTV's Christine Bellport as ball caller. Camp Bingo is a fundraising event for the AIDS Network.
madcampbingo.org



Lisa Lampanelli
February 19, Overture Center,
Madison

The Loveable Queen of Mean will perform her insult comedy for one night only.
overturecenter.com



New Harvest's Dinner Dance
February 27, Monona Terrace
Convention Center, Madison

This year's dinner dance will be headlined by GayCo Productions, a not-for-profit theater ensemble from Chicago that specializes in creating intelligent and thought-provoking sketch-comedy revues based on gay/lesbian themes.
newharvestfoundation.org

ORGANIZATIONS

A representative sampling

AIDS Network
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 252-6540
aidsnetwork.org

Bowling Out Loud
beckwith.matt@yahoo.com

Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls
dcandc.org

Fair Wisconsin
122 State St., Madison (608) 441-0143
fairwisconsin.org

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
personalpages.tds.net/~tmclurg

Gay/Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)
301 S. Bedford St., Madison (608) 661-4141
gsaforsafeschools.org

Gay Softball League
ssblmadison.com

Gay Volleyball League
madisongayvolleyball.com

Hermanos Latinos
sneal@aidsnetwork.org

Lez Talk Yahoo Group
leztalkmadison@yahoo.com

LGBT Business Alliance
madisonbusinessalliance.com

Madison Gay Hockey Association
madisongayhockey.org

Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby
minotaursrugby.org

New Harvest Foundation
newharvestfoundation.org

Out Professional and Executive Network (O.P.E.N.)
info@openmadison.org

OutReach Community Center
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 255-8582
lgbtoutreach.org

PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
(608) 848-2333
pflag-madison.org

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus
perfectharmonychorus.org

Rural Dykes Association
pswfarm@juno.com

StageQ - Madison's Queer Theater
stageq.com

UW - Madison LGBT Campus Center
800 Langdon St., Madison (608) 265-3344
wisc.edu/lgbt

Wisconsin Rainbow Families
wirainbowfamilies.com

November 6 | O.P.E.N. breakfast with Out & Equal
Regional Co-Chair Jim Huberty



Photos by Eric Baillies

our lives **LGBT Market Tip**

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GET LISTED To see your event on this page, be sure to post it on our community calendar ourlivesmadison.com

Midwest Gay Ski Weekend
January 8–10, Granite Peak Ski Area, Wausau

There will be great skiing or snowboarding for all ability levels on more than 70 runs. The weekend includes bar nights, a welcome reception/dinner, a Saturday night group dinner, and a Sunday morning brunch. Participants can take advantage of special room rates at the Jefferson Street Inn—a boutique-style hotel in downtown Wausau. The hotel is walking distance to a mall, great restaurants, shopping, cultural sites, and Oz, Wausau's gay bar.
skibudz.org

Madison Home Expo
January 8–10, Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison

The place to be for all your home building and remodeling needs. Experts will educate you in the latest and best home building, kitchen and bathroom remodeling, decking, sunrooms, basements, flooring, heating and air, garage storage, and landscaping techniques.
homeshowcenter.com

Tarantara! Tarantara!
January 22–30, The Bartell Theater, Madison

The story of the famous Gilbert & Sullivan partnership; the meeting, the association with D'Oyly Carte, the mounting success, the divergences of temperament, the conflicting ambitions, and the trouble caused by Gilbert's obsession with his lozenge story.
madisontheatreguild.org/tarantara

RENT: The Broadway Tour
January 26–31, Overture Center, Madison

Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp, stars of the original Broadway production and film adaptation of *Rent*, reprise

the roles they made famous in this exciting new tour! Don't miss the show that transformed how a generation feels about musicals, changed Broadway forever, and inspired a major motion picture.
overturecenter.com

LINES Ballet
February 6, Wisconsin Union Theater, Madison

A Madison audience favorite, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet celebrates over 25 years of melding classical Western ballet with a diverse set of cultural traditions. Described by The New Yorker as being "hyperkinetic" and "exceptional," King's visionary choreography continues to thrill viewers.
uniontheater.wisc.edu

Midwest Garden Show
February 12, Alliant Energy Center, Madison

Visitors may choose to attend more than 100 educational seminars and demonstrations on gardening, lawn, and landscaping topics and enjoy hundreds of different exhibitor booths in the exhibition area. Attend one of the many hands-on workshops and learn new skills while creating an art piece to take home.
wpt.org/gardenexpo

Madison Winter Festival
February 19–21, Capitol Square, Madison

Watch as Madison's Capitol Square is transformed into a winter wonderland with ice and snow sculptures, tubing hill and snowboard rail jam, World class cross country ski racing, and snowshoeing venues during this weekend-long event. Includes family-oriented activities, special events at the museums, public open skiing, and more.
winter-fest.com

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FOR THE LOVE OF COUNTRY

A soldier and her wife reflect on their loneliness and honor in the oppressive world of military discrimination.



Soldier's Wife's Story

I look at our relationship and know that it is nothing special, compared to everyone else who believes that they have found that special someone to spend the rest of their life with. Fortunately for me, I really have found her. Hardly a day goes by when I don't think of her and our life together and give thanks for the blessing which is this soldier in my life.

She taught me to laugh, not to sweat the small stuff, and the meaning of unconditional acceptance. She has given me emotional shelter in a cold, dark world. I feel safe, at ease, contented, valued—feelings that I have learned to enjoy. She encourages the kid in me, and believes in me—often more than I believe in myself. She is everything I ever dreamed of in a woman in a relationship: she not only completes me but compliments me. I am so much better with her than I ever was without.

She is modest, even if she doesn't think so. She isn't quick to boast, but she served in the military during the first Desert Storm and has since worked with combat veterans, counseling them for PTSD and sexual assault as well as offering grief counseling for families of military personnel lost on active duty.

So why would this woman choose to serve yet again in a combat zone? She honestly believes that because they ask that she should go; that there is great honor in serving the men and woman who fight for our country. I don't deny that. I don't find fault with the folks who put their life on the line each and every day. I respect their choice to serve, and I am confident that they did not consider my sexuality when they went to fight.

The anger, the bitterness, and the isolation that I feel come from the fact that my wife is serving a country that doesn't respect who we are. That refuses to acknowledge the depth of our relationship—a country where, while she serves, I do not exist beyond being the executor of her estate. That title alone makes it difficult for me to have faith in her safe return.

There are many support options available to the spouses of military personnel, including but not limited to the Family Readiness Group. These support options are only available to me in a limited capacity, only so long as I am willing to deny our relationship and who I am. We went to a yellow ribbon event, an event that is hosted by the Army, in this case to help the families and spouses of personnel awaiting deployment to understand and cope with the insanity that has become their norm. An event that is meant to help us all feel a little less alone. But I wasn't allowed to stand with the rest of the spouses when they were applauded for the sacrifices that they are making while their husbands or wives deploy for the next year, nor was I allowed to admit that the tears I shed were for my wife and not my friend, my cousin, my sister-in-law, or whatever people assumed our relationship to be, since I was accompanied by my brother-in-law, and we share the same last name.

I want nothing more than to be able to stand next to my wife, in support of her while she serves this country—our country—proudly, openly, without fear of what may come from people recognizing not only what we are, but who we are to each other.

My soldier often tells me that partners are more afraid of outing the soldier than the soldier is of being outed. I don't want to know if that is the truth. I truly do not wish to jeopardize my wife's military career. I am just tired of feeling as if I have been forced into hiding. Forced to live in the shadows, denying who I am, only wishing to live without restriction and government-imposed limits.

At her insistence, I must point out that there are those within the military who do not agree with the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy and recognize that one's willingness and ability to serve our country has nothing to do with his or her sexuality. Unless, of course, the lack of support offered to a soldier's support system due to their sexuality has a bearing on one's ability to serve.

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Soldier's Story

On June 23, 2006, our priest blessed our union. Although we could not be a couple legally in the eyes of the State, we could be together in the eyes of God, our family, our Church, and our friends.

The essence of our relationship changed, our commitment to each other deepened. We couldn't just walk away from the relationship.

My job was in Madison, and my partner lived in our home in Illinois, waiting for her daughter to finish school. But, the weekends were ours. For two full years, until August 2008, this was our life.

In 2007, I was recruited by the Army. My military past was whispering to me, and I was needed. I was needed, I was asked, and I was willing to return to the military. We talked about it and she saw my passion, even if she didn't understand it. She told me later that the process was very difficult to participate in. I realized much later how difficult this has been on her. It wasn't until I was alerted for deployment that I began to understand.

When Iowa allowed marriage, we talked about doing it, and time passed. I could tell that my partner needed the legal recognition. However, we procrastinated. She let me take the lead since the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy meant that getting married in Iowa could cost me my military career.

At this point, I ask for your indulgence. Let me wander a bit because I like the story of our marriage application. In July 2009, I had my partner email me the link to print the marriage registration for Iowa at my office. I filled it out. On the application, she was able to take my last name. I was honored she wanted to take my name. On our anniversary, July 23, I had her pick me up from work and take us to the downtown US Bank building to get our registration notarized. At this point we realized that you must have a witness who actually knows you to witness the application. We arrived at 4:35 p.m., and the bank closed at 5:00. We had 25 minutes to find someone to get to the bank to sign the document. We walked outside somewhat disappointed and saw the crowd gathering for the Concert on the Square. We went up to two complete strangers: two men who were obviously "family." Both were willing and eager to witness our registration—it was so cute—but one had to stay with the blanket as the other crossed the street to the bank. When you are a member of the LGBT community, you are never completely strangers, just friends who haven't met yet. So, the document was witnessed and signed on our anniversary.

Next came arranging for the magistrate to officiate the wedding ceremony in Iowa. We called several magistrates to see what dates we could get. We had hoped for my partner's birthday, but we settled for August 1, 2009. My partner's sister and brother-in-law stood up for us. We invited our priest, completing our cycle of our church ceremony, and my wife's oldest daughter, who was unable to come to the church wedding, was able to be there for our marriage. This was a miracle moment in my life. The magistrate in Iowa was fabulous. The ceremony was simple and beautiful. It reinforced our union vows and deepened my love for my wife.

The church ceremony will always be our anniversary. For me, the church ceremony fulfilled my recognition of our commitment and love for each other. However, for my wife (and possibly our priest), getting married in Iowa was necessary to complete the cycle. I was a "good Catholic girl" after 16 years of Catholic Schools. Church ceremonies are a dedication of your love, that spiritual union that no one could sever. However, for my wife, having to endure the government not only placing her on the sidelines because of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, but blocking her out totally from a military spouse experience. The legal ceremony in Iowa, with the capability of changing her name without effort, was what she needed to feel the completeness of our marriage.

One of the things I do is to clearly define words such as "honor." I had defined honor in marriage as part of my couple's therapy practice. I had

defined military honor in those couples' sessions as well. Now I sat in the chapel and for some reason those definitions were rambling around and hit me square in the heart. The honor of a soldier was one of my reasons for returning to the uniform; having the courage and integrity to face difficult situations with openness and honesty. Personal honor makes a soldier stand tall, look you square in the eye, and have a sense of confidence in the world. Personal honor for a soldier means that you do right for right's sake. This flash in my mind was compared to the honor shown a wife. The gentler, calmer honor. The desire to listen and respect your spouse. To validate and support them in their life. To encourage growth and watch your spouse thrive because of the love and support that you give them. This honor, the honor I feel for her as my wife, normally brings me peace and serenity—that calmness and certainty that the world is right.

Those two honors clashed at that moment in the chapel during my annual training. My world as a lesbian and my world as a soldier collided at that moment. I was neither honoring the woman I love with all my heart nor was I an honorable soldier because I did not have the courage to talk about this love. The intense sadness, regret, despair, anger, and frustration that I felt at that moment were unbearable. Tides of emotion swept over me and pulled me out to sea. At that moment I realized the enormity of how the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy creates soldiers who must dishonor the Army and their family. At that moment I felt the depth of my dishonor.

As I write this, I know, without a doubt, the amazing Love (Love with a capital L) of my partner. This Love started well before our union ceremony and was confirmed by our marriage. However, it has been tested by my rejoining the military. Tested each time someone asks me about my wedding ring. Tested each time my partner participates in a military event and is introduced simply as herself. We refuse to dishonor the relationship further by having her be referred to as friend. She is not just my friend, but the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy dictates that I not introduce her as my wife. On my military forms she is a family member or the executor of my will. Our sharing a last name has eased some of the questions.

As I write this, the stress increases as I get closer to deployment. I can tell this because I talk faster and more. I am more scatter-brained. I am more of a homebody, I get less done, and I drink more. As a social worker, I can recognize the signs of stress in myself. As a workaholic, I can cover them up so that no one notices my faults. No one except my wife, that is. She sees them, she hugs me, she loves me through my faults without judgment. "It is what it is," she says. I am a soldier, and she loves me anyway.

On October 10, my wife got on the bus in Madison and went to the march in Washington. I am so proud of her. She expresses her distaste of the military while expressing her love of her soldier. She is my voice that wants to scream and cry, "I am a soldier! I am married to a woman! I am proud to serve my country! I am proud to love my wife." I drove her to that bus and enviously saw her off on it. The closer my deployment comes, the more I want to scream the absolute unfairness of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. She is my wife, legally and spiritually. She is not eligible for healthcare like other spouses. She is not allowed to be acknowledged like other spouses. She is not allowed to demonstrate her pride in me, and I am not allowed to express my pride in her.

Deployment is much easier on the soldier. I have a task to do. I'll go do it anywhere in the world I am sent, and I'll do it well. She has to stay back and worry. She has to answer the questions from friends and family about me and what I am doing. She has to see the news every day and feel the anxiety of the "what ifs." I have a job to do and I'm going to go do it and return to the woman I love. As I hugged my partner before she got on the bus for Washington, DC, both she and I knew that this hug could be the last for a year. The next day, I went to training for my deployment.

Thank you my Love, my heart, and the voice for us both. I Love You. ■



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I had never felt love before. I never felt like I deserved anyone. Yet here he was, giving me attention and a feeling of happiness that I didn't know how to express ... I wanted to thank him for helping me discover emotions and feel a sense of peace I wasn't capable of previously. I just wanted to hold him and feel close in a way that I'd ached for but had never experienced. I didn't know what it would feel like to hold someone; to feel his warmth while putting my arms around his body to find the awkward arrangements that were necessary to lie down with him. I remember looking at his face when he leaned in to kiss me; he closed his eyes. I didn't. I kept my eyes open the entire time—studying—because I couldn't believe this was real and needed every proof I could find.

It was my first kiss.

First love is an amazing thing. The newness of your feelings and the companionship that is built from witnessing these discoveries together creates a measure for the rest of your life of what love should be. Chris* was my first. When we were together I felt more sensitive and alive than I'd ever felt in my life.

His touch could cripple me. The comfort that came with trusting him after my total surrender left me vulnerable and exposed. After having protected myself for so long, I was now sharing intimate discoveries with someone at a time when the only thing I had to offer was me.

Perhaps it was more clear when I was heavier that there was something inside me I was trying desperately to protect. My inability to look in a mirror helped me to cope with how fragile my innocence was; it shielded me from the emotional violence that was very present in my life. I've accepted that there are times in life when denial can be necessary. My body was my most sacred possession. It was also the cause of the practically incessant torture I was suffering. Opening up and sharing it with someone was not going to be easy.

The First Time I Fell in Love

by Patrick Farabaugh

I believe there is a science to attraction. A person's physical appearance can spark interest, but appearance alone isn't enough for a sustainable relationship. I believe the reasons we find someone appealing are much more calculated than many of us are comfortable understanding. I now know why Chris was so attractive to me, although at the time I couldn't explain it. Back then, it was impossible to be the person I wanted to be. I lived in silence, as a shadow of who I was capable of becoming. I needed to believe that this wasn't how I had to spend my entire life. I also needed someone who could incrementally allow me to adjust my comfort level with receiving attention. I was used to feeling worthless, to being emotionally grey and numb. I needed hope. When I saw Chris I saw an angel. I saw someone totally engaged in life. He had a confidence that confused me and made me insatiably curious. He was the most androgynous individual I'd ever encountered. He wasn't exclusively heterosexual and didn't feel he had to hide to be more socially acceptable. He was loud, confident, and to my adolescent eyes he was completely devoid of the kind of fear that I was struggling with. There was also something about him that suggested suffering, or at least that he could understand the pain I lived with. He was real, and his level of need was at least as great as my own.

Chris and I had a huge amount of shame about sleeping with each other because of the stigma surrounding being gay. We were alone with these feelings and had no role models except for the people who used the words gay and faggot as an insult. After sex, every orgasm was followed with, "But you know I'm not gay, right?"

After the first time I had intercourse with him I was terrified that I had crossed a moral line. I spent days trying to understand what had happened. I only knew that for the first time in my adolescent life I felt safe being myself and he was the person I had to thank for it.

Chris felt safe with me, too, and sometimes when I woke up I would catch him watching me sleep, smiling. But he tried to fight what he felt. It reminded me of a light flickering before it short-circuits and goes out.

It took time to understand Chris' emotional obstacles. I collected a mosaic of random moments from his history that showed a boy fighting demons foreign to mine. One week I learned he had been with dozens of people before me. Another, that he became sexually active when he was much younger. My mother had warned me that he was caught masturbating with another boy in a garage. I refused to believe her. This wasn't the person I saw, or wanted to see. I loved him. I felt empty whenever I wasn't with him and the second I saw him I could feel my skin go flush with hope. Being around Chris made everything in my life OK. He was the partner who could help me face the world, the sole being who knew everything good and bad about me because he alone knew my secret. He was the most beautiful person on earth because of all the hope he could offer. Through all my pain I found his light. He really was my angel.

I believe Chris loved me. We never said those words to each other, but his actions communicated a truth more real than any words. We continued spending more time together and slowly he revealed more about himself, as he felt safe that his past wouldn't affect how I felt about him. I don't think anything could have affected it, really. He could have confessed a crime and I'd still want to hold him, help him feel safe, and worry about the rest of the world later, when fear couldn't control our thoughts.

One night when he stayed over he brought a bottle of alcohol. I didn't want to drink, but he convinced me that sharing another adult experience with him could make us closer. So, I took my first drink ... and my second, followed by my third and fourth. Once we were drunk, he said,

"I have to tell you something. I have to get away from here." I was drunk and having trouble following him until he directly said, "They beat me." "They" were some of the guys in his neighborhood.

I spent the rest of the night talking to Chris about what we could do to make him safe. The only solution I could even attempt required approaching my mom and dad, which I did the following day. It felt like participating in a board meeting upon the arrival of a heated vote. My mother sat off to the side and I was in front of my father to make my case for letting Chris come to live with us. My mom deferred this decision to him. While Chris waited in my room I explained how he was being attacked when he goes home, careful to not reveal that it was a hate crime. I tried to convince them both that we were his only hope. It must have sounded like a dramatic exaggeration that only a teenager would find rational. Still, my parents honestly considered my request before deciding against it. I felt devastated, but Chris took it even harder. He left my house like his body was a walking shell, emotionally empty.

That was a critical moment in my relationship with Chris; it reinforced his belief that he must be unlovable. He went into survival mode. He became defiantly rebellious with his independence. I remember the pride in his voice while speaking about being able to leave anyone, as if strength came from the ability to abandon a person. He shut down caring about love, and embraced his need to be destructive. It must have given him a valid reason to be unlovable, and reinforced his idea that love was only for the weak anyway.

I didn't see Chris after that. I ached to see him, and often felt sick waiting for any news about what was happening in his life. I felt like I had my heart torn from me, but not yet broken. I still loved him and was terribly concerned about how he was managing. I kept hearing rumors fly around the school about his sexual conquests, and I couldn't help being both hurt and feeling responsible for the blow that drove him to them. His reported boasts about his sexual frenzy were razors to my heart. He'd abandoned me and I couldn't help but believe that all this self-destructive behavior was his way to both intentionally toughen his skin and hurt me for ever loving him.

The final cut came when I learned he'd been expelled from school. No one knew the exact reason why but the rumor was that he'd been caught with another male student. I remember the physical shock when I heard the news; I couldn't focus or concentrate on anything. Whenever I made love to Chris it felt sacred. The surrender of control that came with it was so incredibly intimate that the idea of it being desecrated into something masochistic shattered my spiritual center. I fled school to go to his house. I had to see him; I had to get all the information directly from the source. My emotional pain was too strong and I couldn't take it anymore. I wasn't in control of what I was doing and I just needed him. I stood at his door with my heart pounding until his mother, in hysterics after seeing me, started screaming through their closed window.

"HE'S GONE!! HE'S FUCKING GONE!! GET OUT!!! GET AWAY FROM HERE!!"

I stood there unable to move, feeling the death of all my passion. When I could move, I sleepwalked home and just sat in my room, trying to make sense of what had happened. I was overwhelmed. I just wanted to scream, I wanted to shout, I wanted to swing my fists at anything that was capable of feeling pain, but all I could do was sit there ... sliding down with my back against two walls and collapse my face into my hands and hope that

no one would hear my tears. I was crying from being punished for loving someone, and the pain I was feeling only increased my inability to talk about its cause. It left me more alone than I'd ever felt in my life.

Over time, I discovered another reason why I loved Chris. Finding it helped me understand an intricate simplicity hidden behind all the chaos. It taught me more about Chris than I ever knew with him right next to me. By any relative definition, Chris was beautiful. In some ways, I truly think he was too beautiful, and for exactly this reason he had sex introduced into his life long before it should have ever been there. I remember seeing lots of men at the beach the summers before I met Chris. They'd run along the sand or lay out in their bathing suits and I never noticed myself considering them until after I had physically discovered sex. To me, his conquests were a rebellion against what had stolen the control from his life. It was that need to rebel that gave him the ability to be loud, confident, and again, to my adolescent eyes, visibly absent from any kind of fear.

We continued spending more time together and slowly he revealed more about himself, as he felt safe that his past wouldn't affect how I felt about him.

I never gave up on Chris. My conscience wouldn't let me. My mind refused to rest until I had proof his life was OK. I didn't know if anyone in his life would again see him as completely as I had. I loved him, and like a couple standing at an altar I'd already accepted that loving him meant being available whether it was to my gain or not. Oddly though, it was in a way. The strength I developed while searching for him gave me a heart stronger than most I know. I spent almost seven years looking for any trace of him because of how traumatically things ended between us. I remembered him mentioning his father once and telling me that the man was a preacher in the south. When Chris disappeared, I imagined that was where

he was sent. Eventually, I found an address for someone with his last name. I had nothing to lose and not that many options so I mailed a long hand-written letter. About two weeks later my telephone rang. An average day turned into anything but as I spent the next four hours rediscovering someone whose heart had never really left me. He was married now; he had a baby daughter and another on the way from a wife he didn't really mention in our entire conversation. We were both in our twenties now and he was supporting his family by working in a factory. I detected some joy in his voice when we talked about finding each other. Outside of those moments, he seemed to have these rehearsed answers that he'd been coached into believing himself. Somewhere along the line he had developed a thick accent and with it seemed to come the arrested development of his mind. It was almost like the gears that were turning when I knew him had stopped, then started again in reverse. He never returned to high school. I struggled to recognize the person I was talking to. Now, with a family at risk, it felt like his fate was chosen, and I was set free.

I still love you Chris, I always will. And I will always remember you as an angel.

Editor's Note: Eight years after our phone call, by random chance I came face-to-face with Chris again. It had been half our lifetime since we last saw each other, and we both looked almost unrecognizable to the other. Even still, we each knew who the other was from the feelings we felt in the moment. Since our prior call, Chris left his wife and officially came out.

(*Name has been changed)

The Valentine Poems

Valentine I

I drink my first cup of coffee
hoping my brain will engage;

I think about how this is
the last drug I allow myself
(we won't count chocolate).

I already have an association with coffee and you
and I muse about that
as my hands are warmed
wrapped around ceramic curves
and my tongue swims in liquid.

I think the first cup of coffee
you poured me was drugged.

I'm sure of it being so close
to Valentine's Day;

some invisible, gossamer, giggling nymph
poured in some potion
that possesses me.

My symptoms are clear:
escalating excitement, complete disclosure
of thoughts and feelings,
a compelling desire to repeat the experience.

I drink my second cup of coffee
and have scheming thoughts of you
and the day ahead

seduction by voicemail;
I am possessed.

2/14/94

Author's Note: Linda Lenzke

The Valentine Poems are a chronicle of the author's personal, committed relationship spanning 15 years. Each year on Valentine's Day I wrote a poem to my partner Cindy. Our 15-year journey together included two sabbaticals and almost three years of living in two households as a commuter relationship. The poems capture both the passion and the mundane nature of everyday life. *The Valentine Poems* are excerpted from a soon-to-be-published chapbook entitled, *Scenes of Everyday Life*.

Valentine V

Wandering the Hallmark shop,
I seek the Holy Grail of Valentine cards.

Speed reading down the aisles,
I pass by others, who like me
gather to find the perfect few lines
of sweet confection captured in a card
adorned in images in rouge of roses.
The signs direct me to sweetheart or wife,
to my husband or special someone,
for my sister and family, best friend,
and secret admirer. You are all of these and more.

Yes, this is precisely the challenge.
All the cards are simply snapshots
of who we are and what we mean to each other.

I settle upon a line drawing,
two toothbrushes in a cup on a bathroom sink.
Somehow this mundane depiction of home and habitation
(habitation?) is a haiku of my love.

We inhabit each other's days;
we share in the simple and sacred rituals of love.
We dwell in the soul and spirit of life.

2/14/99

Valentine XI

I've never been with someone for so long a time
as I have with you, a decade and a year.
Measured by rings of a tree trunk,
dog years, cycles of the moon,
the number of finch nests in a season,
days lived between brackets of dawn and dusk, dusk and dawn,
and all the countless, silent moments of a breath, a thought,
the spasm of a muscle, or a tear caught in space.
I've never been with someone for so long a time.
I've never known someone as well as I know you.
Sometimes I think your thoughts for you,
answer your questions before asked,
anticipate your regrets. Some days I know you better than myself.
I know things about you, you can't know,
what you look like when you sleep,
how your eyes brighten when you tell me you have a good idea,
how sadness presses into your shoulders
and etches frown lines in your brow.
I've never known someone as well as you.
I've never loved someone as much as I love you.
Not in the manner of infatuation or lust,
but in the profound experience
of shared bliss and
the mundane familiarity of everyday life.
I've loved you in ways I've feared,
past limits of comfort and control,
loved you in spite and because of my better judgment.
I've never loved someone as much as you.

2/14/05



Author's Biography

Linda Lenzke lives in Madison, Wisconsin and has been writing poetry, performance art and comedy for the past 30 years. Her current passion is her role as an interviewer for the Madison LGBT Community Oral History Project through the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Valentine to My Unknown Lover

Whoever you are, whatever you do, wherever you live,
whenever you're ready, however scared you may be,
I am waiting for you, my new love. I try to recognize you
in the faces of the unfamiliar, or in the eyes of friendly others.
Perhaps I've already met you at the bookstore, or the
Farmer's Market on the Square, our hands reaching for the same red pepper.
Were you the woman two rows in front of me
in the movie theater? I watched you, then the film.
Maybe we're friends; belong to the same group,
pass each other on the road during our daily commute.
You may not yet have arrived in town; the new kid at work;
The neighbor moving into my building,
whose ripped cardboard box I rescue before hitting the ground,
our eyes meeting for a second
in recognition of something important, strangely familiar.

We ready ourselves for each other each day in our meditations and reverie,
conversations with friends, when they ask, what will your next girlfriend be like?

I ponder you. I wonder. My curiosity distracts me in my work, sometimes
becoming the purpose of my play, inspiration for poetry.

I write about you in my journal, I conjure you up in my dreams.
Know this sweet woman. I have loved, I love, I will love again.

I will love you as well as I have learned to love myself,
sometimes with abundance and generosity of spirit, often imperfectly.
I can't promise I won't hurt you, I will. It is the nature of life and love,
yet I will give you my best and hope you can accept the rest.
My passion and desire will wax and wane, yet my love will always be true
and yours. You will have my hand, my heart, my attention.
We will laugh at our similarities, and practice patience with our differences.

We will hold each other during the dark nights
and giggle under the covers as the sun peaks in the window in the morning.
Unknown Valentine, come out, come out, whoever you are, whatever you do,
wherever you live, whenever you're ready, however scared you may be,
I am waiting for you, my new love.

2/14/09

Love That Body!

How a 1920s era Madison man enjoyed fine specimens of the male physique.



Health, Athletics, and Physical Culture—that is the title of a rare manuscript notebook assembled by Julius Beecham Vogel in Madison during the 1920s. Vogel, who lived on the 700 block of Jennifer Street, was an aficionado of the male

form and its presentation. His notebook contains documents, booklets, and photos devoted to the physical specimen that is man. Reviewing his collection provides a window into the world of male physical culture—a literature of the era that espoused health, science, and physical fitness—an acceptable form of body worship for its time when any homosexual erotica certainly had to be cloaked.

Today we now realize that participation in physical culture was one way men in earlier ages were able to obtain such slightly homoerotic literature. David Chapman's introduction to *Adonis: The Male Physique Pin Up 1870-1940* gives a brief overview of the development of the physique photos. At this point there is no way of knowing Vogel's exact motives, but his collection shows that even in less open periods, gay men in Wisconsin could find ways to engage in cultural alternatives. Vogel's materials left behind a treasure trove when it comes to his interest in the study of physical culture.

In filling in a form for a physical training expert who operated from Baltimore, Maryland, Vogel lists "weak wrists" as among his conditions he was most anxious to correct.

On March 6, 1921, Vogel filled out a questionnaire from the International Health Resort at Battle Creek, Michigan. Among his responses were "yes" to bad dreams. He was led to the Battle Creek institution by reading physical culture literature. There were a large number of muscles-by-post operations in the first part of the Twentieth Century, and Vogel explored quite a number of them.

Vogel corresponded with several of these purveyors of material. In 1922, he bought the *Encyclopedia of Physical Culture* for \$6.00 from

the Physical Culture Corporation. The company published several magazines with possible appeal including *Physical Culture* and *Movie Weekly*.

In filling in a form for Antone Matysek, a physical training expert who operated from Baltimore, Maryland, Vogel—who described himself as having arthritis—lists "weak wrists" as among his conditions he was most anxious to correct. Among the touted offerings by Matysek was the Real Man Maker course.

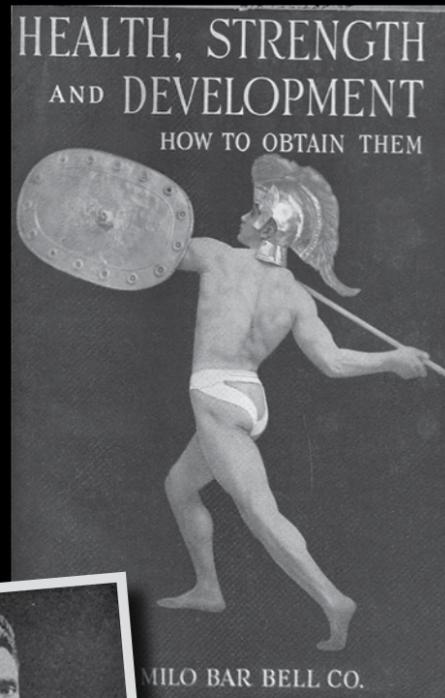
Another flyer in Vogel's notebook was from Professor Anthony Barker of New York who made available a publication entitled "HIMSELF: Talks with Men Concerning Themselves," by two doctors. Among the topics listed for HIMSELF were Anatomy and Physiology of the Male Generative Organs, the Sexual Necessity, Self Abuse, Night Losses-Priapism-Circumcision, and Venereal Diseases, among others. Professor Barker also made available "TRUTHS: Talks with a Young Boy Concerning Himself."

Alan Calvert of Philadelphia provided Vogel with a flyer on Body Molding. One correspondent wrote, "It took me seven weeks to learn that way of striding from the hips; but after I did master it, then, in the three weeks following my thighs gained one and one-half inches and my calves gained one inch in girth." Calvert's response, "That is expected, since there are certain tricks of leg management which, when adopted as a habit, *always* cause an increase in the power and shape of the legs."

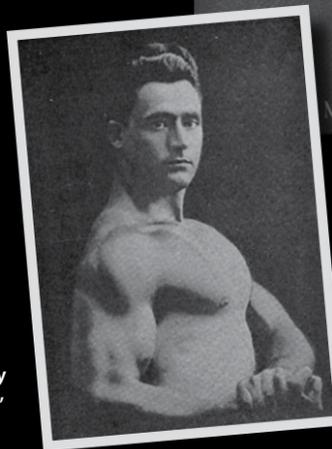
Correspondence from Calvert shows that Vogel sent him some pictures in 1925 as well as a letter. The response was, "I am interested in the front view pictures which show your chest expansion, because your respiratory chest seems to be unusually large." On Jan 29, 1926, Calvert requested additional pictures in the future. Pictures of successful students were often published in the bodybuilding magazines.

Calvert also added a post-script to the 1926 letter. "I note you addressed your letter to me as editor of 'Strength.' I founded that magazine, but at present I have nothing whatever to do with it. I hate to have my name even associated with magazines which specialize in that girly-girly stuff!"

The Vogel notebook also has a multiple-week course by Earle E. Liederman of New York touted as America's Leading Director of Physical Education. Vogel corresponded with Liederman in 1924, and the notebook includes pictures, presumably provided with the course, showing a trunk-clad Liederman using a spring-style chest-expanding exercise device.



MILO BAR BELL CO.



Another publication of Liederman's in Vogel's notebook showed pictures of some students. One of these students was Charles Atlas. One of the Atlas photos shows him discreetly seated nude. Yet another photo shows Liederman nude kneeling in front and Atlas who is also

nude standing with hands on Liederman's shoulders in what is described as "an artistic pose." A note accompanying says the photo printed on heavy paper is suitable for framing.

In Chapman's introduction to *Adonis*, he notes that the photographers drew on classical images of the male nude from Greco-Roman times. Vogel's collection has a couple pamphlets from the Milo Bar Bell Co. of Philadelphia, showing a nearly nude dude in Roman style helmet with a shield and holding a long spear.

Vogel also wrote in 1928 to *Character Reading* magazine which provided some horoscope information about his rising Taurus sign. The letter noted those with this rising sign "are fond of pleasure and love beauty in nature, art, and music and literature, and are moved a great deal by feeling and sympathy." Perhaps this was an apt description of the physical culture-loving Vogel.

This unique collection shows that the inventive gay mind in 1920s Wisconsin could find its way around cultural strictures imposed by society. ■

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

Say It with Gear

Amber Ault has an unconventional suggestion for a gift for that special someone this Valentine's Day.

If you really want to express your love for that cutie this Valentine's Day, give that person ...

- ... great chocolate
- ... great dinner
- ... great — whoops, this isn't that kind of magazine!

How about great gear?

In previous generations, diamonds were a girl's best friend, but we're politically evolved enough to know how those diamonds got here, and besides, this is a recession. And while



Nothing is more romantic than being truly seen, validated, and supported by your beloved.



Amber Ault
ourlivesmadison.com
user Amber

chocolate and dinner are certainly appreciated, they are quickly consumed. Indeed, if you date an athlete, s/he may regard them simply as fuel for the next event—how romantic is that? Yes, durable goods in the form of gear may be just the thing to wend your way deeper into the healthy heart of the object of your affection.

There are two secrets to giving great gear: first, know what kind will make your sweetie's heart beat faster; second, find an expert who can help you narrow down your options.

To get at the first issue, think carefully about what brings your beloved joy, and juxtapose this with gear-related problems about which s/he complains. Somewhere in the universe between these things lives the perfect gift of gear.

For example, if your sweetheart rides bike in sub-zero temps training for the challenging QuadruPedal ride and waxes poetic about

how warm those lobster claw gloves keep the hands but laments how the feet freeze, you've got your data. A lifetime supply of adhesive toe warmers could heat up your honey's passion for you. Not romantic, you say? Nothing is more romantic than being truly seen, validated, and supported by your beloved. Besides, it's all about the framing; the note can read, "I want my love to keep you warm even when you're pursuing your dreams in Siberia."

If your partner comes home from the gym proud of bench-pressing improvements despite wretched blisters, you're onto it. A sexy pair of leather lifting gloves could raise this romance to the next level. The inscription? "You always lift me higher and higher."

A local kayaker friend tells me that "a good paddle" would make a nice sentimental offering, while a Madison Gay Hockey Association goalie says, "Any stick that looks expensive and sexy proly is expensive and sexy."

You're getting the idea. Gear is good.

So, now that you're convinced and you have researched your beloved's gear delights and deficits, you need to find an expert. Fortunately, Madison is full of those, whatever his/her active pastime might be.

Let's pick running. I call up David Meixel-sperger, co-owner of Berkeley Running Company, to ask him how he would guide a shopper hoping to send a message of love.

"First," he says, "You have to know what the person likes and what kind of running the person does." David knows the secret of romance.

Then he starts sifting and winnowing. For an outdoor runner, he recommends a "SPIbelt," which allows your valentine to carry a cell phone around the waist, increasing safety ... and the ability to receive your texts on the go. He's also got "STABILicers," that attach to running shoes for navigating icy terrain; he's got white lights for those who want to see, and red lights for those who want to be seen; he's got warmers for various body parts, and massage sticks "for keeping your sweetheart's muscles loose." Isn't this starting to sound romantic?

Along with the chocolate and love poems this Valentine's Day, think about giving someone a gift of gear that will raise her heart rate or make him sweat—both scientifically proven aphrodisiacs likely to translate into you having a fabulous Valentine's Day, too. ■

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quality of life

Louie Phillips & Brian Schultz

Louie: Trust and Estate Paralegal at Boardman Law Firm
Brian: Director of Student Accessibility Services for UW Colleges
Years in the Industry: Louie, 25 years; Brian, 9 years
Years in Madison: 30 each

What community organizations are you involved with?

- Louie:**
- Currently on Carpenter-Ridgeway Neighborhood Association Board
 - Recently six years on the New Harvest Foundation Board
- Brian:**
- Singer and recent board member with the Madison Chamber Choir
 - Musician and choir director with Unity Church of Madison

Personal Shopper Bonnie Raimy on Dressing Louie & Brian:

Orvis. The name is synonymous with fishing ... fly fishing to be exact. The company, founded in 1856, is definitely the place to go for fly fishing rods, accessories, even fishing lessons, but clothing? Huh?

Orvis's style is "world traveler meets sophisticated professional" and absolutely oozes class. Leather and suede, tweeds, wool, madras ... it's all there, crafted into beautiful garments just waiting to be worn. And that's where our mature male professionals enter the picture.

Louie and Brian have been partners for 29 years. As longtime residents of Madison, they have cultivated a love of the arts, a love for community preservation, and a passion for volunteering. Louie is the outgoing one, while Brian is more shy and reserved. Although different in personality, both men were ideal for Orvis.

Louie works for a law firm, so his ensemble needed to be professional, yet allow for his outgoing personality to come through. The corduroy pub jacket paired with a suede vest and plaid button-down allow for both professional and business casual attire and the suede vest adds a bit of unexpected flair. The outfit says "confidence, independence, and good taste."

Brian, although shy, wanted to show his adventurous side. Working at UW allowed for a bit more leeway in dress, but still needed to be professional. The leather vest is less formal than a traditional blazer, but quality and craftsmanship make up for its casual nature. Pairing the vest with a sweater and business casual button down create an ensemble that speaks to both Brian's reserved and adventurous sides ... the hat is both practical and daring, and let's face it, Brian looks fantastic wearing it!

The shoot took place at Indocara on West Washington. Owner Natasha Vora scours the globe for beautiful, unique furnishings and artwork. Stepping into Indocara was like taking a journey ... I strongly suggest you make a trip yourself!

Orvis Company Store, 1700 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562, (608) 831-3181

On Brian:

- Presidential microfiber button down**, Retail, \$79.00
- CF0 Donegal wool/cashmere mechanic sweater**, Retail, \$139.00
- Pant, khaki**, Retail, \$79.00
- Field trailer hat**, Retail, \$49.00
- Lambswool scarf**, Retail, \$45.00

On Louie:

- Inisheer Isle plaid button down**, Retail, \$59.00
- Roughout suede vest (conac)**, Retail, \$129.00
- Murphy's pub jacket**, Retail, \$279.99
- MK Teton twill retro khaki**, Retail, \$69.00
- Lambswool scarf**, Retail, \$45.00

Indocara, 540 W. Washington Ave., Madison, WI (608) 251-7711

Stylist/personal shopper: shop@bonnieraimy.com

Hair: Scott Staples, I Du Hair, 21 North Butler Street, Madison, WI 53703

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Choosing Love

Jimmy Owen reflects on the coming out, coming together journey that he and his parents have traveled.

Last October, my parents came to visit Madison for the first time. They stayed with my partner Jim and me for almost a week and treated our relationship with care, respect, and love. To some LGBT couples, this may sound innocuous and normal. For others, it sounds impossible. For my family and me it has been an ongoing process—a journey full of silence, anger, tears, grace, and ultimately, acceptance. The story of my family's coming out is a reminder to me that love and recognition can sometimes be a long, arduous journey. It required everyone involved to challenge their core beliefs and dig beyond religious thinking to find a spiritual foundation of love.



When I realized that in telling them they were "wrong" for believing as they did, I was doing to them exactly what they were doing to me.



In the fall of 1988, I told my parents I was gay. I didn't think it was that big a surprise. I mean, I was living with a "roommate," working in a gay and lesbian counseling center, and attending a church very different from the one in which I was raised. I was certain my parents knew.

At my college graduation I remember Mom saying to friends and family, "You know that Jimmy, he marches to the beat of a different drum," and I hung on her every word looking for the courage to tell them.

Evidently, the drum she was referring to was heterosexual, because when I did come out to them it was not music to their ears.

We spent the next four years in silence. I was dead to them—no phone calls, visits, nothing. Holidays and special events were painful, but I learned what the term "family of choice" meant and began filling my world with friends in similar situations looking to have peaceful and meaningful times together.

After four years of silence, I asked them if we could sit down to talk it out. It was the beginning of our reconciliation. Although our meeting was difficult and tense, we all shared the desire to find a way to put this back together. We had many uncomfortable moments over the next several years but were committed to figuring out what the relationship was going to look like and how we would choose to love.

My biggest challenge was finding a balance between understanding that Mom and Dad had a right to their belief system while continuing to hold on to my own. When I realized that in telling them they were "wrong" for believing as they did, I was doing to them exactly what they were doing to me. Choosing "right" over "happy" wasn't working. We eventually moved to a place of not trying to convince each other of our "rightness" and simply chose to love.

A turning point in the relationship took place when they attended a HRC function with me in Dallas about 12 years ago. After four years of inviting, they finally agreed to join me. This would be the most important acknowledgement of acceptance and love I had received from my family (my mom, dad, aunt, and sister and brother-in-law were all in attendance) and the first time they would be introduced to my world on such a grand scale. I hoped through the event they would see our sameness, rather than difference. Although it was hard for Mom and Dad, I learned later they came because they knew how important it was for me.

As I showed my family to the table, I beamed with pride and tears of joy. My dad showed a bit of fear when he asked for directions to the restroom. I walked him to the door and he said with a sheepish smile, "Is it safe in there?" The only thing I could

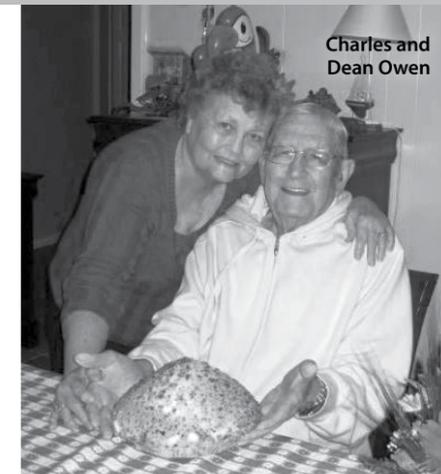
I saw my parents not as mean, narrow-minded ogres, but as scared and willing to step into the unknown for the love of their child.

think to say was, "Yeah, but I'll stand guard for you just in case." In that moment, any tension shattered and I realized how brave he was being. It also made me realize what a big step he was taking in showing love for his son. We laughed, and I saw his humanness. My parents saw my community as normal. It was demystified and no longer a threat. I saw my parents not as mean, narrow-minded ogres, but as scared and willing to step into the unknown for the love of their child.

So much has happened since then. I have fathered a child, married, and become an educator and activist. My parents continue to hold on to their faith, which contradicts who I am, but we have been able to reconcile our relationship. I don't try to change them anymore, nor do I have a right to do so. We simply choose love.

My advice to anyone struggling on this journey is to be patient. It took me years to accept my sexuality. It took my parents years as well. I had to respect their pace while staying true to me. Be persistent. Not pushy, but persistent. Gently continue to invite them into your world. Keep your internalized homophobia in check. When my mother began asking about my dating world, I was so used to this being a taboo topic; I had to challenge my thinking, to recognize that she was ready and to let her in.

As I reflect, it all seems so far away now—today is very ordinary and as comfortable as I dreamed it would be. The process evolved over two decades and we've all benefitted. A week after my parents' visit,



Charles and Dean Owen

my mother was diagnosed with stage four lymphoma. I don't know how long she will be alive, which makes me very sad. At the same time, I am so proud of our journey. It is honest. It is authentic. It is love. Thank you, Mom and Dad. Thank you for redefining what family looks like—and embracing the love in our lives.

Jimmy has been a LGBT therapist for over 20 years. In addition, he works as a Trauma Specialist for the Dane County District Attorney's office Crime Response Program. He and his partner, Jim, have 3 beagles, Dixie, Silas and Tatum. He can be found online a www.jimmyowen.com

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Two Steps Forward

Equal pay for equal work? Not quite yet. **Tamara Packard** explains how the State of Wisconsin's health insurance coverage for partners and children gets us closer but not quite there.

Every other Big Ten University has done it for years. The Gap, General Motors, Kimberly-Clark, Home Depot, FedEx Office, Miller Brewing, and the majority of Fortune 500 companies also do it. A growing number of Wisconsin municipalities and private employers do it, too (see sidebar). And as of January 1, the State of Wisconsin, including the University of Wisconsin, is finally closer to providing equal pay for equal work. Now, the State has begun offering its employees health insurance coverage that includes coverage for the domestic partners of State employees, as well as their children.



Federal law exempts from taxation the value of health insurance covering an employee's spouse and dependents—but a domestic partner is not a spouse under federal law.



To prepare for this day, State employees and their partners have been busily completing the necessary Affidavit of Domestic Partnership form (ET-2371). This Affidavit, among other things, requires the couple to acknowledge that they consider one another to be immediate family and to commit to responsibility for each other's basic living expenses. Registering as Domestic Partners at the County Clerk's office does NOT qualify State employees and their partners for DP health insurance and other

employment benefits now available to State employees. This Affidavit, along with other paperwork, is necessary for State employees to complete and file with their human resources officers in order to access domestic partner health insurance coverage and other important employment benefits, such as the ability to leave their Wisconsin Retirement System account to their partner when they die. (These other benefits are beyond the scope of this column; please review the Wisconsin Employee Trust Funds publication "Domestic Partner Benefits under Chapter 40 of the Wisconsin Statutes" [ET-2370] for more information.)

You may have noticed that I said at the start of this column that by providing domestic partner health insurance benefits, the State is "closer" to providing equal pay for equal work; there is a hitch. In most cases, the employee will be taxed on the value of these benefits. Federal law exempts from taxation the value of health insurance covering an employee's spouse and dependents—but a domestic partner is not a spouse under federal law. State law follows the same basic rule. Thus, unless a domestic partner (or child) qualifies as a dependent, the value of the additional insurance is counted as additional "income" to the employee.

For example: assume that coverage for only the employee costs \$500 per month. Coverage for the employee and partner costs \$800 per month. The \$300 per month difference is counted as additional income to the employee, and taxed at the same rate as the employee's regular wages. Therefore, for \$300 in benefits, an employee with an effective tax rate of 20% will pay \$60 per month in taxes that a married employee will not pay for the same benefits.

The only way to exclude this benefit from the employee's wages for tax purposes is for the partner (and children, if any) to qualify as a dependent. Generally, this means that the potential dependent has had very little to no income during the year, lives with the employee, is a "member of the employee's household," and receives at least one half of his/her support from the employee, among other things. (The Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers a good primer on this at dor.state.wi.us/taxpro/news/090803.html.)

Fortunately, there is a fix in the works, and the correction is at the federal level. It is a bill called the **Tax Equity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act**. This bill would eliminate the tax inequity described above: employees would no longer be taxed on the value of the coverage provided to their partners and their children. Instead, just like their married co-workers, domestically partnered employees would also receive health insurance for their family without additional taxation. This bill has enjoyed substantial support among United States Representatives and Senators, as well as businesses throughout the country. And now there is reason to believe this bill may become law sooner than later: it has been incorporated into the House of Representatives' version of the health care reform bill. In the process of reforming health care, we may also achieve another small step on the path to full equality for our families.

Power concedes nothing without a fight. But little by little, family by family, neighbor by neighbor, employer by employer, we are advancing toward equality. ■

Tamara Packard is a Madison civil rights lawyer, activist and partner in the law firm of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, www.cwpb.com.

Wisconsin Employers with Domestic Partner Benefits

The following is a sampling of Wisconsin employers who offer health insurance coverage to the domestic partners of their employees:

Public Employers:

- Madison Metropolitan School District
- City of Monona
- LaCrosse School District
- Western Wisconsin Technical College

Private Employers:

- 3D Manufacturing (Shawano)
- Alliant Energy (Madison)
- American Girl (Middleton)
- Brown Shoe Company (Sun Prairie)
- Capital Newspapers (Madison)
- Covance (Madison)
- Dean Health Systems (Madison)
- Epic Systems (Verona)
- Guaranty Bank (Milwaukee)
- Gundersen Lutheran Health System (LaCrosse)
- Lands' End (Dodgeville)
- Liberty Mutual Insurance (Wausau)
- Madison Gas & Electric (Madison)
- Northwestern Mutual (Milwaukee)
- Oscar Mayer (Madison)
- Platypus Technologies (Madison)
- S. C. Johnson (Racine)
- Wisconsin Education Association Council (Madison)

For a more complete list of Wisconsin employers with domestic partner benefits, visit fairwisconsin.com/issues/DPB/WIemployers.html.



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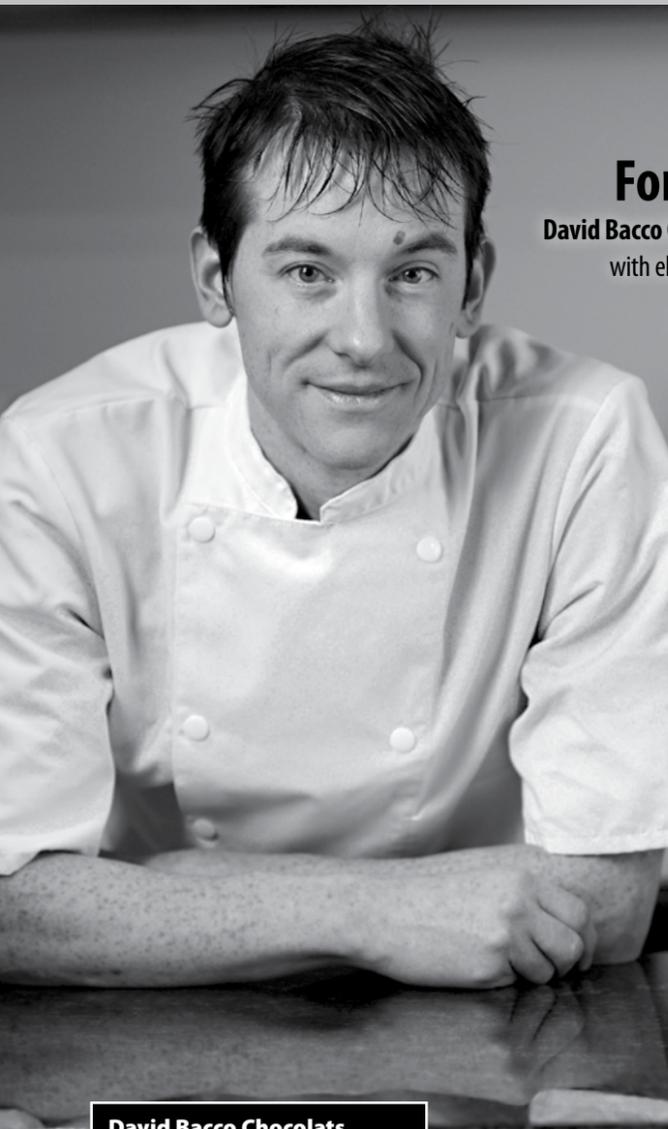
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Force of Nature

David Bacco Chocolats captivates mind and body with elementally themed chocolate.

TAKE ONE LOOK AT DAVID Bacco's Technicolor trove of truffles and you can tell he's in his element. His bold, bittersweet chocolates evoke the mercurial facets of nature in flavor-snapshots derivative of the elements: water, air, fire, earth, and spirit.

Bacco attributes the spiritual side of his culinary influences to Tai Chi and yoga: chocolate comes from the earth, takes in air and water for sustenance, and gets its soul from fire.

"The spirit is just the culmination and gives it its total being, its total essence," said Bacco, noting the varying qualities of bitterness, warm caramel undertones, and the almost anatomical properties of cocoa butter, "the blood of chocolate," which gives the chocolate its mouthfeel, body, and sheen.

The exterior of the truffles are matched with an equally assertive, geometric physicality—an assembly of hard angles, arched domes, and whimsical abstract designs.

The flavors range from traditional to experimental, incorporating teas, fruits, spices, and yes, even Nueske's applewood-smoked bacon, to "clarify" the elemental themes. The seasonal aphrodisiac truffles for him and her (or for "him and him or her and her," Bacco adds) are a special treat to consider as Valentine's Day nears.

If you're planning to go out for dessert, consider a sit-down date in the 100 percent green-powered shop. Its chic, contemporary atmosphere is perfect for lingering at

one of a few intimate tables, a nice slice of Zen away from the hubbub of the mall.

Be sure to browse the wings of the store, where you'll find the seven varieties of tonifying Chakra bars such as the No. 2 Water/Sacral bar, with orange zest, Madras curry, dried mango and other delights, as well as their drinking chocolates—aromatic bliss in a cup.

"This is chocolate with a purpose," said Haag. "A tremendous amount of thought and passion and good energy goes into it, and I think as people taste the chocolate the good energy is transferred."

It's perhaps the spirit—the essence—behind their chocolate that lends to a wholly experiential savoring to each bite. The chocolates I sampled keyed all five of my senses. Maybe even my sixth ... I'm sensing another visit soon. —Marcelle Richards

David Bacco Chocolats

550 N. Midvale Blvd., Madison
(608) 233-1600
Chocolatier: David Bacco
President: Christine Haag
Sales Manager: Ann Culligan
Assistant Chocolatier: Megan Stowell
Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00 a.m. until 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.; and Sunday 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Visit davidbacco.com for a complete listing of products and specials. Classes start at 6:30 p.m.

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251-1222
French, Creole \$

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600 Williamson St., 255-6910
Indonesian \$\$
bandungrestaurant.com

Bellini Restaurant
401 E. Washington Ave.,
250-0097
Italian, Pasta \$\$\$
bellinirestaurant.com

Blue Velvet Lounge
430 W. Gilman, 250-9900
American, Tapas \$
thebluevelvetlounge.com

The Brass Ring
701 E. Washington Ave.,
256-9359
American, Burgers \$
thebrassringmadison.com

Buraka
543 State St., 255-3646
East African \$
buraka.com

Burrito Drive
310 S. Brearly St., 260-8586
Mexican \$
burritodrive.com

Cafe Continental
108 King St., 251-4880
Continental \$\$

Cafe Costa Rica
141 S. Butler St., 356-9830
Costa Rican \$

Cafe Porta Alba
15 N. Butler St.,
441-0202
Pizza \$\$
cafeportaalba.com

Cafe Soleil
25 N. Pinckney St., 251-2700
Bread, Sandwiches/Deli \$
letoile-restaurant.com

Cardinal Bar & Cafe
418 E. Wilson St., 251-0080
Lunch \$
cardinalbar.com

Dayton Street Grille
1 W. Dayton St., 257-6000
American \$\$
concoursehotel.com/dining

Dotty Dumpling's Dowry
317 N. Frances St., 259-0000
American, Burgers \$
dottedumplingsdowry.com

Eldorado Grill
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Tex-Mex \$\$\$
eldoradogrillmadison.com

Fresco
227 State St., 663-7374
American \$\$\$
frescomadison.com

Frida Mexican Grill
117 State St., 256-4000
Mexican, Southwestern \$\$
fridamexicangrill.com

Great Dane
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Brewery, Burgers \$\$
greatdanepub.com

Harvest
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American, French \$\$\$
harvest-restaurant.com

Himal Chuli
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Nepalese, Vegetarian \$

Husnu's
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Turkish, Italian \$

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Steak, American \$\$\$
johnnydelmonicos.com

Kabul Restaurant
541 State St., 256-6322
Afghanistani \$

Lazy Jane's Cafe
1358 Williamson St., 257-5263
Sandwiches, Deli \$

Le Chardonnay
320 W. Johnson St., 268-0372
Mediterranean, French \$\$\$
lechardonnaymadison.com

L'Etoile
25 N. Pinckney St., 251-0500
French, American \$\$\$
letoile-restaurant.com

Maharani
380 W. Washington Ave.,
251-9999
Indian \$\$

Marigold Kitchen
118 S. Pinckney St., 661-5559
Sandwiches, Soup \$
marigoldkitchen.com

Michael's Frozen Custard
2531 Monroe St., 231-3500
Frozen Custard, Burgers \$
ilovemichaels.com

New Orleans Takeout
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New Orleans Cuisine \$
eatmobettah.com

The Old Fashioned
23 N. Pinckney St., 310-4545
Steak, American \$\$
theoldfashioned.com

Opus Lounge
116 King St., 441-6787
Tapas \$\$
opuslounge.com

Restaurant Muramoto
106 King St., 260-2680
Asian Fusion, Vegetarian \$

Roman Candle
1054 Williamson St., 258-2000
Pizza \$
theromancandle.com

Sardine
517 Williamson St., 441-1600
French \$\$\$

Shamrock Bar
117 W. Main St., 255-5029
Sunday Brunch \$
shamrockbar.com

Sunprint Cafe
1 S. Pinckney St., 268-0114
Sandwiches, Vegetarian \$

Tornado Club
116 S. Hamilton St., 256-3570
Steak \$\$\$
apartmentrenting.com/tornado

Weary Traveler
1201 Williamson St., 442-6207
International \$

East

Bunky's Cafe
2425 Atwood Ave., 204-7004
Italian, Mediterranean \$\$
bunkyscafe.net

Ella's Deli
2902 E. Washington Ave.,
241-5291
Kosher/Deli, Ice Cream \$
elladeliandicecreamparlor.com

Fork and Spoon Cafe
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Italian, Pasta \$
forkandspooncafe.com

Glass Nickel
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glassnickelpizza.com

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vrv-madison.com/mariners

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American, Pies \$
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Nau-Ti-Gal
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Seafood \$\$
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Tex Tubbs Taco Palace
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Tex-Mex \$
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West

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American, Vegetarian \$\$
bluephies.com

Captain Bill's
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Seafood \$\$
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flemingssteakhouse.com

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Mediterranean \$\$
Inka Heritage
602 S. Park St., 310-4282
Peruvian \$\$\$

La Hacienda
515 S. Park St., 255-8227
Mexican \$

Madeleine's Patisserie
3742 Speedway Rd., 441-0909
Bread, Pastries \$
madeleinesmadison.com

Mickie's Dairy Bar
1511 Monroe St., 256-9476
Breakfast, Burgers \$

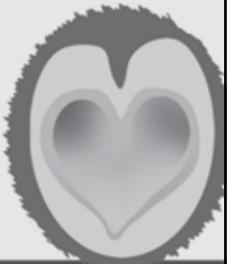
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Everything's Coming Out Roses

Out and proud **Jake Aebly** is hopeful for all those who will come out to a more open-minded society.

Christmas break home from college, having missed the memo about not coming out during the holidays. Anyway, once everyone sobered up and mom stopped begging me to become a priest, they came around.

It has been five years since that Christmas, and I feel so lucky. My family—with the exception of a few loose screws—has completely accepted me and my boyfriend of three years. My social life is thriving, and as I'm planning a career in musical theatre, I don't exactly lie awake at night worrying about job discrimination. I even recently managed to come out as a drag queen to my own mother! Her only response was, "Well, thank God I've finally got someone to will the mink coat to." So, she's handling it rather well.

Looking forward, I am reminded that perhaps the most remarkable thing about my coming out was how unremarkable it was. Certainly LGBT folks still suffer discrimination, but things are progressing, and quickly. I recently helped a local high school with their fall musical, and I was astounded at how young kids are coming out these days! Sure, there are still horror stories, but I can't help but think we've come a long way when I'm teaching a 14-year-old how

to properly attach false eyelashes so he can proudly show the whole school his interpretation of the character "Mary Sunshine."

The most important thing I've learned since coming out as a big gay drag queen is the value of being yourself, and more importantly, loving yourself. Others will see this and love you for it. If you won't take my advice, take the advice Judy Garland once gave to a young Liza Minnelli: "Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else." ■

the wrestling team. Yet no matter how hard I tried, I simply couldn't suppress my telltale lisp or urges to accessorize. Although I was too afraid to come out, I was still an obvious target for bullies. I went to bed every night thanking God for the women's soccer team, because they kept me safe in the hallways.

During my junior year a dear friend committed suicide. Although this was devastating, it ultimately prompted me to re-examine life, and I became determined to live mine to the fullest. I knew this meant that I could no longer hide who I was, not that I was doing a great job... I slowly began to come out to close friends, and they were generally accepting. A few even came out themselves!

I came out to my family during my first

I even recently managed to come out as a drag queen to my own mother! Her only response was, "Well, thank God I've finally got someone to will the mink coat to."



our lives **01** Jake Aebly
ourlivesmadison.com
user jakob.aebly

Whenever I read the stories of those who came—and came out—before me, I always think my story to be rather unremarkable. The eldest of three children, I was raised on a naval base outside of Seattle. I grew up in an environment of women and children that pined away for macho sailors who had left us in order to perform mysterious and manly duties at sea. This, my mother would later hypothesize, was my "root." At any rate, I've been playing show tunes at the piano since before I could read, so open-mouthed shock is not typically the response I get when I announce, "I'm gay." Being "obvious," however, doesn't necessarily make coming out any easier.

When my father retired from the Navy, our family moved back to the Midwest where real estate was cheap and "family values" abounded. I attended a rural high school, and the abundance of Confederate flags kept me from professing my love for the captain of

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