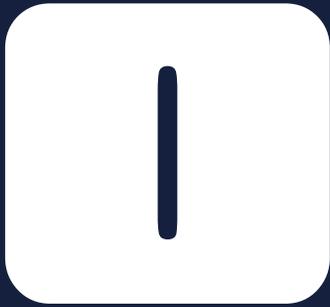


March/April
2010

our lives



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Cover Photo by Todd Klassy, toddklassy.com



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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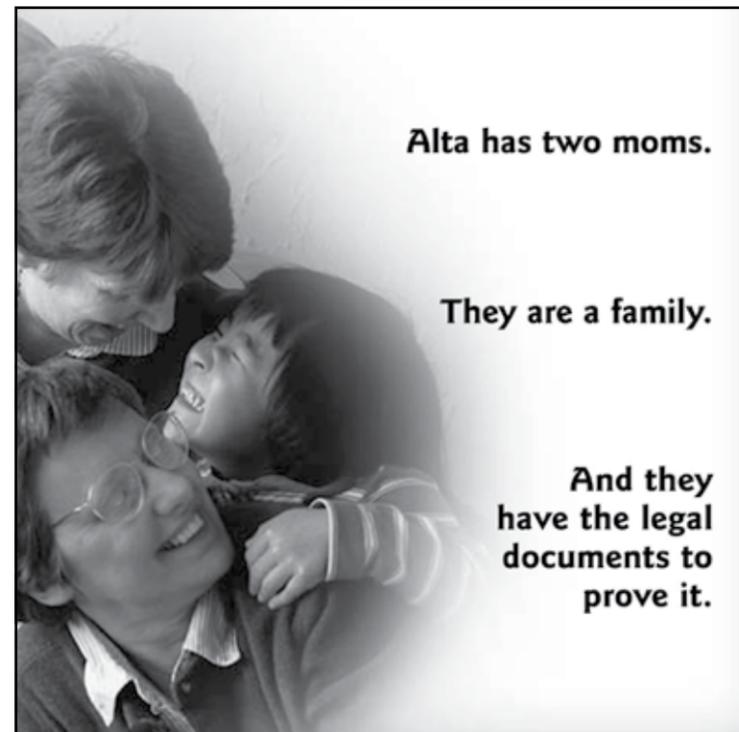


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Community and Workplace Advocacy



Our Workplaces, a column written by Marty Fox, debuts in this issue. Marty is the first seated president of the Out Professional and Executive Network (OPEN).

Last November, Marty authored the Corporate Diversity Initiative Report for *Our Lives* and has spent the past year helping OPEN's founding interim board lay a foundation for building a network of professionals and executives who can create community and advance equality issues around workplace advocacy. The work OPEN is doing is exciting, and I'm looking forward to its evolution.

It is my hope that by dedicating editorial space to workplace equality disparities, *Our Lives* will provide local resources and educational information that empower you to make a positive impact in your own world. As Marty says in this month's column, "There is no reason why the Madison area can't become a leading community for LGBT diversity and, in turn, move our local economy forward."

I couldn't agree with her more.

With love,
Patrick Farabaugh
PUBLISHER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



contributors

Dick Wagner, former Dane County Board Chair, was the first openly gay county official (1980-1994) in Wisconsin and a founding member of the national association of lesbian and gay public officials. Governor Anthony Earl appointed him in 1983 to co-chair the Governor's Commission on Lesbian and Gay Issues. He was the founding co-chair for the New Harvest Foundation for LGBT support in South Central Wisconsin and founding co-chair of the Wisconsin Alumni Association's LGBT Council, the first such alumni group in the Big Ten. He has an MA and PhD in American history from the UW Madison.



Retired, he is currently researching and presenting on Wisconsin's gay history among other civic activities.

Sue Gill loves to travel, and hopes one day to go to Moscow so that she can have some ice cream while sitting in Red Square. She also loves snowshoeing and backpacking from her home base in Madison where she lives with her partner Sheri and their two dogs. Her step daughter Christa also lives in Madison where she performs with several musical groups, and her step son Aaron is in the Navy. Sue is a licensed psychologist and has been working in private practice and with crime victims at the DA's office for the past few years. She specializes in working with PTSD and other effects of abuse, and in LGBT issues.



Tara Ayres is a singer, writer, actor, director and general theater geek. She is the Artistic Director of StageQ, Madison's queer theater troupe, and hosts a weekly radio program, "Better Living Through Show Tunes," on WORT, 89.9 FM. She's a strong believer in changing the world through art. She loves bringing people together and helping them find their voices and build community at the same time. She so appreciates how generous people in the Madison music and theater worlds are with their time and talent, and what a nurturing community Madison is for people who take artistic risks. In her spare time, Tara runs a computer training business, Breathe Easy Computer Training, and teaches individual voice lessons.



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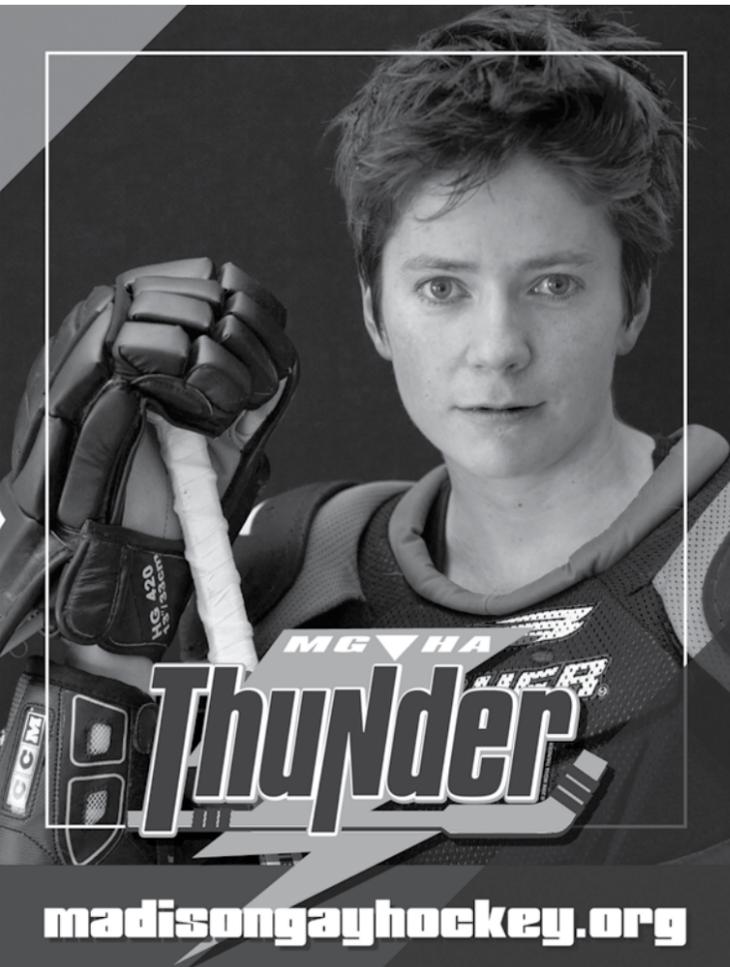
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community



OUR INTRODUCTIONS

our lives
Patti Thompson
ourlivesmadison.com
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From left to right:
Patti Thompson, Daña Alder and Donna Wess sharing conversation and coffee at Java Cat Coffee.

Talk of the Town

Meet LezTalk listowner Patti Thompson and moderators Daña Alder and Donna Wess. The trio have created a thriving online community for area lesbians.

What is LezTalkMadison?

Founded July 2, 2007, LezTalkMadison@yahoo.com (LezTalk) is an online community with current membership numbers in the mid-600s that is designed to provide lesbians of south-central Wisconsin (or wanna-be's) a one-stop shop for posting and receiving event information, resources, referrals, requests, and questions directly related or connected to lesbian and lesbian-oriented content. The list is moderated, meaning that all posts are reviewed and approved for posting, and women who join must be approved for membership. LezTalk also has a sister list; HYPERLINK "mailto:Lezdatemadison@yahoo.com" Lezdatemadison@yahoo.com is an offshoot of LezTalkMadison designed to make one-on-one connections of the romantic kind.

How did LezTalkMadison get started?

LezTalk was started by community organizer Patti Thompson, who for two years in a row, was frustrated by not having one source of outreach to Madison lesbians in order to recruit traveling companions for a trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Upon outreach to local LGBT groups requesting they post the announcement, she was informed they only post information related to their own groups. Patti, also having felt that Madison's lesbian community was rather disjointed at the time, took the bull by the horns and started an email listserv dedicated to Madison area lesbians for the purpose of making connections.

What kind of traffic does LezTalkMadison receive, and what are the most common topics posted?

Since its birth, LezTalk has put through 3,300+ postings. Typically about one to four postings come through daily. Members can set their email settings to receive the digest version, which truncates the messages into one email with an index of subject lines at the top for quick review. Most common topics posted are LGBT events, housing

available, and skilled trades people and medical practitioner referrals needed.

Please describe the impact of LezTalkMadison on the lesbian community.

Patti's favorite story summing up LezTalk's impact occurred one night when she was at an Indiequeer dance. She ended up sitting at a table with a new couple in town. Without knowing Patti's role with LezTalk, one of the women told the story of how they were enroute moving to another state but ended up detouring and finding their way to Madison. They were told one of the most important things to do is get on the LezTalkMadison. The visitor proceeded to tell how important the list had been to helping them connect with local lesbian and that it made all the difference helping them settling into Madison.

Overall, it has revolutionized our community's ability to stay connected, reach out for help, and cast a wide net for advertising events and resources.

What is the most noteworthy posting on LezTalk?

One of the most noteworthy postings happened in February 2008 (message #745) during the Obama and Clinton primaries. The list was quite young and its mission was still being defined. There had been a lot of activity on the list focused on discussing the pros and cons of each candidate. As you can imagine, the race and gender issues were right up on the surface and postings were getting more heated.

As the listowner, Patti sent out a clear and diplomatic message calling the end of any further political discussions on this list, and also defined for herself, as the leader of the group, what her vision is for LezTalk.

A seemingly innocent posting could and has caused an onslaught of opinions and discussions, so now we moderators watch closely for those tones and either reject them or ask the poster to reword.

Photographed by Melody Hanson, Imagine Photography

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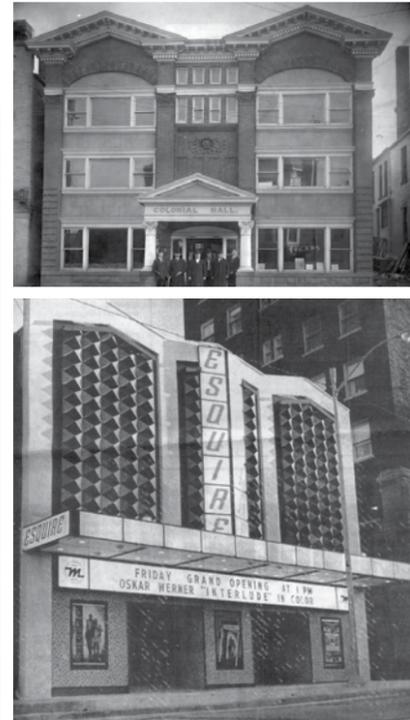


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Spotlight by StageQ Artistic Director Tara Ayres



Cross-pollination

The Bartell Theater—home to six theater companies—is a haven of collaboration and cooperation.

One of the things that I love about the theater scene in Madison (and the general arts scene here as well) is the kind of collaboration that happens between different theater groups and artists. From StageQ, Perfect Harmony, and Proud Theater's co-production of "Riot Acts," to Kia Karlen bringing 50 different visual and performance artists together for "Something Wicked" at MMoCA, to Children's Theater of Madison teaming up

Constructed in 1906 as Colonial Hall, it housed a dance academy, a community center, a bowling alley and pool hall.

with Four Seasons to produce "Little Women: The Musical," to StageQ and Mercury Players Theater's co-production of "Vamp" and "Cloud 9," there's a lively foment of cross-pollination among artists here. And one of the institutionalized cornerstones of that collaboration is the Gerald A. Bartell Community Theatre.

The Bartell is something of a Madison miracle: a theater building owned and operated collaboratively by six theater companies. In most cities, theater companies see themselves in competition for audiences and for scarce resources. In Madison, a group of visionary community theater stalwarts, representing "competing" theater troupes, joined together in 1994 to create what would become the Bartell. One of the only ventures of its kind in the U.S., the Bartell does more than provide performance space: the proximity of the troupes, and the structure of the organization guarantees communication between the groups, and fosters cooperation, from sharing props and costumes to helping each other find technical staff.

The building itself has a colorful history: constructed in 1906 as Colonial Hall, it housed a dance academy on the third floor, a community center and stage on the second floor, and a bowling alley and pool hall on the first floor. It continued to be an entertainment and meeting venue after it became Madison's

first VFW post in 1946. It became a movie theater (The Esquire) from 1969 to 1993. And in 1997, it was leased by the Gerald A. Bartell Community Theatre Foundation, which later purchased the building.

Some of the troupes housed by the Bartell have folded or moved on to other venues (Millenium, Reprise, Mazomanie R&R, and Mad-CAP) but the Bartell has consistently housed six theater troupes. The current companies are Encore Studio for Performing Arts; Laboratory Theater; Madison Theatre Guild; Mercury Players Theater; StageQ; and Strollers Theatre. Each company has a unique identity, ranging from queer theater (StageQ) to theater focused on people with disabilities (Encore) to children's theater (Laboratory) to more avant-garde fare (Mercury Players) to classic community theater (MTG and Strollers). Each of the resident companies has a seat on the Board of Directors. And while each troupe's philosophy and management structure varies, we all have a fierce commitment to each group's artistic freedom and autonomy.

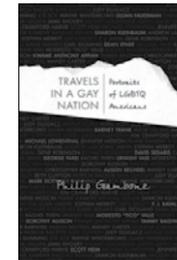
The Board and committee meetings ensure that the representatives of the different troupes see each other regularly and work together. Just that simple proximity encourages cooperation; the people in the Bartell community know each other and call on each other for help, borrowing and loaning set pieces, props, and costumes freely, as well as working on projects and productions together. It's not uncommon for calls for help to go out and for there to be immediate assistance forthcoming. The spirit of community cooperation extends far beyond the six Bartell resident companies to other Madison theater troupes.

Each of the resident companies obtains its own space for rehearsal; storage for props, sets, and costumes; and shop space for building sets. Since all of the groups have similar needs, the Bartell Board is currently researching the feasibility of obtaining additional space to meet those needs. If it does so, it will likely undertake the first major capitol campaign since its inception. And it will certainly continue its mission of supporting vital community theater in Madison.

The Bartell is located at 113 E. Mifflin Street in Madison, just off the Capital Square. For more information, visit the Bartell website at www.bartelltheatre.org. ■

Travels in a Gay Nation: Portraits of LGBTQ Americans

by Philip Gambone



Gambone traveled the length and breadth of the United States, talking with people about their lives. In addition to interviews with David Sedaris, George Takei, Barney Frank, and Tammy Baldwin, Gambone brings us lesser-known voices—a retired Naval officer, a transgender scholar and "drag king," a Princeton philosopher, two opera sopranos who happen to be lovers, the founder of a gay frat house, and a pair of Vermont garden designers.

In this age when contemporary gay America is still coming under attack, Gambone captures the humanity of each individual. Whether splashy or quiet, center-stage or behind the scenes, his subjects have managed—despite facing ignorance, fear, hatred, intolerance, injustice, violence, ridicule, or plain indifference—to construct passionate, inspiring lives. *Travels in a Gay Nation* is part of the *Living Out: Gay and Lesbian Autobiographies* series published by The UW Press.

Something to Declare: Good Lesbian Travel Writing

Edited by Gillian Kendall



Editor Gillian Kendall has brought together a collection of impressionistic, literary travel essays that explore the sense of place and the pull of wanderlust, and reveal what happens when a traveler follows her heart. Established and emerging lesbian travel writers present accounts ranging from the poetic and internal to the exhilarating and life-altering.

These women share personal stories of exploration and adventure. Whether set in Italian changing rooms, a Cadillac hearse, an ashram, a medieval labyrinth, a wheelchair, or a kayak, *Something to Declare* offers stories of reflection, challenge, and growth. *Something to Declare* is published by Terrace Books, a trade imprint of The UW Press.

Missing Monona's North Shore

There is a magic in temporary places
Even when you don't know yet
A place will soon no longer
Exist as it is, going there
Is charged with intensity.

I was drawn to that shore
Over and over to stare at a
View that people have always seen—
South-west across water,
I didn't know something was coming
But I knew I'd better go look now.

A lot of people wound up there.
A large group of us ran there
Moon-crazed one night, and acted
Out an impromptu play on the
Rocks, touched all the trees.

We make art as a barrier
To the intangible and familiarity is
A coin we spend freely and pursue
With ferocity.

Nicky Sund is a Madison poet, musician and cab driver. She is a graduate of the UW-Madison Creative Writing Dept. She has read poetry at the Room of One's Own Valentine's Day Love and Lust reading for many years. She plays drums with the bands Ladies Must Swing, Atimevu Drum and Dance Group, the Cheron-Heany Group, the Dalton Gang and Fermata.



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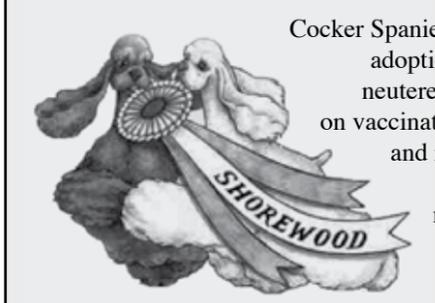
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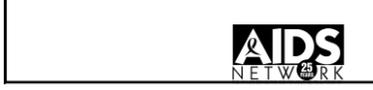


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community

A Force to be Reckoned With

GSAFE's Middle School Program Assistant
Monica Adams is ready to advocate for multicultural, queer youth around the state.

When Monica Adams is in the room, you can feel her presence. At only 24, this powerful woman has strength of vision and clarity of purpose you don't often see in people of any age. For now, Monica turns her attention to the anti-bullying efforts of GSA for Safe Schools (GSAFE). Down the road, though, Monica seems to be on a trajectory to expand her realm of influence as she builds on her experience, passions, and goals.

"I feel like there's often a gap between mainstream organizations and the communities they serve," Monica says. "I want to work with allies and use my ability to speak across cultures to facilitate cooperation and communication. I want to address the 'isms' that are inherited in those institutions and bridge those gaps."

Monica was hired in December 2009 by GSAFE to become the Middle School Program Assistant. Executive Director Cindy Crane said the time had come to bring the work of GSAFE into more middle schools, and Monica is the ideal person for the job.

"Monica has a lot of experience engaging with students of color, including those who are LGBTQ. She is bi-cultural and fluent in Spanish. We were looking for someone who could work with middle school students to address bullying, and we were hoping to find someone who was also familiar with LGBTQ youth issues if possible. That was a lot to find in one person," Cindy says.

"A number of professionals understand LGBT issues and many understand youth, but of those people not everyone is specifically familiar with LGBT youth issues," Cindy says, "Monica really understands all those issues, plus she brings a deeper bicultural experience to the youth."

Bystanders to Allies Program

"Bullying is a huge problem in middle schools. We recognize that being bullied affects a student's sense of safety, academic achievement, and tendency to participate in high-risk behavior," she says.

GSAFE encourages just this kind of positive peer pressure in area schools. Brian Juchems, GSAFE's program director, has successfully used a program called Bystanders to Allies (b2a) to address bullying in Madison middle schools, with funding from the Madison Metropolitan School District. Through b2a training, students find their own power in naming bullying and being an ally to those harassed, so the entire burden of dealing with harassment doesn't fall on the target.

Funding the Position

GSAFE relies largely on individual donations to operate and fulfill their mission to make schools safer for LGBT students and all youth. Monica's half-time position is funded by a three-year grant from the Queer Youth Fund.

With a new staff person, GSAFE would like to extend their trainings and consultation beyond Madison. They also would like to extend their outreach to LGBTQ students of color in middle and high schools and be available to students and parents who only speak Spanish.

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Getting to Work

Monica hopes to improve the services offered to underrepresented youth through her work with GSAFE.

"GSAFE does remarkable work," Monica says. "I'll be doing anti-bullying work, but I don't want youth to just get this programming in the schools—the youth we need to be reaching don't stay after school. I want to make the space for these young people to self-determine and do the work."

Timothy Michael, GSAFE Program Assistant, says, "Monica's incredible with the students. She can meet them where they are and affirm what they're going through while helping them grow and be the best they can be."

Monica is prepared to build bridges and open doors in the middle schools and within the communities of color to bring the tools to overcome bullying to more students.

"It's important to build that relationship and do the work in a way that is meaningful, fulfilling, and sustaining for the communities I'm serving," she says. "My first months at GSAFE will be focused on outreach—going to local community centers that may not already access the service. I want them to view GSAFE's programming a serious tool to support the work they're already doing and view GSAFE as a genuine, necessary resource." —Virginia Harrison

Photographed by Roberto Amezcua

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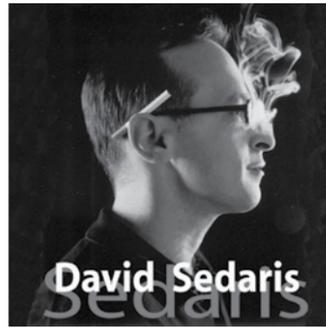
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Cultural, Social, Service and Nightlife listings edited by Virginia Harrison



OPEN Annual Dinner
March 10, The Edgewater Hotel

The Out Professional Executive Network is holding its first Annual Dinner. **Rebecca Ryan** of Next Generation Consulting's keynote on "Building Our Next City: How the LGBT community can cultivate the Creative Class." is meant to excite and inspire you to think about new ideas to make our city a more vibrant, open place to live and work.
info@openmadison.org

An Evening with David Sedaris
April 13, Overture Center, Madison

America's preeminent humorist returns, following a hugely successful sellout in 2008. Sedaris rocketed to stardom on Public Radio International's *This American Life* and as author of the vivid and sometimes vitriolic memoir *Me Talk Pretty One Day*. He will read all-new, unpublished stories. Part of the proceeds from this event benefit the Wisconsin Book Festival.
overturecenter.com

Red Ribbon Affair
April 16, Monona Terrace, Madison

Celebrate AIDS Network's twenty-fifth anniversary at their annual black-tie gala. Rub elbows with an entire community of leaders while enjoying a delicious meal. Most importantly, help raise funds for the work and services the Network provides. Includes both silent and live auctions.
aidsnetwork.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

January 23 | indieQueer at the Cardinal Bar



January 31 | AIDS Network's Camp Bingo at the Edgewater Hotel



January 24 | Madison Gay Hockey Association Games



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

Fresco Opera Theatre's Dueling Divas
March 5, Overture Center, Madison

Fresco Opera Theatre is striving to provide a fresh approach to opera and open the genre to a new audience. At the Dueling Divas event, watch opera singers battling against each other for the title of Diva Champion. Awards will be divided into Biggest Pipes, Most Heart Wrenching, Best High Note, and Best Coloratura. frescooperatheatre.com

Bike-O-Rama Bicycle Sale and Canoecopia
March 12-14, Alliant Energy Center

Comparison shop, test ride, accessorize, and buy from all 2010 bicycle brands in one place! bikeorama.com
In Exhibition Hall, check out canoes and kayaks of every size and shape at Canoecopia. rutabaga.com/canoecopia

QLaw's Fifth Annual Gala
March 13, University Club, Madison

A reception and benefit for QLaw—a student organization dedicated to serving the LGBT community at the University of Wisconsin Law School. The program is an informal reception but includes remarks from local leaders and sponsors. qlaw.org

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus Cabaret: "Troop Salute"
March 13-14, West Side Club, Madison

A WWII sailor/soldier camp show featuring solo and small ensembles along with several full chorus numbers performing music of the 1940s. Music includes "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "I'll Be Seeing You" and about 20 more selections including songs familiar and unfamiliar. perfectharmonychorus.org

South Pacific Bingo
March 28, The Edgewater Hotel, Madison

Join hostess Cass Marie Domino and celebrity ball caller WKOW's Carl Agnelly to raise money for the AIDS Network. madcampbingo.org

Milmaids 9 Pin No Tap Bowling Tournament
April 10, Badger Bowl, Madison

Milmaids is a charitable bowling tournament that was started in 1985 in response to the AIDS crisis. This annual tournament alternates between Madison and Milwaukee with all proceeds going to AIDS organization in the host city. milmaidsbowling.com

King Stock IV
April 24, Barrymore Theater, Madison

The event was initiated a few years ago in Milwaukee as a way of bringing a variety of drag king troupes and gender performers to the Midwest. This year, the torch passes to Madison. Join us as we welcome the most creative, talented, and sexy drag kings, troupes, and gender-bending performers from around the country. themadkings.com

Addressing the State of our Unions Seminar
May 1, Boardman Law Firm, Madison

Register by April 21 for this public service seminar for same-sex couples. Keynote and break-out sessions include an overview of Wisconsin and federal law; parenting and adoption; financial issues; estate planning, including health care decision making; domestic partnership agreements; employee rights and benefits; and correcting the law to guarantee equality. boardmanlawfirm.com/union

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Gazing at the State Capitol, as I now do every day, reminds me of all that our community has been able to achieve over a relatively few years.

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO ... IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY ... WISCONSIN became known across the country as “The Gay Rights State.”

And for good reason.

Passage of our historic first-in-the-nation civil rights law more than a quarter century ago heralded a new era in the modern LGBTQ movement.

An entire generation has since grown up accepting as the norm that discrimination based on sexual orientation is not only morally reprehensible but is illegal in our state as well. Recognizing the significance of this landmark civil rights law from a historical perspective provides both a renewed appreciation of our past accomplishments and serves as inspiration for what we can achieve in the future.

Gazing at the State Capitol, as I now do every day, reminds me of all that our community has been able to achieve over a relatively few years:

- **Passage of gay and lesbian civil rights banning discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.**
- **Repeal of “sodomy” statutes and all laws criminalizing sexual activity**

We made gay rights a bipartisan cause. The bulk of our support in the legislature came from Democrats, but Republican votes provided the margin of victory in both houses. It’s no accident that governors of both parties signed our bills into law (Gay Rights: Dreyfus; Consenting Adults: Earl; Hate Crimes and HIV issues: Thompson). We thus created a safer political environment that allowed lawmakers to cast votes as they should.

Most important was an active and engaged statewide LGBTQ community, setting the agenda, establishing the long-range strategy, and working in the trenches for years. Local governments—Milwaukee, Madison, and Dane County—enacted anti-discrimination ordinances. Openly gay and lesbian elected officials brought the issue before the public; at one time we had more openly LGBT officeholders in Madison—like Supervisors Dick Wagner and Kathleen Nichols—than any jurisdiction in the country.

When I was first elected to public office, Stonewall had not yet marked its third anniversary. There were no openly gay elected officials. Anywhere. To predict that Wisconsin would pass the country’s first gay rights law would have been absurd.



CAPITOL REFLECTIONS

DAVID CLARENBACH SINGS THE PRAISES OF A CITY AND A STATE WHERE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

by unmarried, consenting adults.

- **Enactment of a comprehensive Hate Crimes Law, enhancing criminal penalties for violent crimes motivated by bigotry (a law later used as a test case, affirmed as constitutionally valid in a unanimous ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court).**
- **Creation of a Bill of Rights for People with AIDS and HIV Infection outlawing discrimination by insurance companies, hospitals, and healthcare providers, based on one’s HIV status.**
- **First-ever state funding for AIDS service organizations like AIDS Network and the Milwaukee AIDS Project.**

Today we have all this, and more, that would have been equally unimaginable. Tammy Baldwin is the nation’s first and only openly lesbian member of Congress (and remains the only non-incumbent open gay or lesbian candidate ever to be elected). State Rep. Mark Pocan is the powerful chair of the legislature’s Finance Committee. Milwaukee’s Tim Carpenter is the first, and still only, openly gay or lesbian member of the State Senate. Domestic partnership benefits for state employees—setting the standard for the public and private sectors—was passed into law. We have a permanent statewide political organization (Fair Wisconsin), local service groups (OutReach, AIDS Network), a non-profit foundation (New Harvest), support for LGBTQ youth (GSAFE), a bimonthly magazine (Our Lives), and not one, but two professional business associations (The Business Alliance, O.P.E.N.).

And that’s just scratching the surface of what constitutes our community today—absolutely and entirely unimaginable when I first began.

Now as I walk past the Capitol, I see a vibrant community—with our renewed vigor, refreshed commitment, enthusiasm, and hard work—that has a future that cannot even be imagined. It reaffirms my return to Madison: not only a special place to call home, but with a community that remains at the forefront of today’s LGBTQ movement. ■

How did we do it? Our community did it the old fashioned way, by rolling up our sleeves and doing the hard work that makes change happen.

We pieced together a broad-based community and religious coalition, with support from virtually the entire spectrum of the faith community, including mainstream Protestant denominations (like the Wisconsin Baptist Convention), Jewish organizations, and the crucial backing of the Catholic Church (yes, that’s right!). We tapped allies like the Civil Liberties Union, NOW, and statewide labor unions. We isolated the “moral majority” as the lunatic fringe that they are.

David Clarenbach was elected to two terms on the Dane County Board of Supervisors, served on the Madison City Council, and was a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly 1975–1993 (where he was Speaker Pro Tem 1983–1993). He was Acting Executive Director of the Madison AIDS Support Network (1994–1995), and Executive Director of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund in Washington, D.C. (1995–1996).

David Clarenbach photographed by **Goldmund Lukic**
 Capitol Dome photographed by **Peter Patau**



Governor Nelson State Park



Willy Street Co-op



Tornado Club



The Dane County Farmers' Market on Capitol Square



Harmony Bar & Grill

our town

Local community members reflect on their favorite Madison destinations from grocery stores to lakeshores, from neighborhoods to nightclubs.

The Capitol Square

Jim Chiolino, Attorney, Quarles & Brady LLP



I've been referred to as "master of the obvious" for my tendency to voice clichés. Even so, I'd be missing the boat if I didn't name our beautiful Capitol Square as my favorite place. I especially love it on Saturdays when the **Farmers' Market** is showing the best of the season. Like most Madisonians, I am extraordinarily proud of our **State Capitol building**, which boasts the largest dome by volume in the US and one of the largest in the world—and the only granite dome in the country.

On the best summer days, my husband David and I start with a workout at **Capital Fitness** (a few blocks off the Square), then stop for a leisurely lunch at the friendliest lunch spot in town—the **Argus Bar Grille**—where owners Gwen Cassis and Rick Brahmner offer great sandwiches at reasonable prices (try "Auntie Em's Veggie Reuben"). Next, a stop at **Brocagh Irish Pub and Restaurant**, the nicely renovated former home of the Badger Candy Kitchen and E. W. Parker Jewelers, for another beverage, watching the parade of Farmers' Market goers. Tremendous people watching!

When the top of my head begins to redden, we leave for a nap. Later, we take our dog, Puck, to **Sycamore Park**, one of Madison's many dog parks for some dog time. From the hill in the center of the park, you get to enjoy a stunning view of the sunset behind the capitol dome. The view confirms what we have known since returning here in 1999: we live in an enchanted city.

Community Pharmacy

Richard Kilmer, Chief Pharmacist



I have worked at Community Pharmacy since 1984. Several days after pharmacist Jane Greischar interviewed me for the job, I saw her at a 10% Dance at UW Memorial Union. At that moment, I knew that I had found the perfect working en-

vironment. I recall a feeling of "coming home" to a place where I could be openly gay, while also satisfying my desire to make a difference in the world and to be there for people in need.

Community Pharmacy began in 1972 as a Wisconsin Student Association (WSA) sponsored program to provide affordable prescription drugs to students and community members. Known as WSA Pharmacy, it evolved into a worker-owned cooperative. As the community began to view the pharmacy as a comprehensive health care resource the name was changed to Community Pharmacy. The pharmacy expanded its inventory from pharmaceuticals and basic body care products to also include a large selection of nutritional supplements, herbs, homeopathic remedies, books, and greeting cards. Students from the University of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy can select Community Pharmacy as a clinical training site. I serve as a Clinical Professor and coordinate and oversee their experience.

The pharmacy supports a wide range of social and political health care issues, including donating thousands of dollars for low-cost medications to the homeless and uninsured, providing a clean needle exchange, and securing affordable medications for health teams traveling to developing countries. Locally, Community Pharmacy is well regarded as an "information warehouse" and referral center for complementary medicine.

Put Community Pharmacy on your list of Madison destinations. You won't be disappointed.

Downtown Eating and Drinking Establishments

Ricardo Gonzalez, Owner, Cardinal Bar



Many eating and drinking establishments have come and gone in Madison over the past 40 years.

There were always staples, such as **Paisan's**, **Porta Bella**, and the **Cuba Club**—some of them still around. But new ground was broken in the

1970s by the **Ovens of Brittany** on State Street, which together with **Andrea's** (now **L'Etoile**) set the tone for years to come.

I loved Andrea's for its simplicity and Ovens for its great tasting nouvelle cuisine. Around 1976, L'Etoile took over and has literally remained the number one restaurant in Madison, although others such as **Magnus** and **Harvest** have certainly challenged its supremacy.

Personally, I love the eateries where you can get a good meal for a good price (don't we all?). Foremost on my list would be the **Weary Traveler**, which is hard to beat for quality, price, atmosphere, and service. **Sardine** is a wonderful space with excellent offerings; the new **Plaka Taverna**, formerly Cleveland's, is a good bet, as is **Dardanelles** on the near west side.

One place in the burbs that has really impressed me is **Eno Vino** and you can't beat **Wasabi** for Japanese; when I'm looking for a good steak, then **Tornado Club** is the place.

The Cardinal Bar

Cheng Vue (aka DJ Chen Cheng), local DJ



I like to think of dancing not as an activity, but as an experience consisting of a comfortable atmosphere, a bumping sound system, and music that makes you move. One of my favorite places for that

is the **Cardinal**—**Madison's classic dance bar**.

Atmosphere is important because it gets you in the mood to dance. Anything from the lighting to the other people in the bar can have an affect on the atmosphere. I've always liked the Cardinal because even though it isn't officially a gay bar, I always feel comfortable dancing with another guy there. When you walk in, you can hear music, but the dance floor is tucked away in the other room, allowing for some drinks and conversation with friends before dancing.

The sound system at the Cardinal is amazing. Because of the carefully placed speakers, the music literally surrounds you. You not only

hear the music—you feel it.

Friday is definitely my favorite night to go to the Cardinal. It is their Rebirth night (in honor of the recent renovation) and resident DJ Nick Nice spins all things house from the classics to funky or electro. Also, once a month, Rebirth teams up with Indie Queer and switches things up by bringing in guest DJs.

The East Washington Underpass at the Yahara River

Ingrid Ankerson, Principal, Ankerson Communications



Since opening my graphic design business three years ago, I've lived on one side of East Washington Avenue and worked on the other. My daily walk between my house on North Baldwin and my office on South Dickinson is only five minutes, but it means crossing six lanes of traffic at least twice a day. And while I generally try to find the beauty in the mundane, walking the long block along East Washington followed by a rather desolate patch across the railroad tracks of the "warehouse district" is both loud and, well, boring.

Then, in 2006 during the reconstruction of East Washington, something magnificent happened: the city built an underpass for bikers and walkers along the Yahara River. Suddenly it became possible to cross East Washington without the fear of someone making a left-hand turn over the top of me. **The north and south side of the isthmus was bridged with a tunnel. And a very beautiful one at that.**

Constructed in the "Prairie School" style of architecture, the underpass is graced with a series of simple, elegant, arching beams that cast a beautiful reflection on the river year-round. In the summer, boaters and canoers pass with me from lake to lake; and on cold winter evenings, the nighttime lighting throws quiet, inspired shadows on the water.

Granted, taking this trail adds a few blocks to my walk, but once I reach the river and then the underpass, I feel overwhelmingly fulfilled by this city and my place in it. Over time, I've had numerous conversations with others with whom I've shared the trail. One morning an elderly woman nearly shouted as we passed each other,

"How lucky you are that this is your path!"

Indeed.

Grocery Stores from The Willy Street Co-op to Woodman's West

Linda Balisle, Shareholder, Balisle & Roberson, S.C.



For foodies, discerning cooks, and anyone looking for a healthy meal with recognizable ingredients, Madison is a paradise. Much has been written about our **Dane County Farmers' Market**, which

The New York Times rated the best in the country, but I spend my time at the remarkable variety of food markets available in Madison. Not mere grocery stores, but true markets, where the source of the produce is identified and the produce reflects the seasons.

I confess that my heart belongs to the **Willy Street Co-op**. I wander the perimeter comparing orange, red, purple, green, brown, and yellow foodstuffs from all food categories. When I'm on a "soup mission," I can select from 3–5 different types of fresh mushrooms, 6–7 types of greens, 3–4 varieties of onions, shallots, and leeks, and a myriad of root vegetables, most with their home farms identified.

The Seafood Center located next to the deli is my routine source for special dinners as well as all the Omegas we're supposed to consume. I could describe each aisle of bulk grains, nuts and flours, fresh oils, the full expanse of artisanal cheeses, the local organic meat choices, the expertise available for the pharmaceuticals, and the beautiful teapots and other kitchen supplies that gratify my every wish. But then I would be ignoring some other wonderful local food markets available in Madison.

On the east side, the **Jenifer Street Market** always is noted as the best neighborhood market. It has evolved over the 30-some years I have shopped there into a true market, with fresh and organic produce, with a notable meat and deli section crafted by experienced butchers. If your mind insists and your body allows, their bakery is a corner to savor, filled with their own muffins, cakes, cookies, and breads.

On the West side my car seems to turn into the **Metcalf's Sentry** parking lot whenever I pass. They welcome you with a prepared food and

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Estate Planning • Child Custody and Visitation
Cohabitation Agreements • Guardianships
Probate • Mediation Services • Bankruptcy

- Adjunct Professor of Law at Marquette (Sexual Orientation and the Law)
- Rising Star distinction (2006, 2007)

* AIDS Network, Volunteer Attorney of the Year (2005, 2007 & 2009)

* Authored published articles on LGBT legal issues

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produce emporium that is often my first and last stop. Some of their attraction is practical—they provide large quart containers for their homemade soups, which is convenient for several people, or your sick friend who needs good chicken vegetable or chicken noodle soup for a couple of days. Their “Asian to Go” section is good enough that your family and friends will think you spent the hours of chopping and sautéing with the right oils.

Madison also has Wisconsin-grown, traditional grocery stores: **Copps** and **Woodman's**. Woodman's is employee-owned and has one of the best sections of gluten-free packaged foods I've ever seen. I would be remiss if I didn't share that while at Woodman's West I've witnessed two domestic altercations, one of which required police intervention. Both were in the produce section, which provided too many objects a human hand could grip and throw. But this additional drama was free of charge and Woodman's prices remain one of the lowest in town for packaged goods.

Atwood Avenue

Kim Nemacheck, Realtor, EcoBroker,
Bunbury & Associates



Atwood Avenue is one of Madison's little treasures. A **bike path** runs parallel to the street, and I particularly love the stretch from Olbrich Botanical Gardens to the Yahara River.

Café Zoma's backyard café is right on the bike path, and I often stop in the summer for an iced coffee and to visit with friends. The backyard has tables and chairs, a sandbox, dog tie-outs and is a great place to people watch. When I need to have my bike tuned up, I pop next door to **Revolution Cycles** where the tattooed bike mechanics are always helpful and you can find a cool T-shirt.

Just down the street is one of my favorite bars, the **Harmony Bar & Grill**. I consider it the “Cheers” of the east side, where everybody knows your name. It brings together locals sports and music fans, straight and gay clientele, and is an all-around welcoming place. Most of the bartenders have been there forever and the food is great. I especially love the hot chips with blue cheese, walnut burger, and made-to-order pizza.

Just down the street is **Dobhan restaurant**, and if you haven't been there, you should make plans to do so very soon. The service is always friendly and the food is consistently good. The owners, from Nepal, also own **Himal Chuli** and **Chautaura** on State Street. Take my word for it—this place has good eats for dinner or brunch.

Because the Atwood area is so pedestrian friendly, I really look forward to **gallery night**, the night all over Madison that art studios and local businesses feature local art and refreshments. My friends and I have so much fun stopping in the many businesses and galleries that

have openings including **Bad Dog Frida**, **Café Zoma**, **Absolutely Art**, and **Paran Studios** (around the corner on Winnebago) to name a few.

Atwood Gives Back

Alnisa Allgood, Executive Director,
Nonprofit Tech



Stopping by **Café Zoma**, I talk to Dan about the **4th Annual Atwood-Winnebago Winter Festival**. The weather was cold and I was worried people would stay indoors. Dan described a huddled-down crowd flowing between **Absolutely Art** and **Café Zoma**. They were warm, caffeinated, excited, and braving the cold.

Framed by Starkweather Creek, the Yahara River, and Lake Monona, you can walk, bike, canoe, or garden, and feel at-home holding the hand of your partner, while walking down the street. The Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood is more than a neighborhood. It's a community.

I'm a twenty-first century girl. I love high-speed Internet, all things Apple, and FedEx delivery; but I've got an old fashioned attachment to civility—and Atwood bristles with it. Business owners such as Megan Blake-Horst, owner of **Absolutely Art**, and Teresa Ouabel, owner of **Bunky's Café**, who inspired the community to brave the cold and economic uncertainties; to come out, have fun, and support the neighborhood for that Winter Festival. Priceless.

I'm also a bit of a dreamer and I think Schenk-Atwood is, too—a neighborhood of dreamers who want green spaces, beautiful places, and smiling faces, but know that it takes commitment. I see the abundant enthusiasm of Helen Hazelmare of **Goodman's Food Pantry** or Christine Thompson of the **Personal Essential Pantry** at **Zion Lutheran**. They provide food, service, and hope to your friends and neighbors.

I've felt the warm smiles of the staff at the **Goodman Community Center**—where Becky, Kristi, Corrisa, and Kristin work with boundless energy for this community, for you.

The Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood is colorful, vibrant, and engaging. It has good food and people, and lots to do. But there's a warm comfort, and a sense of the familial, that embraces the LGBT communities ensconced within.

The Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood

Linda Halsey, Director of Development,
University of Wisconsin Foundation



In 2000, we decided to move our family out of the San Francisco Bay Area. The City had been an exciting, magical place where Mary and I had lived for 15 years. But after our two boys were born, we began to long for things from our own childhoods that were simply not going to be part of

our boys' Bay Area lives. Simple things, like a neighborhood where kids all went to the same public school (private schools were the norm where we lived because the public schools were in rough shape), or a place where parents felt comfortable letting their young kids walk to the park by themselves.

But for all of our frustrations, we had always felt that there simply wasn't a more accepting place than the Bay Area for same-sex parents to raise a family.

Then we heard about Madison. We heard that it was a special place—not too big, not too small—a place where our family would be embraced, where the public schools were great, and where the community was progressive. “It's the Berkeley of the Midwest,” someone assured us.

So after doing a little research, we moved here in July of 2000 with our then three- and six-year-old boys, and by an immense stroke of luck (and the help of a wise realtor) we settled into the Schenk-Atwood neighborhood.

Now, almost 10 years later, we are still in the honeymoon phase with our neighborhood. At first our neighbors didn't understand why we got so excited when our kids actually learned how to ride a bike, or when we let them walk to the park, and to school, by (gasp) themselves. Or how we loved it when our kids began to use old-fashioned terms like “I'm going to call on Emory to see if he wants to play.”

We didn't know what hit us that first year when we began to uncover the amazing treasures in our neighborhood: We had a seemingly endless bike path that crossed our street. We could walk to pretty much everything ... restaurants, shops, cafes, a grocery store, parks. (In the Bay Area it took 20 minutes and a car just to get a gallon of milk.) We had an incredible (**Goodman**) community center down the street and the **Barrymore** around the corner for music. And the **Yahara Park summer festival!** ... and it's free?! Our favorite place in Madison is our Schenk-Atwood neighborhood, hands-down.

Governor Nelson State Park

Cheri Maples, Co-founder,
Center for Mindfulness & Justice



Of the innumerable gems in Madison, I must direct special attention to Governor Nelson State Park—we have this phenomenal treasure right in our midst, and right on Lake Mendota's north shore, complete with a **stunning view of downtown Madison**.

It seems rare for a city to be able to boast a state park in its environs, and many Madisonians enjoy it for its **boat launch**, **picnicking**, and **fishing** activities. I prize the park for other reasons—it is a restorative haven, a quiet refuge for me where I can deeply connect with the natural world.

Governor Nelson has more than eight miles of trails through woods and prairie. On a typical summer day's walk, I encounter stunning **wildflowers** and incredible bird life—including **sandhill cranes**—and I often pay my respects at the many **Indian mounds** (including a panther effigy mound), reminding me of those who came long before us. As a completely fun bonus, I get to share this experience with my dog, as they're also allowed at the park (leashed, of course).

As I write this in the midst of winter, I'm especially appreciating the **groomed cross-country ski offerings** of the park. I'm awkwardly, and happily, honing my skate skiing skills at “Gov Nelson”—and when I'm not up for that challenge, I strap on my classical cross country skis.

I'm now watching for the **annual nighttime event** they host each winter, where they have **candlelight trails** for skiers/snow-shoers. It is a magical evening that evokes a more civilized time, where “strangers” share in a fun outdoor activity, complete with a roaring bonfire and hot chocolate along the trail—and in so communing, are strangers no more.

The Crestwood Neighborhood

Bill Beaudreau, Owner and Interior Designer
of CRB Interiors



When asked to ponder a favorite west side neighborhood, I was instantly reminded of a time many years ago when I learned about the Crestwood Neighborhood as a docent for a **Historic Madison home tour**. The neighborhood is near Rosa Road and Old Middleton Road and borders **Bordner Park** and **Owen Conservation Park**. It is filled with modest residences, built in the post-World War I period, where optimism and ingenuity reigned. The houses are generally modern in style. Marshall Erdmann was instrumental in providing and building residences based upon types A, B, C, and D, with variations on a theme.

Inspiration and enlightenment come into play here. A section of the neighborhood is filled with an arc of cul-de-sacs alphabetically named: **Arbor Vitae Place**, **Bittersweet Place**, **Cedar Place**, **Dogwood Place**, **Elder Place** and **Forsythia Place**. It is simply quaint. This neighborhood was formed by the Wisconsin Co-operative Housing Association in 1936, and it is believed to be the oldest neighborhood association in the U.S. At the time, many people didn't have money to buy a large lot and a house. So, public paths as alleés were formed between the smaller lots through cooperative ownership and provided direct access to Owen Park.

Imagine taking a daily walk up into a restored prairie or a woods for hiking or a winter ski. I have walked through Owen Park many times and once sauntered down one of the paths through the neighborhood. It was a sheer treat. I only wish I could do it more often. ■


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The 5th anniversary of Wisconsin's pioneering gay rights law was celebrated with public LGBT officials in 1987. State Representative **David Clarenbach**, Dane County Board Supervisor **Dick Wagner**, Madison Alderperson **Hank Lufler**, State Representative **Tim Carpenter**, Dane County Board Supervisor **Tammy Baldwin**, and Dane County Board Supervisor **Kathleen Nichols**.



12

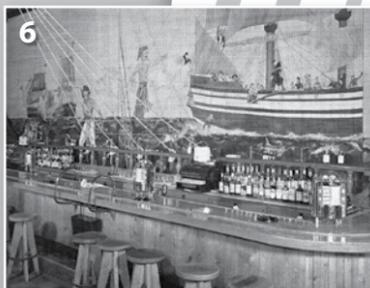
Our History by Richard Wagner

The Pink Plaque Tour

Take a stroll through time to discover some of the hidden history of Madison's LGBT community. **Dick Wagner** gives you a guided tour.

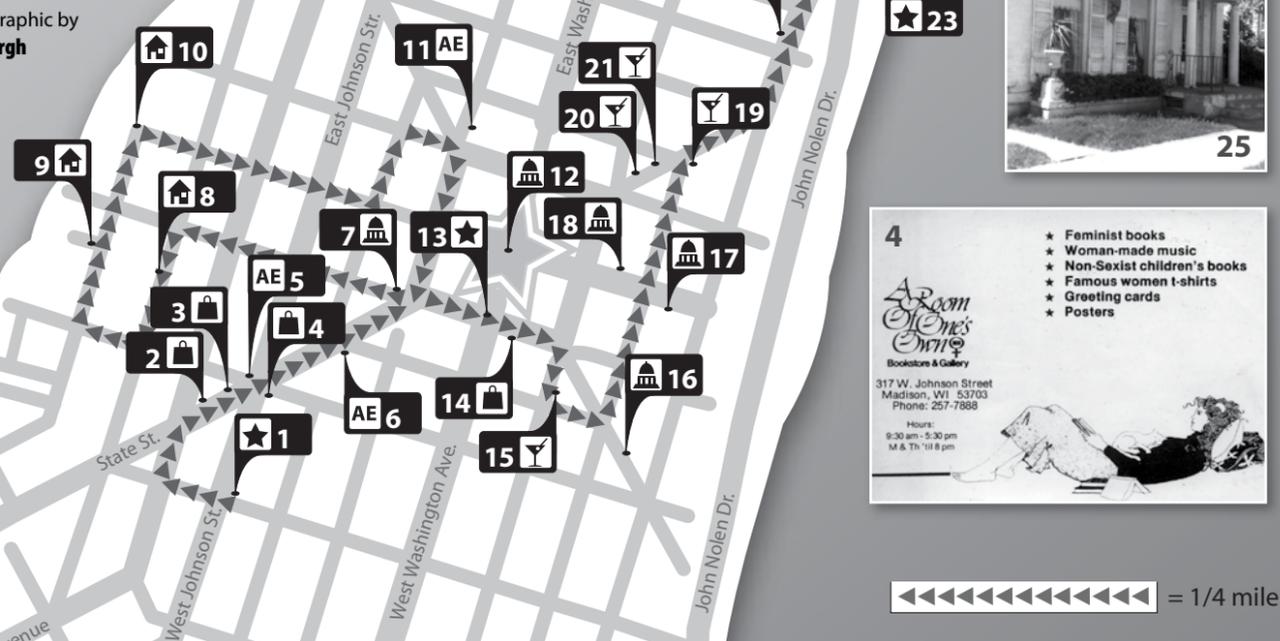


32



6

Information graphic by Patrick Hasburgh



4

- ★ Feminist books
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9:30 am - 5:30 pm
M & Th - 10 p.m.

The house at 739 Jenifer Street



25

1. Lysistrata Bar

The outdoor café space of 319 Gorham Street

This much-mourned womyn's space was a very popular bar, restaurant and community space. An unfortunate fire took it away and caused much lamentation. The name derived from the Greek play of Aristophanes where women seek to control their destinies and shape a world dominated by men by withholding sex from men in the interests of peace.

2. Community Pharmacy

341 State Street

An LGBT-friendly place where community leader and fantastic gardener Richard Kilmer has been helping folks with medical needs outside the world of commercialized pharmacies.

3. The Soap Opera

319 State Street

One of the longest-lasting gay-owned businesses to have contributed to the vitality of Downtown. Owners Chuck Bauer and Chuck Beckwith were known to boogie at the town's annual Frostiball high society soiree. Buy your good-smelling soaps and fancy lotions here.

4. A Room of One's Own

307 West Johnson Street

Borrowing a title from bisexual Virginia Woolf on the personal liberty needed by women to write, the store has always been a good source for LGBT books. LGBTQ authors are sponsored at the bookstore as part of the widely popular Wisconsin Book Festival. A great place to pick up a gift.

5. Four Star Video Heaven

315 North Henry Street

Need to find LGBT-friendly flicks? Here the depth of LGBT materials permits many connections to the broader international world of LGBT film.

6. The Pirate Ship (Overture Center)

201 State Street

The bartender from the gay bar The Pirate Ship, Bill Ferris, was surprisingly elected Sheriff in 1972. The Ship's parking lot was a place where cops would note down license plates during the decades of oppression. The Ship, and an older community civic center, were torn down as part of the new Overture Center. The community's New Harvest Foundation was launched in the Civic Center in 1985. Later the community's annual New Year's Eve bash, the Pink Party, was held for many years in the old Civic Center's Marquee Room.

7. Fair Wisconsin Offices

122 State Street

In a building housing many environmental and women's organizations, the LGBT civil rights organization Fair Wisconsin fits right in. It fought the unfortunately unsuccessful effort against the Wisconsin Constitutional Marriage Amendment of 2006 here, but then persisted and turned around

and won statewide domestic partners legislation with the help of Governor Jim Doyle and Democratic legislative leadership in 2009.

8. Fag Manor

133 Gilman Street

This historic Mansion Hill building housed a group of all gay men including a number of activists who helped make early community efforts succeed among the contributors to the Gay Renaissance newsletter, the first of the gay press in Madison.

9. Thornton Wilder's birthplace

140 Langdon Street

The gay writer known for his play, "Our Town" and the 1927 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Bridge of San Luis Rey, was born in Madison in 1897. He spent his early years here till age nine. His father was editor of the Wisconsin State Journal.

10. 10 Langdon Street

This student housing site was an early site for gay activists and community social events in the 1970s. This was a time when gay activism was on the cutting edge but still semi-underground.

11. Bartell Theater

113 East Mifflin Street

Home to StageQ and other theater groups who have presented many LGBT-themed productions over the years. The community theater groups benefit from a joint facility that always has people ready for their close-ups, Mr. DeMille.

12. The State Capitol

The Capitol is the locus and focus of the town and the center of so many LGBT things as well. Here in 1982, Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to pass a gay rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodation. Originally sponsored by Rep. Lloyd Barbee, an African American from Milwaukee, the measure was successfully championed by Rep. David Clarenbach. Today out members Rep. Mark Pocan and Sen. Timothy Carpenter continue a tradition of advocacy. The legislature was the political nursery for Wisconsin's two out members of Congress—Rep. Steve Gunderson and Rep. Tammy Baldwin. When Governor Anthony Earl appointed Ron McCrea as press secretary in 1983, newspaper headlines screamed about the appointment of an avowed or practicing homosexual. McCrea quipped he did not need any practice. In 1989, the Capitol hosted the Fifth Conference of LGBT out public officials, the first in a state capitol. In 2009, the Wisconsin legislature passed domestic partner legislation championed by Fair Wisconsin. Wisconsin was the first state to do so after a restrictive constitutional marriage amendment.

13. The Capitol Square

The Square with its pattern of circumference circulation has a long history going back at least

to the 1950s as a late-night cruising spot. The presence of nearby hotels with traveling single men may have contributed. The former Belmont Hotel coffee shop (now part of the YWCA) used to be listed in the old gay guides of the 1960s.

14. Fromagination

12 South Carroll Street

This great cheese emporium with top-flight selections is among our friendly gay-owned businesses. Its selections make great gifts as well as consumables. Take-outs include a selection of sandwiches with wonderful cheeses and other items.

15. Shamrock Bar

117 West Main Street

This popular, comfortable gay bar does good lunch business and has existed seemingly forever on a block that has a long history of other popular gay bars including Going My Way (aka the Gong Show), and the Rainbow Room.

16. Dane County Courthouse

215 South Hamilton Street

Here in the new location, and formerly in the old courthouse, gay and lesbian judges have administered justice in an inclusive manner. Circuit Court George Northrup contributed to task forces on positive judicial views in dealing with HIV issues in the courtroom and Circuit Court Judge Shelly Gaylord is a former member of the Governor's Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues.

17. City County Building

210 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard

The City of Madison passed the first Gay Rights City Ordinance in Wisconsin in the mid 1970s, an ordinance which survived the Anita Bryant era attacks when the Madison Community United was formed to defend it. Dane County followed in 1980 with the second gay rights ordinance in the state. The first openly gay official was James Yeardon in 1976, appointed as alderman and elected in April 1977 before Harvey Milk was elected that same year. Many out officials follow including County Board Chair Dick Wagner 1980 and County Supervisor Kathleen Nichols 1982 who both would later co-chair Governor Anthony Earl's first in the nation Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues. Others include the first out Hispanic official in the country Alder Ricardo Gonzalez and an early out Republican Alder Jim McFarland. Usually 10% of the Madison City Council and County Board have been out—a tradition carried on today by Alders Mike Verveer and Satya Rhodes-Conway and Supervisors Chuck Erickson and Kyle Richmond.

18. Congresswoman

Tammy Baldwin's office

10 East Doty Street

Congresswoman Baldwin became the first out lesbian elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1998 and still serves Wisconsin's Second Congressional District.

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19. Fess Hotel (now Great Dane)

123 East Doty Street

The first-ever Madison gay community dinner-dance sponsored by the New Harvest Foundation was held in the renovated restaurant.

20. Woof's Bar

114 King Street

Popular gay bar with a loyal male following.

21. Opus Lounge

116 King Street

High-end cocktails are served here with a sometime-gay crowd, particularly on Sundays.

22. Cardinal Bar

418 East Wilson Street

An institution founded and now run again by Ricardo Gonzalez. As a Madison Alderman, Ricardo was the nation's first Hispanic elected, out official. The area was the location of other popular LGBT bars over the years including the Back East, a bar with a good lesbian following and the gay bar Maneuvers (now Hotel Ruby Marie's).

23. Dane County Boathouse

At Machinery Row, 601 Williamson Street

Home of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, which for many years was headed up by a gay "admiral".

24. AIDS Network, Outreach, and A Woman's Touch

600 Williamson Street

This rehabilitated building houses several community-related institutions and businesses.

25. 700 Block Jenifer Street

711 Jenifer - In the 1920s, a resident amassed a collection of physical culture magazines with nude and nearly nude men in artistic poses.

735 Jenifer - In the 1970s, several fiber artists resided on the block and had an informal Stitch and Bitch Club. Otto Thieme who resided at 735 was known to make erotica lace in fine patterns depicting homosexual acts.

739 Jenifer - In the 1950s and 1960s, this was the home of Keith McCutcheon and Joe Koberstein—the center for a very active gay salon and social circle. Keith published poems that in veiled language talked of gay love. From the 1980s to the present the home of local gay activist and out former County Board Chairperson Dick Wagner. Here, the New Harvest Foundation was created in six months of discussions in 1984. The first in the Big Ten LGBT Alumni group held several early receptions for LGBT speakers.

741 Jenifer - Nationally known Women's Studies professor Jean Boydston resided here with her partner Joy Newmann. Both were also artists and had their studios on the lakefront side.

754 Jenifer - Some of the first big gay house party fundraisers were held here—the Alice B. Toklas Birthday Party for the United and A Night in Key West for the Gay Center. Celebration maven Dan Curd, a longtime block resident,

designed the parties. Over the next several decades, the house had many gay tenants including one who sponsored a nude cookie bake for a number of years by gay fans of the Mazomanie clothing optional beach.

807 Spaight at Jenifer Street - Long time gay historic preservationist Gary Tipler resides here. He helped weave together a network of gay boys to foster saving older homes.

26. BB Clarke Beach

800 block of Spaight Street

This cruisey gayborhood beach was the site of activism by the "ladies tops off club" for a while. This beach became more quietly notorious for its late-night, after-bar, gay skinny-dipping.

27. Plan B

924 Williamson Street

Popular gay bar and dance club opened in 2009 to a broad LGBTQA following. The Amsterdam leather and drag outfitter is across the street.

28. Broom Street Theater

1119 Williamson Street

Home to many gay playwrights and original productions including the remembered "Oklahomo." Broom Street has been part of avant-garde theater in the city for decades.

29. Orton Park

at the corner of Few and Spaight Streets

The corner was home to George Segal's Gay Liberation Statues. Today, a plaque and benches commemorate the installation's visit.

30. Social Justice Center

1202 Williamson Street

Many supportive efforts are housed among the organizations associated with the center.

31. Willy St. Coop

1221 Williamson Street

From its inception, the Co-op has been a gay friendly community institution and source for gay press and publications. Perhaps the trademark purple aubergine was a giveaway.

32. Ted Pierce's House

1442 Williamson Street

Theodore Pierce resided in this home for almost all of the Twentieth Century and was active in the town's gay circles from the 1930s. Described best by the French term "boulvardier," he was a font of knowledge with classical allusions.

33. Fyfe's Bar and Restaurant

701 East Washington Avenue

Former popular place, good food in restored ambience, with a strong lesbian clientele at the bar.

34. House at 454 Sidney St.

Home to Rep. David Clarenbach during much of his legislative career. Now the home of one of the town's many lesbian power couples. ■

OUR ISSUES

When the Stress Becomes Too Much

Dr. Sue Gill looks at alcohol and drug dependence in LGB populations.

a recent article by Michael King and others (2008) examined the prevalence of substance abuse, anxiety, depression, and suicide attempts in lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. The news is not good.

King found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people are at elevated risk for experiencing anxiety and depression disorders, with risk rates that were about twice those for heterosexual populations. Sadly, gay men are at 3.5 times higher risk to have a suicide attempt at some time in their lives compared to



Why are gay men so much more likely to have a suicide attempt than straight men? What is the deal with lesbians and all of that drinking and drug use?



their straight counterparts, and lesbians may have as high as 6 times the risk for developing alcohol dependence at some time in their lives compared with straight women. The risk for drug dependence is also higher for LGB people, with risk rates as high as 3 times higher than heterosexual populations, with lesbians and bisexual women showing slightly higher rates than gay and bisexual men.

Getting accurate data for these kinds of studies is very difficult. The authors of the above article dealt with the limitations of social science research by conducting what is called a meta-analysis. They began by

conducting a review of all of the scientific literature published over the past 40 years to find every single study done related to LGB mental health. They found almost 500 articles, and then narrowed them down to the 28 that met the most stringent criterion for scientific excellence for these kinds of studies. This is the gold standard for getting an accurate understanding of what is going on in such a complicated topic as LGB mental health. Transgender people were not included in this meta-analysis, but individual studies point to similar trends among trans people.

It is very clear from the above data that LGB people are at much higher risk than their straight counterparts for developing alcohol/drug dependence or other mental health problems. It is less clear why this is the case. Why are gay men so much more likely to have a suicide attempt than straight men? What is the deal with lesbians and all of that drinking and drug use? Here we may pool our collective wisdom, because no study will be able to identify clear causes for complicated social behavior.

Are we seeing the cumulative effects of a lifetime of heterosexism? How is this heterosexism internalized, expressed, and managed? What are the long-term emotional, physical, and relational effects of this type of stress?

LGB people often begin to internally question assumptions about their heterosexuality during adolescence. This process of naming and questioning such a core aspect of personality can be very difficult—especially when it often carries a stigma. Plus, society is filled with heterosexist bias, and there are few healthy role models for many LGB youth. In addition, some LGB youth may also express gender roles that fit for them, but do not readily conform to the rigid rules for gender expression that is often part of adolescent social circles. The resulting emotional conflict can add to a very difficult developmental phase during a time when there are few internal resources for coping and peer groups are usually the primary source for support.

It seems that this turbulent time could significantly increase the risk for developing

future mood regulation disorders such as anxiety and depression. For some it might also be the time when maladaptive coping strategies first get used. Self-harming behavior, drinking, and drug use can all be examples of coping strategies that help a person to feel better in the short term but lead to long-term negative consequences. In addition, coping styles that are developed in childhood and adolescence are often used into adulthood, are very hard to change, and are especially compelling during times of stress.

So what does all of this mean for us today? It is really clear that mood disorders, self-harm, and drug and alcohol dependence are very prevalent within our community. We need to start by recognizing these as serious problems and not dismissing them as the norm. Even if many in the community are drinking, using drugs, or engaging in self-harm, it does not mean that it's okay. Even if "a lot" of people you know drink or use other drugs frequently, that does not mean that your or their level of use is safe or healthy. If you have ever tried unsuccessfully to cut down, you or others have been concerned about your level of use, or you've continued to use despite negative consequences, you might have a problem.

We also need to actively create healthy community spaces that do not focus on substances, promote positive social interactions, and model healthy ways to deal with strong emotions when they arise. We need to promote resilience within our youth. Build social structures that do not perpetuate the heterosexist bias. Change the laws that add to our stress. My hope is that some meta-analysis 10 years from now will not find any differences between LGBT and straight populations, but we have a lot of work to do to get there! ■

Sue and her partner Sheri have lived in Madison since 2000. They keep busy with their two dogs, Frankie and Maslow. Sue is a psychologist in private practice and can be found online at www.madisontherapy.com.



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quality of life

Scott Staples

Owner, I Du Hair Salon
Years in the Industry: 18 years
Years in Madison: 3.5

What community organizations are you involved with?
AIDS Network ACT Rider, Downtown Madison Inc., Madison Referral Group, Madison Gay Hockey Association, Madison Gay Volleyball, MAGNET, Capitol Pride

Personal Shopper Bonnie Raimy on Dressing Scott:

Scott does hair... and well. The experience you'll get at his salon, I Du Hair, far exceeds any you've had at a "chain" salon. And, you do get what you pay for... quality comes at a price.

In the business of beauty, Scott needs to stay current in fashion and trends, but keeping up with both takes money... something a new business owner finds in short supply. This is when a department store such as Macys comes into play.

Macys has undergone a bit of a facelift when it comes to men's clothing. Carrying lines such as **Joe's Jeans, J.A.C.H.S: Just a cheap shirt, Affliction, 7 for all Mankind, Ben Sherman, Lucky Brand, Vintage Red**, as well as **Calvin Klein, Kenneth Cole, and Polo Ralph Lauren**, Macys is giving men a greater option to be creative with their wardrobe. In addition, Macys' private collection, **I.N.C. International Concepts** has also been revamped with slimmer lines, better fabrics, and a greater attention to detail.

Scott's larger-than-life personality is only slightly overshadowed by his big heart. I wanted to put him in clothing that speaks to his free-spiritedness, his attention to physical fitness, and his individuality. Pairing a slim fit **Hugo Boss suit coat** with an **Affliction tee**, an **I.N.C. button-down**, and accessorizing with an **Alfani tie** blur the lines between professional and "rock star". Squeeze into a pair of **Joe's slim-fit black jeans** and it's nearly impossible to look bad.

I am a huge fan of the "tee over a button-down dress shirt" look. I think that if a man is going to spend \$50.00+ on a tee shirt, he better show it off! In addition, the tee can easily be removed, tie tightened, and the edgy ensemble is now ready for a more conservative evening.

For a casual look, the **Calvin Klein slim fit khakis**, rolled and paired with black **Steve Madden slip-on dress shoes** elevate the khaki to a whole new level. Pair a plaid shirt (in this case, **Ben Sherman**) with a fitted tee (again, **Ben Sherman**), add a tie and what was once a "standard" in the workplace: khaki trousers and button-down, have now become a quirky take on office-chic.

Macys, Hilldale Shopping Center, 702 North Midvale, (608) 232-2525

* items below are at full retail price, not sale.

- Hugo Boss suit jacket**, Retail \$795.00 (includes trousers)
- Affliction tee**, Retail \$48.00
- I.N.C. Macys private line button-down**, Retail \$39.98
- Alfani tie**, Retail \$45.00
- Joe's gauge brixton slim fit denim**, Retail \$198.00
- Ben Sherman hoodlum button-down**, Retail \$89.00
- Ben Sherman face tee**, Retail \$45.00
- Calvin Klein steel Vtech solid tie**, Retail \$49.00
- Calvin Klein Dylan khaki, tailored fit, tapered leg**, Retail \$58.00
- Steve Madden, black square toe dress shoe**, Retail, \$90.00

Stylist/personal shopper: shop@bonnieraimy.com
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quality of life

OUR WORKPLACES

Debits and Credits

Marty Fox tallies the progress of incorporating LGBT sensitivity and supportive policies in Madison workplaces.

during the early 1980s, I was a teaching assistant, helping students navigate their first introductory accounting class. All of the teaching assistants shared a drafty "office" on the third floor of an old castle-like building at a mid-sized, Midwestern university. In our spare time, we were each applying for accounting jobs with "the big eight" accounting firms, and the office was often filled with talk of job interviews and workplace expectations. Back then, interviews with these firms required a somewhat meticulous adherence to a set of prescriptive dress rules; they were like fraternal organizations with their own admission rush and pledge traditions.



There is no reason why the Madison area can't become a leading community for LGBT diversity and, in turn, move our local economy forward.



Each candidate wore a suit in light gray, medium gray, or dark gray. Shoes could not have sling-back heels as those were considered too risqué. Skirts (and they had to be skirts) had to cover the knee. Hose needed to be a neutral color that would not draw attention to the leg. I was concurrently a TA in the new Women's Studies program, so I had some difficulty fitting my new sense of self into a corporate dress code. Thus, I elected to pass over the public accounting experience and focus on manufacturing and industrial firms. For the

next twenty-five years I worked in a variety of industries for several companies. Here I could slip into real work clothes and get close to the noise, grit, and energy of the manufacturing process.

Fast forward to 2007 when I had the opportunity to attend the Out and Equal Annual Summit in Washington, D.C. Out and Equal is a national organization devoted to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in the workplace. At their Annual Summit, several thousand attendees participated in workshops and caucuses all designed to create an inclusive workplace. Here I encountered hundreds of employees from the largest accounting firms (no longer the big eight). Now public accountants came in all sizes, colors, and gender variations. I attended lectures given by transgender audit managers and reveled in the creativity, authenticity, and confidence of these out professionals. What a journey this profession has traveled!

As we learned in the Corporate Diversity Index, Madison workplaces have a few more miles to travel. There is no reason why the Madison area can't become a leading community for LGBT diversity and, in turn, move our local economy forward. For example, there are just a few local Madison area companies that have put all of the policies in place to achieve a score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Equality Index. But oddly enough, some local corporations fall short because they do not include gender identity in their nondiscrimination policies. I don't understand why an organization wouldn't include gender identity in its nondiscrimination policy when gender identity discrimination is banned by city ordinance. Once nondiscrimination is covered in the law, it shouldn't be a stretch to include it in the company's nondiscrimination statement. Companies that want to be real allies to the LGBT community can take additional steps, starting with developing gender transition guidelines. After all, the best auditor, attorney, contractor, or employee may be a transgender individual. In addition, your company may have employees, potential employees, customers, and suppliers who are allies and look closely at the corporate policies and HRC scores. If you are an LGBT employee or ally, let your company know that

Some local corporations fall short because they do not include gender identity in their nondiscrimination policies. I don't understand why an organization wouldn't include gender identity in its nondiscrimination policy when gender identity discrimination is banned by city ordinance.

these issues matter to you. Changes like this are well within our reach.

Sometimes we get discouraged with the state of our workplaces and the lack of emotional intelligence and understanding we sometimes encounter, but we should be encouraged by changes in many large companies. If we can make these kinds of changes in a 20-year span, just imagine where the future will take us. We can learn from the organizations that have stepped forward into the future and use that understanding to help the organizations that have more changes to make. This is a destination worthy of our collective efforts. ■

Marty Fox has over 25 years of experience as an accountant for five different companies. She retired in 2009 as the Executive Director of the Alliant Energy Foundation. She is now a full-time volunteer for her favorite causes and nonprofit organizations. She and her wife, Catherine, have five adult children and a French bulldog named Lily.

Resources for Learning About Workplace Advocacy

More information about **Out and Equal Workplace advocates** is available at: www.outandequal.org

More information about **preparing for the HRC index** is available at: www.hrc.org/issues/workplace/workplace-resources.htm

More information about **transgender inclusion in the workplace** at: www.hrc.org/issues/transgender/9565.htm

For more information about **OPEN, the Out Professional and Executive Network**, e-mail: info@openmadison.org

More information about the **Business Alliance** is available at: www.madisonbusinessalliance.com

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OUR RIGHTS

Spring 2010 Elections

Tamara Packard reminds us that it is important that we support the candidates who support us.

dane County has long been a proving ground for both politicians and ideas. Two of the State's most esteemed gay politicians, Tammy Baldwin and Mark Pocan, cut their teeth as Dane County Supervisors. And some of the best ideas for eliminating the effects of prejudice against LGBT people were first tried here before being expanded elsewhere. For instance, Dane County has provided domestic partner benefits to its employees for years. As other municipalities saw that fears of high claims and abuse did not materialize, but rather the measure helped attract and retain the best employees, they followed suit. This year, the State is finally doing the same.



There are roughly 12,000 to 13,000 people in each County Board District, and the traditional 25% to 30% turnout for spring elections means that it may take only 1500 votes to win.



Pro-fairness Supervisors continue to find new ways to support Dane County's LGBT population, too. Last year, with a strong majority led by County Board Chair Scott McDonell, gay-friendly Supervisors enacted a cutting-edge law requiring county contractors to offer domestic partner health insurance coverage to their employees as a condition of receiving the privilege to do work paid for by our tax dollars. Only a few other governments in the nation (such as the City of San Fran-

cisco) have similar laws; it is the only law of its kind in Wisconsin. The County Board also amended the equal housing laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

On April 6, we will choose a new County Board. The winners will have the opportunity to continue setting an example for other governmental bodies and building on the good laws and policies already established in Dane County—or to weaken and eliminate them. The winners will also learn skills that will help them move up to higher office. It is important that we support the candidates who support us.

There are several races of special interest to our community. First is the race for County Board Chair **Scott McDonell's** seat in downtown Madison (District 1). McDonell has been a tireless ally of our community, including by leading the way on the county contractor domestic partnership benefits law and ensuring its smooth passage. He is one of several incumbents who deserves our thanks and support on April 6. (See the sidebar for other incumbents, as well as those running for open seats and those challenging conservative incumbents who merit our support.)

Readers who remember Mike McKinney, the TV anchor who lent his star power to support the ACT Ride and other important projects, might wish to learn more about his mother, **Barbara McKinney**. She aims to unseat a conservative incumbent on the west side of Madison (District 15), one who chose not to support the pro-fairness actions in recent years. McKinney can surely be counted on to champion issues important to our community, just as her son did.

Openly gay Supervisor **Kyle Richmond** is facing a conservative challenger for his seat representing the south side of Madison, Town of Madison, and parts of Fitchburg (District 27). Richmond stood shoulder-to-shoulder with McDonell to corral the votes needed to pass the county contractor DP benefits law, and did enormous amounts of behind-the-scenes work to ensure it was legally sound. He is smart, savvy, and a real rising star.

Your vote counts the most in local races: there are roughly 12,000 to 13,000 people

Richmond stood shoulder-to-shoulder with McDonell to corral the votes needed to pass the county contractor DP benefits law, and did enormous amounts of behind-the-scenes work to ensure it was legally sound

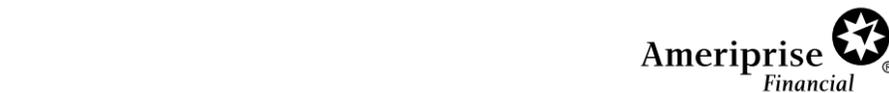
in each County Board District, and the traditional 25% to 30% turnout for spring elections means that it may take only 1500 votes to win. When we vote for those who vote for us, not only do we achieve pro-fairness policy in our County, but we help set examples for others, and allow the Tammy Baldwins and Mark Pocans of the future to develop their skills.

Find out more about the candidates in your district, especially about where they stand on fairness for LGBT citizens, and tell your neighbors what you learn! Most of all, **VOTE!** ■

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

Contested Seats Where Supportive Candidates Need Our Help

Area (district number)	Supportive Candidate (Incumbent/Open/Challenger)
Downtown Madison (1)	Scott McDonell (I)
East Side Madison (3)	Elaine DeSmidt (I)
West Side Madison (4)	Brett Hulsey (I)
Southwest Madison (7)	Matt Veldran (I)
Maple Bluff/ North Madison (12)	Paul Rusk (I)
West Side Madison (15)	Barbara McKinney (C)
Far East Side Madison (16)	Dave de Felice (I)
North Side Madison (18)	Melissa Sargent (O)
East Sun Prairie (20)	Gordon Shea (C)
Monona (24)	Robin Schmidt (I)
Middleton (26)	Sharon Corrigan (O)
South Side and Town of Madison, Fitchburg (27)	Kyle Richmond (I)
Mazomanie, Cross Plains (28)	Bob Green (C)
Mount Horeb (30)	Patrick Downing (I)
Fitchburg (33)	Samuel Cooke (C)
McFarland (34)	Patrick Miles (I)
Stoughton (35)	Denise Duranczyk (I)



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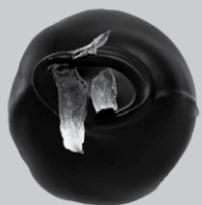
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Don't get me wrong, I love Madison. The danger is that I sometimes love it to the exclusion of other places. As I started thinking about the destination theme for this issue, I knew that

I wanted to explore outside the city limits. Besides, it was time for a get-away, and rarely do I get away without food in mind.

It didn't take me long to stumble across Carl Povlick's Naeset-Roe Inn, a gay-owned bed and breakfast in Stoughton that was built in 1878 and is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The ambience seemed charming but it was Carl's acclaimed gourmet breakfasts made with seasonal, local ingredients that caught my attention. (His "Wonderfully Wild, Wild Rice Quiche" recently placed him second in the Wisconsin Bed and Breakfast Association annual cook-off.)

When my partner and I arrived on a snowy winter evening, we were greeted by Carl and Zack, a charismatic sheltie who didn't have to try too hard to get us to concede to a game of fetch. Carl is virtually a one-man show but gave a nod to Zack: "He's my supervisor."

Carl showed us to the Clock Tower Suite, an intimate corner of the house with antique furniture, a whirlpool tub, a fireplace, and a bed covered in one of the quilts that Carl made himself. The one on our bed was made for his mother.

"Expect the unique," he said. "It's a male-owned bed and breakfast.



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Decisiones de Hombres

Diego Campoverde-Cisneros hace una reflexión cargada de emociones y vivencias personales acerca del camino hacia su aceptación.



Este reto en mi vida se lo dedico a Marco: "Marco, siempre estarás presente en mi memoria y en mi corazón..."

Cuando tenía cinco años jugaba en el jardín de infantes con mis compañeros y dudaba si jugar a la pelota, al escondite o con muñecas. Era obvio que el juego con el cual me identificaba más era el de las muñecas, pero a tan corta edad, la confusión era bárbara.

Luego en la escuela y en el colegio la situación se tornó más difícil. Al entrar a una escuela católica, la culpabilidad que sentía por mi forma de ser, a pesar de tener siete años y saber que era diferente, fue intensa. Sobreviví las duras bromas que los compañeros me hacían por, entre otras cosas, tener una voz más fina, no jugar al fútbol o compararme con algún cantante con características afeminadas. En fin, fueron muchos episodios los que me marcaron. Soy consciente de que mis amigos de ese entonces no hacían sus comentarios para afectarme, hacían y hacen parte de lo que se vive en muchas unidades educativas a nivel mundial que no cuentan con una orientación acerca de la homosexualidad y de

las distintas tendencias sexuales.

Al finalizar el colegio sentí un "alivio" espontáneo ya que la presión social sería un poco diferente en la universidad, aunque lamentablemente continuaba llevando una doble vida exigida por esa misma sociedad llena de tabúes. Fue durante mi segundo año universitario cuando mi vida cambió para siempre. Poco después de la muerte de mi madre, ella me envió al hombre que me ayudó a definir cuál era mi camino experimentando por primera vez en mi vida una relación con alguien de mi mismo sexo que duró casi seis años. Una relación escondida del mundo exterior y con dos caras, ya que tenía encuentros casuales con chicas e inclusive relaciones afectivas, todo para jugar al juego impuesto por la sociedad y así ocultar los rumores que pudieran suscitarse porque pasábamos "demasiado" tiempo juntos.

Al término de mis estudios superiores la gota que derramó el vaso cayó. No podía respirar más llevando esa doble vida y decidí salir de mi ciudad natal Cuenca (Ecuador) en búsqueda de mi libertad. Quizás ha sido una las decisiones

más duras que he tomado en mi vida; no fue nada fácil dejar atrás a mi familia, amigos, raíces, trabajo, memorias e historias.

Es así que en octubre de 2001, lleno de miedo y temor, llegué a los Estados Unidos buscando "mi libertad". Tuve la oportunidad de mudarme a Madison y trabajar en un medio de comunicación hispano, sin embargo el destino es paradójico. Huí de una sociedad porque no podía pertenecer a ella debido a mi inclinación sexual, y como la vida siempre es impredecible, terminé laborando para la misma comunidad latina pero en los Estados Unidos.

A pesar de todo, los años pasan y las increíbles personas que aparecen en tu camino te hacen dar cuenta de que no necesitas un letrado que diga "SOY GAY" para poder vivir en libertad. El primer requisito para ser libre es respetarte a ti mismo para que el resto de la sociedad lo haga. No es nada fácil, pero hay que recordar que si tú no piensas en un cambio para ti, nadie más lo hará.

Cuando era niño rezaba el rosario durante el mes de mayo con mi madre y mis hermanos alrededor de la cama

y pensaba que el infierno era lo menos que podría merecer. ¡Qué equivocado estaba! Hoy, cuando he logrado tanto en mi vida personal y profesional, sé que Dios, mi Dios, ha estado

junto a mí todo el tiempo y que el infierno no será mi próxima morada.

Aunque la libertad completa aún no la encuentro, he aprendido que la mejor libertad es tu conciencia y corazón. Sé que hay personas que como yo se identificarán con mi historia y quizá se animen a buscar su identidad. No será nada sencillo, especialmente si creces en una familia conservadora y una sociedad que aunque va siendo más tolerante, aún juzga de manera hostil el tema de la homosexualidad.

Ahora mi familia acepta quien soy, mis amigos son para siempre y he encontrado un camino lleno de amor, verdad y apoyo. He decidido luchar por quien soy y por los derechos fundamentales que todos tenemos como seres humanos independientemente de nuestra orientación sexual. He decidido vivir plenamente mi sexualidad y enfrentar a la sociedad en pro de la aceptación y la justicia social. Definitivamente, no es imposible pero sí de HOMBRES salir del clóset. ■

The English translation of this story appears exclusively online at: **ourlivesmadison.com**

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