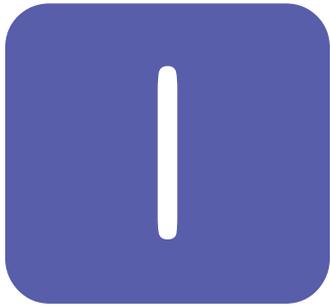


our lives



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Henry Sanders, Jr. on Marriage Equality

An Op-Ed by a Democratic candidate
for Lieutenant Governor

Go Outside & Enjoy Your Summer

Pride, Wisconsin AIDS Ride,
and Plan B's Corey Gresen
sporting a Speedo

First Glimpse

The story behind the
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Lucia Nuñez

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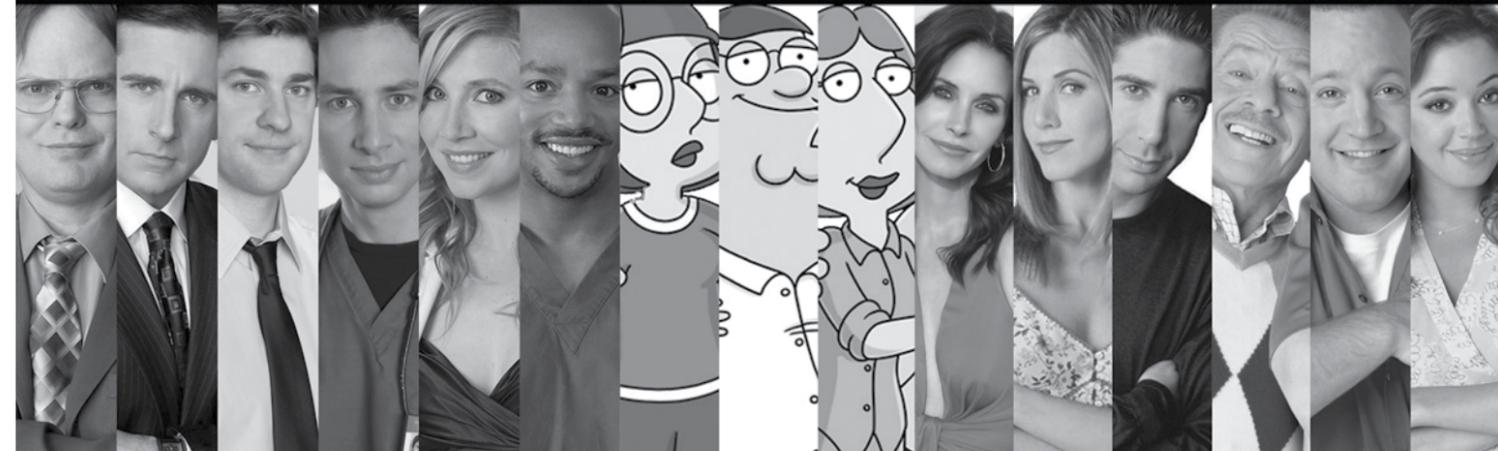
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Features

JULY / AUGUST 2010



18 Turning a Moment into Momentum

Lucia Nuñez comes out as a cancer survivor and explains how her job became more poignant as a result of her diagnosis



22 The Face of Commitment

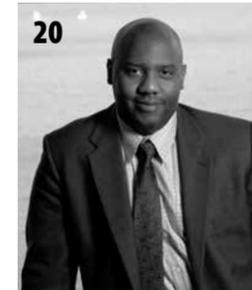
Jeanne Marshall chronicles how her feminism informed her decision to get involved with AIDS activism.



24 Many Pieces, One Clinic

Jill Nebeker examines the people and elements that came together to make the AIDS Network Dental Clinic a reality

Departments



- 6 **Publisher's Letter** and a **The Ripples Project**
- 7 **Contributors** The faces behind our pages
- 20 **Opinion-Editorial** by Henry Sanders, Jr.

Community

- 8 **Our Introductions** Wisconsin Capitol Pride's Maria Parker
- 10 **Our Stages** Jeremy Sonkin
- 11 **Our Pages and Poems** *Alphabet City: My So-Called Sitcom Life* reviewed and "Unrecognized" by local poet Erin Doolin
- 12 **Our Advocates** GSAFE Award Winners (and partners) Tina Owen and Jennifer Morales
- 14 **Our Advocates** Fair Wisconsin Leadership Award Winner Lester Pines
- 16 **Our Calendar** ACT 8: The Wisconsin AIDS Ride, Pride, and the OutReach Awards Banquet
- 17 **Wisconsin Capitol Pride Festival** Calendar of Events

Quality of Life

- 28 **Our Apparel** Bonnie Raimy dresses Corey Greesen
- 30 **Our Workplaces** Marty Fox inspires us to become leaders in our workplaces
- 32 **Our Rights** Tamara Packard addresses the state of our unions
- 34 **Our Issues** Dr. Sue Gill looks at "lesbian" drama and how it applies to all of us
- 36 **Our Plates** Marcelle Richards shops the Willy Street Co-op
- 38 **Our Start** Melissa Peyton shares why ACT 8 matters to her

Cover Photo by **Lukas Keapproth, lukaskeapproth.com**
Hair by **Scott Staples, duhair.com**

Our History
26 A Gay Boulevardier for Madison
 Richard Wagner delights in local dandy Ted Pierce.



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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publisher

Lessons in Leadership on Our Third Anniversary

[Publisher's Note: In honor of our third anniversary I wanted to offer a reflection on our first issue (July/August 2007). Below is my first Publisher's Letter. I'm proud of how focused the vision for this magazine was at inception, and how true to the mission we've remained.]

"We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world. We are all meant to shine, as children do. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same." —Marianne Williamson

The Faces of Our Community

One year ago this month I began work on the Madison Gay Hockey Association. The MGHA became a tool that empowers individuals to recognize their value to themselves, their team, league and to our community. As that happened something remarkable started occurring. People became willing to come forward and contribute to building what Outsports.com since has called "the premiere gay hockey league in the Midwest, if not the nation, built on diversity and inclusion."

With a conviction I've never before had in my life I believe that each of us, as individuals, are incredibly special people. We each have a delicately original perspective to both nurture and offer. I believe we start to discover our value when we begin recognizing that. In his open letter about the MGHA (A Culmination of Community, p25) Mark Sadowski writes, "Personally, I've grown into someone I never thought I could be, a leader, someone who doesn't just sit back and roll with the punches but, rather, one who is responsible for what he says and does." In accepting this responsibility I believe each of us become the face of our community.

You'll see this as I sit down with Felicia Melton-Smyth. Transcribing her description about care giving for her closest friends during the AIDS crisis left me in tears and having to turn the recording device off. Felicia's story is a powerful one about how more often than not, our cause in life shapes and selects us.

I've spent nine months of my life crafting *Our Lives* to show that long before any facet of our identity has a chance to divide us, what matters above all is that all of us are people first—we are individuals contributing to a larger community. In your hands now are some of those common threads from our experiences that make all of our stories real and valid and well worth sharing.

Welcome to *Our Lives*.

With love,

Patrick Farabaugh

PUBLISHER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Our Lives is proud to begin publishing a thematic "splash" of quotes from Paul Wesselmann at The Ripples Project.



A Splash from Paul at TheRipplesProject.org

I believe a big part of leadership is about winning the moment.

—Mike Krzyewski

Leadership is like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen. —Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus

You can't lead people if you don't love people. You can't save people if you don't serve people. —Congresswoman Julia Carson

Leadership is about self-awareness, recognizing your failings, and developing modesty, humility, and humanity. —C.K. Prahalad

Leaders must be tough enough to fight, tender enough to cry, human enough to make mistakes, humble enough to admit them, strong enough to absorb the pain, and resilient enough to bounce back and keep on moving. —Jesse Jackson

We advance toward our destiny when we encourage others to reach theirs. —Paul Wesselmann

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contributors

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Roberto Amezcua came to Madison in 1998 from El Paso, Texas, to work as a computer programmer. While in Madison he has rekindled his love of photography and uses it to express creativity. He enjoys the emotional connection of photographs to his life



experiences and finds it to be a means to connect with others. Roberto enjoys interacting with the person being photographed to set them at ease but more importantly to make a connection with the person and get their personality out. You can see some of his work at amezcua photography.com.

Bonnie Raimy initially majored in fashion merchandising and held several retail positions before discovering merchandising was not her passion. She earned an M.A. in Creative Writing and taught secondary multicultural literature in Delaware before moving to Madison in 2006. Her desire to own her own business, coupled with her innate sense of fashion, became the catalyst for change, and her personal shopping business was born. Bonnie caters to those who find shopping intimidating. She believes clothing should make people feel confident and comfortable, celebrating each person's individual beauty.



BONNIE RAIMY
ourlivesmadison.com
user **braimy**



Jill Nebeker is a hockey-playing, yoga-doing, web-loving girl from Boise, Idaho. She has lived in Madison since 2003 and has worked as a manager of website development at a local magazine publisher and currently at UW-Extension. With her free time and money, she visits Boise and spoils her daughter and granddaughter. You can find her online at small-potatoes.net.

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community

OUR INTRODUCTIONS

Building Pride

Get in on the fun of the upcoming Wisconsin Capitol Pride Festival and Parade! Senior Co-Chair **Maria Parker** tells us how.

Junior Co-Chair Mark Whitehead and Senior Co-Chair Maria Parker

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What is Wisconsin Capitol Pride? Wisconsin Capitol Pride organizes and hosts the LGBTQA Pride Celebration in Madison. Our events include an annual Pride Festival and Parade. This year the Pride events will be held on August 20-22. The Pride Festival will be on Willow Island at the Alliant Energy Center. The Pride Parade will circle the Capitol Square, continue down State Street, and conclude at Library Mall on the University of Wisconsin campus.

Maria, how did you come to be involved with WCP? In the summer of 2008 an exploratory committee was formed to reach out to the LGBTQA community to determine if there was still an interest in organizing a Pride Weekend in Madison and to determine the status of the former organizing committee, Madison Pride. I became involved early on in that discovery process as a way to give back to the Madison community. Volunteering with organizations has always been a part of what I do, so it seemed a natural fit for me to help with this new organization when the opportunity presented itself.

What are some successes from last year's festival, and how do you plan to build on those this year? Last year we had 1200 paid attendees on Saturday at the Festival, which was higher than expected and on Sunday when we only asked for donations, we estimated another 300. In addition to the Festival, we also hosted a Commitment/Recommitment Ceremony in the Rotunda of the State Capitol where 10 couples participated. The ceremony was organized with the support of members of the faith community as a way to draw attention to the recently passed state law that created the same-sex domestic partnership registry.

One of the most important things we learned from last year's events was that we ended up splitting our resources too thin on Sunday to be able to cover both the Parade downtown and the Festival back on Willow Island. Because of that, this year we have chosen to

limit the Festival to a one-day event. While the Parade remains on Sunday with an expanded closing, including entertainment by the band VO5 on Library Mall, we should be able to best attend to the needs of each event and venue.

Can you give us a preview of the festival? Our line-up includes local and national acts from across the country like God-des & She, the duo with local roots who headlined for us last year. In addition, Dot Dot Dot, a band from Chicago, who grew into prominence as contestants in the TV show Next Great American Band in 2007, will be our closing act this year. Other acts include R. J. Helton, who finished fifth during the first season of American Idol; and Matthew David, who participated in the Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

The Dance Pavilion returns, filled with live performances and DJs. These acts include Georgie Porgie from Chicago, G Cavelle Project, Harry Towers, Tod Miner, and others. A third community entertainment tent will feature events hosted by the Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls, Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus, and StageQ. We are working with various local organizations to possibly host other events on Willow Island as well. For instance, the OutReach Pancake Breakfast will take place on Willow Island. A full listing will be posted to our website, wisconsinpride.org, as events and performers are confirmed.

What are some ways that people can get involved with WCP and/or the festival? We're an all-volunteer organization and are always looking for help. If a yearlong opportunity isn't what you're looking for, we also need help at various fundraising events and especially during Pride weekend. Individuals interested in helping should email volunteer@wisconsinpride.org and we'll get them connected. ■

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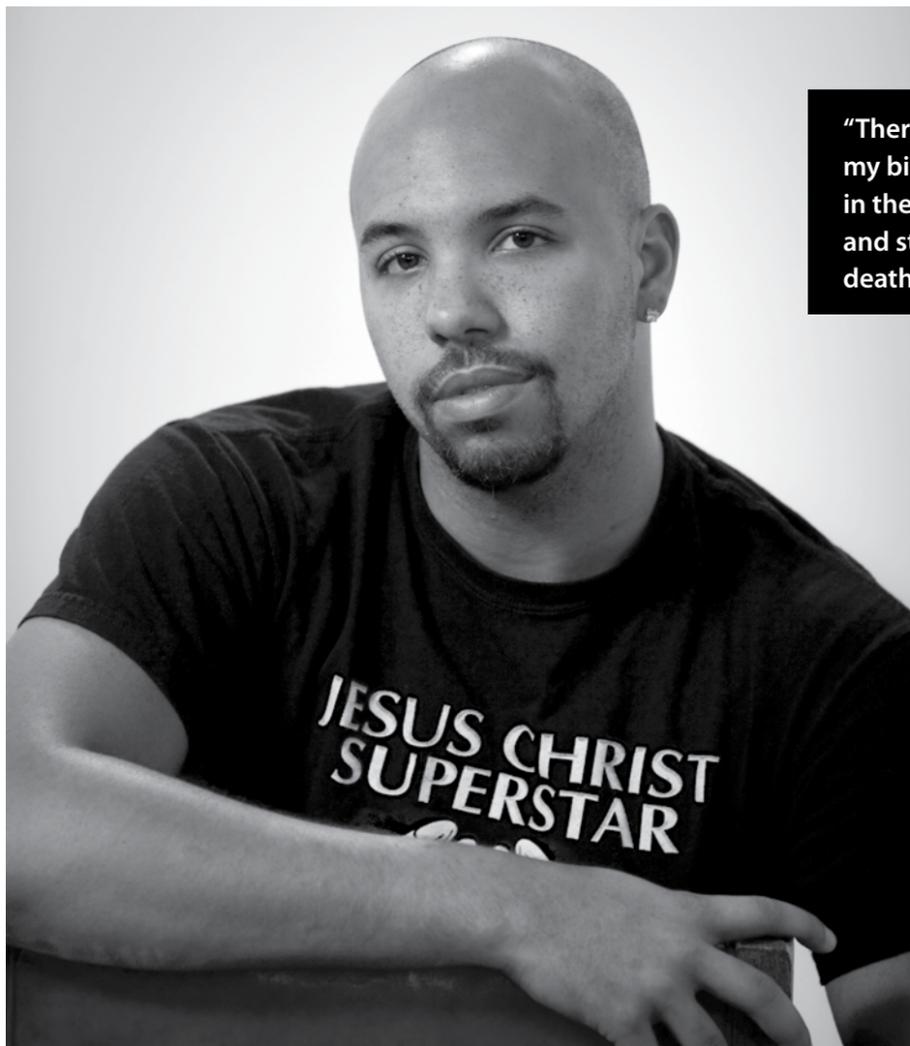
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Spotlight by StageQ Artistic Director Tara Ayres



"There was silence after the audition: my big belting note was just resonating in the air, and they all just were silent and stared at me. It scared me to death!" He got a call-back on the spot.

clothes four times a week was a joy. 'The Full Monty' gave me the same high that it was to play a big match in front of people cheering." He brought his athletic preparation and work ethic from tennis to theater and got to work seriously, taking voice lessons and acting training.

During his senior year, Jeremy flew to New York to audition for the chorus of "Jesus Christ, Superstar." He was one of over 1000 men who auditioned for 15 roles. After hours of waiting in the cold rain, a typical Broadway cattle call, Jeremy describes his big moment: "There was silence after the audition: my big belting note was just resonating in the air, and they all just were silent and stared at me. It scared me to death!" He got a call-back on the spot.

Jeremy returned to Madison, where he was in rehearsal for the Madison Theatre Guild production of "Forever Plaid." His director and castmates encouraged and supported him while he worked non-stop with his vocal coach on his songs for the callback. He flew back to New York, where he was one of 80 men being considered. A few weeks later, he was offered a role, and packed his bags for the road tour.

Jeremy talks at great length about how much he loves Madison community theater: "It's fun to perform for a big house with 'Superstar,' but I miss the intimacy of community theater. This is something that people strive their entire lives to achieve, to come right out of school and do this, and I'm so grateful. I had no theater background, and with just a couple of years of community theater and a lot of hard work, I was able to achieve this. Anything is possible."

Jeremy is back in Madison for one last summer. You can see him in University Theatre's production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." Then he is moving to LA to pursue his acting dreams. He says, "I want to beef up my résumé, do some smaller things, some regional things in lead roles—get that under my belt. I need to learn a lot before my next big opportunity." ■

Anything is Possible

Jeremy Sonkin cut his teeth on community theater in Madison, and will carry those experiences with him as he sinks his chops into the next big thing.

At 23, Jeremy Sonkin has spent the last year touring professionally with "Jesus Christ, Superstar," and he credits Madison community theater with helping him get there.

Jeremy came to the U.W.-Madison from Chicago. His parents encouraged his interest in theater and "forced" him to audition for musicals: "Oklahoma!," "The Music Man," and "Annie Get Your Gun." Jeremy says, "I would cry and cry. I was afraid people were laughing at me. It took me a while to get it, that people are laughing at the character, not at the actor."

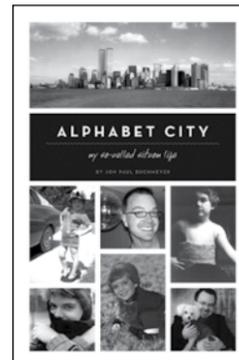
Jeremy arrived at the U.W. as a tennis play-

er, having played competitively since he was 10. At 11, he was the boys' champion for the U.S. He toured, and his goal was to be a professional tennis player. Then the unthinkable happened: during his junior year, he was hit by a car. Overnight, his dreams of a life as a tennis pro were over. He describes losing his drive, and not knowing what to focus on. And then he was cast in Mercury Players Theatre's production of "The Full Monty." It changed his life, and gave him a new goal: to become a professional actor.

Of his experience in "The Full Monty," Jeremy says, "Being laughed at, and taking off my

Alphabet City: My So-Called Sitcom Life

by Jon Paul Buchmeyer



Moving from Dallas to Manhattan in his late 20s, Jon Paul Buchmeyer fancied himself a gay Mary Tyler Moore starring in a sitcom of his life that he called Alphabet City. In his humorous entertainment industry memoir Alphabet City: My So-Called Sitcom Life, Jon Paul lands a series of publicity jobs that create madcap storylines, including a mishap with Whoopi Goldberg's Oscar, a mistaken identity as Tyra Banks' Turkish boy-toy, and finishing school lessons in the gossipy halls of publishing giant Condé Nast. But

unlike snarky tell-alls, the memoir maintains a Texas-sized optimistic spirit about life in the Big Apple, with guest appearances from Cameron Diaz, Gloria Estefan, Teri Hatcher, Derek Jeter, Ashley Judd, Rosie O'Donnell, Graham Norton, and Vanessa Williams.

Following Jon Paul's journey from naive Southerner to wizened New Yorker, Alphabet City combines the glamour of Sex and the City with the warmth of Tales of the City, tapping into America's fascination with the world of celebrities. In the end, just like Mary, Jon Paul discovers he's going to make it after all. Buchmeyer is a 2010 Next Generation Indie Book Awards Finalist-GLBT. abcityblog.com

[Editor's Note: Jon Paul Buchmeyer will be in Madison August 21-22 as part of his national book tour. Learn more at abcityblog.com/episodes/book-tour.]

ERIN DOOLIN is a graduate student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a recovering artist. She has recently rediscovered the art of noticing, which has contributed to putting words on paper and a burgeoning collection of poems on the ordinary.



UNRECOGNIZED

I don't know much about anticipatory grief, but it seems similar to raising a child and imagining her untimely death; the details of the tragedy continuously changing.

The ends I know have been abrupt or a slow decay.

When my grandfather had an aneurism, he was just gone; one week cutting the turkey at Thanksgiving and the next week, all that remained were the muddy footprints of the EMS on my grandparents' white bedroom carpet.

And it set in motion the slow decay of my grandmother's world, all strength and resolve disappeared into grief and isolation; conversations with her dog who still sat in the window waiting for my grandfather to come home.

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The Power of Two

2010 GSAFE award winners and partners **Tina Owen** and **Jennifer Morales** reflect on their partnership and lives as powerful advocates in the Milwaukee schools.

Editor's Note: Jennifer Morales, Writer/Editor/Community Activist in Milwaukee was awarded the Judi Devereux Community Activist Award. Tina Owen, Lead Teacher of The Alliance School in Milwaukee, was named Educator of the Year.

TINA: We laugh at ourselves sometimes, at the goofy, beautiful coincidence that we both think that talking pedagogical theory is a totally appropriate activity for "date night." We're education geeks in love. We look at education from different points of view—I'm the teacher and Jennifer's the writer and former school board member—but both of us are obsessed with questions about schools and about making them better for students and families.

JENNIFER: We met via e-mail when Tina was drafting the proposal to start The Alliance School, a small public school designed to be a safe place for students who had been bullied or harassed in other environments. Tina expected that many of the students would be LGBTQ. I was a member of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Board and advised Tina on the tone and content of the proposal to give it the best chance to win approval from the Board, which it did.

TINA: We had our first real in-person meeting months later when we both happened to volunteer to score student portfolios at another MPS high school, where my foster son was a student. I offered Jennifer a ride to her next meeting and in that 10-minute trip we had the most intense conversation of our lives. It was pretty much love from that moment on.

JENNIFER: I was married to a man when we met, but within a month of that

car ride, it became clear that the marriage couldn't last. I moved into my own apartment and we started rebuilding our lives. Between us we have five kids, so that was a big rebuilding project. At first the kids weren't too sure about the idea of blending families but after a while they really grew to love each other as siblings. Now they're great advocates for LGBTQ rights; a couple of the boys even posed with "The Moms" in the Gay Neighbor billboard campaign in Milwaukee (pictured above).

Since I'd been elected while in a heterosexual relationship, I decided that it was important to come out publicly. We chose the moment carefully,

just before Milwaukee's 2006 PrideFest and in the midst of the battle against the constitutional amendment that was to be on the statewide ballot that fall. We both felt it was important to stand up and be counted among the many LGBT employees, students, and parents in MPS who would be harmed if the amendment passed.

Later, I led the struggle for domestic partner benefits for MPS employees. My proposal to give partner benefits to the ap-

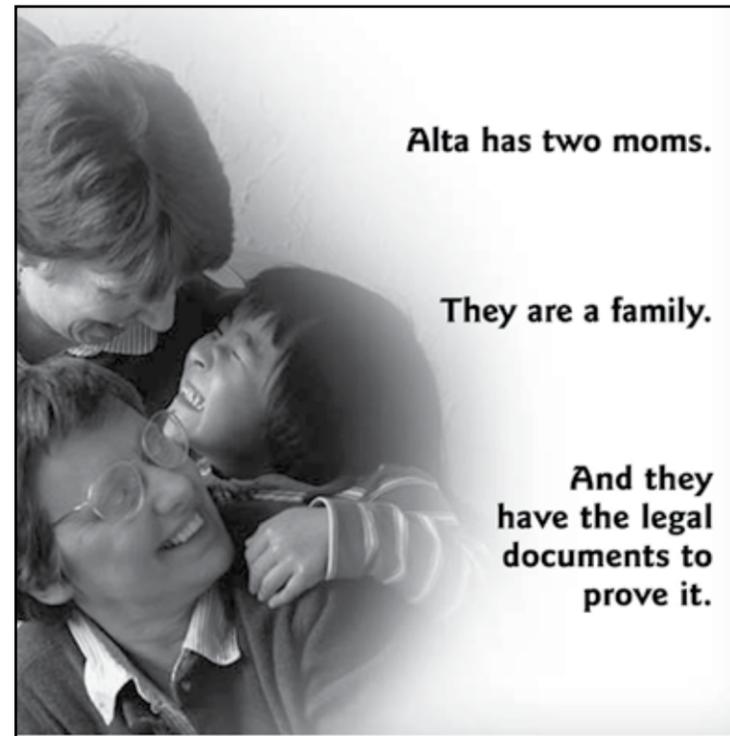
proximately 100 staff members who aren't part of a union was approved after four very painful public hearings at which our family and my integrity were attacked in really vile terms. We had hoped that the approved policy would open the door to domestic partner benefits for all MPS employees. Unfortunately, the human resources department has resisted implementing the benefits program until the next teachers' union contract is settled—something now a year overdue. It's hard to have experienced all the hate and harassment only to see the policy put on hold, especially now that I'm retired from the school board and no longer have a vote.

My prediction that The Alliance School would attract a large number of LGBTQ students definitely came true. The students aren't asked their orientation, but the staff estimates that at least half of the population is gay, bi, or transgender.

TINA: We're keeping an eye on the ongoing domestic partner benefits effort, but a lot of our attention is focused on making sure The Alliance School thrives. The school, originally started as a high school, was expanded to include grades 6–8 in the 2009–10 school year and, this spring, the school won a two-year renewal of its charter from the MPS board. My prediction that The Alliance School would attract a large number of LGBTQ students definitely came true. The students aren't asked their orientation, but the staff estimates that at least half of the population is gay, bi, or transgender.

Alliance has been featured in *People*, *Elle Girl*, *Time*, *Teaching Tolerance*, and other national and international media. We get calls, emails, and visitors from all over the globe. Many of the contacts are from students who live far away and who wish they could move to Milwaukee to attend Alliance. Alliance staff and students regularly make presentations to other schools, sharing their knowledge about how to make a school safe and welcoming for all students.

JENNIFER and TINA: We were both moved very much by the moment in the movie *Milk* when a young gay man who uses a wheelchair calls Harvey Milk to tell this political hero how desperate and alone he feels, how unable he is to escape his isolation in rural America. We're both finely attuned to that note of desperation—particularly when it comes from young people. Like in that scene in the movie, sometimes we can offer only heartfelt word of encouragement and the example of our own lives. Sometimes that's enough. We've seen the power of one steady, out, supportive adult to inspire a student and sometimes save that student's life. Our advice for LGBTQ school and district staff: Come out. Do it consciously and responsibly, but come out. You might not ever get to know all the students (and adults) you positively affect with your bravery and honesty, but we can guarantee that you will affect someone to whom it will matter very much. ■



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New Harvest Foundation is the only foundation in South Central Wisconsin that channels charitable contributions exclusively to organizations working to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, services, culture and community development. 2010 Funding Priorities: LGBT Youth and Seniors



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No Labels

Fair Wisconsin Advocate of the Year **Lester Pines** examines the many factors that shaped his political and social belief system.

[Editor's Note: Lester Pines, a senior partner at Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, is a 2010 Fair Wisconsin Advocate of the Year. According to Katie Belanger, Fair Wisconsin Executive Director, Pines "has been a tireless advocate for the LGBT community." Currently, Pines is representing, pro-bono, William McConkey, an Oshkosh lecturer, in a challenge to the legality of the 2006 amendment to the state's Constitution banning same-sex marriage and civil unions. In McConkey v. J. B. Van Hollen, Pines and his client argue that the two propositions in the amendment proposed to the voters should have been presented to them as two separate questions. If successful, the challenge will take the discriminatory amendment off the books.]

Have you always been an advocate for liberal social issues?

I was born in 1950 and came of age in the midst of the civil rights movement in St. Louis. It was something that my parents believed in; it was part of the family discussion. My father was very influential in

my political and social development and talked about the need to have the courage of your convictions and not be afraid to defend them and do what's right. Also, our rabbi was a very well-known theologian and was very influential in civil rights.

I was a freshman at the University of Wisconsin in 1968, and it was a time of incredible political and social turmoil. After graduating from law school, I did criminal defense and civil rights work from the very beginning in private practice with two other attorneys. I've always done employment discrimination and labor discrimination work.

Equally important to the influence of the civil rights movement on my development was the impact of the women's movement—and 40 years with my wife Roberta Gassman. From a young age, particularly because of the women's movement, it was pretty clear to me that just because things had been a certain way, that didn't mean that's the way it was always supposed to be.

When I cast forward 30 years later, it seemed self-evident to me that you can't have a society where you label people as something and then because they are labeled, they don't have the same rights as everybody else. That seemed completely nonsensical.

How did you come to take the McConkey case?

When Madison Teachers, Inc. (MTI) negotiated Domestic Partner Benefits and those were attacked, our firm defended that, and that was the first opportunity I had do anything for LGBT rights in court. It was at that time that I hired Tamara Packard to be an associate here.

When Tamara joined our firm, MTI was the first case on which she was assigned to work. Tamara and I became and have been very close colleagues over the last 12 or 13 years. When you become friends and colleagues with someone, you can learn a lot about a topic that you might

not otherwise know about. That really helped me to perceive that the way people think about people who aren't heterosexual is completely skewed. It was helpful to me to understand how these various issues need to be presented, both politically and legally.

Later, when I was campaigning against the marriage amendment, I said to audiences, "When I get up in the morning and sit on the side of the bed and stretch, I don't say to myself, 'Gee it's going to be a great heterosexual day.'"

The amendment was hypocritical beyond belief, designed to appeal to peoples' fears and emotions. After it passed, the ACLU was discussing attacking the amendment. Fair Wisconsin was discussing what to do legally. And the consensus was that the courts were not the place to take up this fight. The fight had to be won politically, not legally in court.

Then Bill McConkey filed his own lawsuit, and the question became, "Is the lawsuit going to be done right, or is it going to be done wrong?" As smart as Bill is, the challenge on this particular section of the Wisconsin Constitution is complicated and difficult for all of us. Article 12, Section 1 says if you present an amendment by referendum, you've got to have separate questions if you have separate issues. There have been only three cases that have addressed that issue in 150 years, and they are relatively unintelligible. So, I decided that I wanted to get involved with this, and Tamara and I decided to do so together.

Then Bill McConkey filed his own lawsuit, and the question became, "Is the lawsuit going to be done right, or is it going to be done wrong?" As smart as Bill is, the challenge on this particular section of the Wisconsin Constitution is complicated and difficult for all of us. There have been only three cases that have addressed that issue in 150 years, and they are relatively unintelligible.

What do you think the best strategies are outside of what you can do legally, to fight the amendment and to get our political environment to turn around?

My firm belief is that if nothing else, with the passage of time, the social climate is going to change. The political climate has already. There is still a very vocal minority of people who are just hateful and mean, but overall, peoples' attitudes are generally, "Hey, live and let live."

To get from there to changing law it's a bigger step. It's a hard step. Think about Women's Suffrage. The best approach is to start with basic political things. You have a domestic partners registry... you defend it, you expand it. I would just expand the rights on that over time. When the time was right, just move to eliminate the amendment.

I think what will happen in Wisconsin is, over time, there will be a tremendous number of rights under domestic partnership. And then, the climate will be right to just say, "C'mon, this is ridiculous." Right next door in Iowa, they have legalized same-sex marriage. And apparently no one cares. Iowa has not had a big social upheaval.

The statewide referendum on Wisconsin ballots in November 2006 stated:

"Shall section 13 of article XIII of the constitution be created to provide that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state and that a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state?"

Wisconsin voters passed the constitutional amendment by a margin of 59.4%–40.6%.

You talked about expanding civil unions rights. As they are expanded, does that open it up more and more to challenging it based on the amendment?

It may very well be that we'll get an interpretation of the amendment substantively at some point where it says, "substantially similar" means that it has to have all of the elements of marriage." Meaning that you could expand civil union protections dramatically.

You've been named Advocate of the Year by Fair Wisconsin. Why do you feel that people who are LGBT deserve equal rights under the law?

In his *I Have a Dream* speech, Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "I have a dream that one day, my

four children will be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin." And that's really what this whole movement is about. People should be judged on the content of their character, and not on their sexual orientation or their gender identity. If we can get past those notions that people have to be labeled and they can just be who they are, we would have a much healthier society. —Virginia Harrison

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- » Call 608-256-4204

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



ACT 8: The Wisconsin AIDS Ride

July 29–August 1
Southern Wisconsin

The eighth annual Wisconsin AIDS bike ride will raise funds for AIDS Network and raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. ACT 8 will cover four days and 300 miles on bike. The riders are 100% supported before and during the ride. actride.org



Wisconsin Capitol Pride: Proud • Connected • Visible

August 18–22

Alliant Energy Center's Willow Island

The mission of Wisconsin Capitol Pride is to promote diversity and pride within the greater Madison area's LGBTQA community and acceptance from the rest of the community. wisconsincapitolpride.org



OutReach Awards Banquet

September 17

Monona Terrace, Madison

Awards will be presented to Man of the Year, Woman of the Year, Organization of the Year, OutReach Volunteer of the Year, and many others. Cass Marie Domino will host. lgbtoutreach.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.)
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

WISCONSIN CAPITOL PRIDE: SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



Wednesday, August 18

Pride Kickoff Networking Happy Hour

4:00–7:00 p.m. at Plan B
Sponsored by Out Professional & Executive Network (OPEN)

Thursday, August 19

Wisconsin Interdenominational Group of Wisconsin Capitol Pride Events

5:00 p.m. Renewing Vows & Commitment Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda
5:45 p.m. Proud • Connected • Visible Family Promenade around the Square (starts at State Street corner)
6:30 p.m. Ice Cream Social at First United Methodist Church, Wisconsin Avenue

Friday, August 20

Proud • Connected • Visible Greet & Meet

5:00–9:00 p.m. at MMoCA
Join us for a great evening of schmoozing in the glass lobby of the MMoCA, grand entrances by the King & Queen of Pride, the Hostess of the Pride Parade, and the Parade Marshalls. Hosted by the GLBT Alumni Council of the Wisconsin Alumni Association.

Saturday, August 21

Outreach Brunch
9:00–11:00 a.m. on Willow Island

Health & Fitness Area
This area will include many community groups demonstrating their value to our community, including volleyball games, rugby demonstration, and kayaking demonstrations.

Madison GLBT Legacy Tent
This tent will feature displays showing the GLBTQ timeline of people and places that affected our community throughout the years. We will also have a viewing area of various videos of past marches and prides and an opportunity for participants to present their own perspective for future viewers through written or taped contributions.

Around the Grounds
Various balloon artist, jugglers, magicians, yoga folks, drum circles, hula hooping, face painters, stilt walkers, minstrels, giant puppets, belly dancers, and hula dancers will be traversing the grounds. Costumed characters will be available to be photographed with festival-goers.

Sunday, August 22

Big Gay Brunch
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at various downtown restaurants

Parade and Rally
1:00 p.m. at the Capitol Square
Starts at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., circles the square and proceeds down State Street to Library Mall/Fountain area.

Contests: Best Proud Float / Best Connected Float / Best Visible Float
Volunteers will encourage on-lookers to march at the end of the parade down State Street to Library Mall for the rally and entertainment.

Rally
2:00–5:00 p.m. VO5 Disco/funk band

Tentative Schedule

Pride Main Stage
11:00 a.m.
2:00 p.m. Drag Show
3:30 p.m. AJ Shanti
4:30 p.m. Julie Schurr
5:30 p.m. Matthew David
6:30 p.m. RJ Helton
7:30 p.m. God-des & She
9:00 p.m. Dot Dot Dot
10:30 p.m. Close

Dance Pavilion
11:00 a.m. Rick Styles
1:30 p.m. DJ Donna Madden
2:00 p.m. DJ Wesley
3:00 p.m. DJ Tod Miner
4:00 p.m. G Cavelle Project
5:00 p.m. Dj Tim Walters
5:30 p.m. Ciara Corr
6:00 p.m. Layla
6:30 p.m. Raquela
7:00 p.m. Harry Towers
8:00 p.m. Georgie Porgie

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

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
July 8–24, Mitchell Theatre-Vilas Hall, Madison

This Tony-award winning hip musical comedy follows six young people in the throes of puberty, who are overseen by grown-ups who barely managed to escape childhood themselves, as they learn that winning isn't everything. utmadison.com

Art Fair on the Square
July 10–11, Madison's Capitol Concourse

Art Fair on the Square has grown into a can't-miss-it summertime destination for fine arts enthusiasts from across the Midwest. Organized by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, the fair features music, entertainment, and outdoor dining, as well as the work of nearly 500 artists exhibiting works in mixed media, ceramics, drawings, graphics, prints, fiber, leather, furniture, glass, jewelry, metal, paintings, photographs, sculpture, 3D mixed media, and wood. mmoca.org/events/artfair

Olbrich's Blooming Butterflies
July 14–August 8, Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Experience the magnificence of free-flying butterflies while strolling through the tropical Bolz Conservatory. Live butterflies emerge from chrysalises daily in the Conservatory, including low-flyers like the playful yellow and black striped zebras and bright orange julias. More than a dozen species of butterflies, native to both Wisconsin and the more tropical areas of the southern United States can be seen at various times during the exhibit. olbrich.org/events/butterflies.cfm

Opera in the Park
Saturday, July 17, Garner Park, Madison's West Side

A beloved Madison summer tradition, Opera in the Park features familiar opera hits, the best of Broadway, as well as highlights from the upcoming Madison Opera mainstage season. Performed by the talents of the Madison Opera Chorus, the Madison Symphony Orchestra, and some of opera's brightest stars, Opera in the Park is a FREE event perfect for audiences of ALL ages! madisonopera.org/performances/park2010

Maxwell Street Days Summer Sidewalk Sale
July 16–18, State Street, Madison

With great bargains and fabulous food, this annual event showcases Madison's State Street and Capitol Square shopping district. More than 80 shops, boutiques, galleries and restaurants—many locally owned—offer bargains on clothing, jewelry, gifts, artwork, food, drink, and more. maxwellstreetdays.org

Full Moon Cruises
July 26 and August 24, Lake Mendota

See the full moon rising over Madison's gorgeous skyline as you enjoy a dessert buffet on a Betty Lou Cruise! betyloucruises.com

Ride the Drive
August 29, Downtown Madison

Ride the Drive is a celebration of Madison's commitment to healthy, active lifestyles. This is an invitation for all to leave their cars behind to experience some of Madison's most scenic byways by riding, walking, skating, or strolling along some of our city's most beautiful streets. cityofmadison.com/transportation/ridethedrive

Cardinal

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TURNING A MOMENT INTO MOMENTUM

City of Madison Department of Civil Rights Director
Lucia Nuñez recounts how her personal and professional paths
intersected in a most life-changing way.

There are definitive moments, moments we use as references, because they break our sense of continuity, they change the direction of time. We can look at these events and we can say that after them things were never the same again. They provide beginnings for us, and endings too.

— **Margaret Atwood**
The Robber Bride



BOTH MY PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS are atypical. They meander, taking significant detours along the way. There are common themes, and more importantly, there are definitive moments—moments that serve as a reference for my life and ground me to the work I do. This is an account of how my personal and professional lives intersected in a most powerful—and unpredictable—way.

Illness and Diagnosis

In January of 2008, as I prepared to attend the events in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I got sick. At first I thought I had food poisoning, but by Monday, I was jaundiced and could not eat anything. By Tuesday, my primary doctor sent me to the hospital thinking I had blockage from a gallstone. Someone listened to me when I said that I was nervous because my older brother, Rudy, had recently died from pancreatic cancer. A CA 19-9 blood test was ordered, the only marker for pancreatic cancer—and not a good one at that. Results can vary, including false positives.

My CA 19-9 was elevated but they couldn't find a tumor. My gallbladder, perhaps from the endoscopic procedure, got infected and I got sicker. The doctor wanted an endoscopic ultrasound to see if he could find a tumor. He knew I had a cancer. Because of his persistence and determination, I have him to thank for the early detection of my cancer.

He found that I did have a tumor in the ampulla, the meeting of the pancreatic duct and the bile duct located in the duodenum. Although the diagnosis was frightening to hear, I breathed a sigh of relief because though this was a rare cancer it wasn't pancreatic cancer. We scheduled the surgery for the first available date.

Never did I imagine, sitting at the EOC meeting, how personal this addition to the ordinance would become for me.

Post-surgery, it was confirmed that it wasn't ampullary cancer but rather pancreatic cancer. The tumor did start in the pancreas and extended down into the duct. How could it be that two siblings not three years apart in age could end up with the same cancer? Our parents were still alive and they had never had this cancer. What was going on? Thoughts of toxic exposure when we lived on Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba began forming in my mind. I remember chasing after a truck we nicknamed "Smokey Joe," as it sprayed pesticides to kill mosquitoes. I had images of Cold War biochemical warfare being fought on the naval base by the U.S. and Soviet Union—envisioning my brother and me being somehow exposed to a toxin.

At the end of February, I had the Whipple operation, a surgery to remove the cancerous tumor along with my infected and useless gallbladder, most of my pancreas, part of my stomach, and the duodenum. I still remember the surgeon saying this was a complex surgery where lots could go wrong and then there could be leaks. I had to survive the leaks and figure out what I needed to do to make sure that this cancer didn't come back.

Pancreatic Cancer and Treatment

Some statistics about pancreatic cancer: it is the fourth leading cause of cancer death; there is a five percent five-year survival rate (compared to breast cancer which is 89 percent); and there is a high chance that the cancer will return. I was lucky that the cancer was found early and that it was operable. Most tumors don't reveal themselves until it is too late, as was the case for my brother Rudy.

Diagnosed at stage IV, Rudy was given six months. His tumor was inoperable and the cancer had already spread to his liver. He was 50 years old.

My niece, Rudy's daughter, had done cancer treatment research for her father, and now she researched for me. She knew that I needed the most aggressive treatment possible, and then some. She searched and found a clinical trial at Northwestern University to test a vaccine against pancreatic cancer. Less than a month after my surgery, we headed down to Chicago on St. Patrick's Day to see if I could get into this trial.

With my brother-in-law and niece reading the protocol for the trial on the telephone, we arrived at Northwestern with the pathology report in hand. I didn't realize I had to be approved. If I was found to meet all the requirements, I had to have the first round of vaccines on the twenty-eighth day after my surgery. We arrived in Chicago on Monday night, and my twenty-eighth day after surgery was Wednesday.

I was accepted into the clinical trials, beginning a regimen of eight vaccine shots every two weeks for 14 weeks along with two different kinds of chemotherapy and five and a half weeks of radiation.

Genetic Identity as a Protected Class

Shifting the focus from my personal journey onto my professional journey, the connections and intersections emerge.

Rewind back to 2007. At the tail end of a meeting of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Steve Morrison (one of the commissioners) suggested that the EOC explore adding genetic identity to the list of protected classes in the equal opportunities ordinances for the city of Madison. We were to explore what was meant by genetic identity. How could an employer discriminate against a potential or existing employee on the basis on genetic identity? What did this mean for housing and, even more perplexing, for public accommodation?

The process of researching, working with the City Attorney's office (that drafts the language), and presenting information to the commissioners fell on the staff's shoulders, and so began the long process of researching, writing, and debating. Never did I imagine, sitting at the EOC meeting, how personal this addition to the ordinance would become for me.

As the Commission worked on this endeavor here in Madison, the Genetic Identity Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) was making its way through the process at the federal level.

In May of 2008, President George Bush signed GINA into law just as I was starting radiation treatment for pancreatic cancer. The Senate passed GINA unanimously, and the House passed it 414 to 1. In November of 2009, the law went into effect. Madison will most likely incorporate aspects of GINA into the ordinances later this year.

The Impact of GINA

Why is GINA important? Why should we care if there are protections? As developments in genetic testing and information advance and as people take advantage of these to determine if they have a predisposition, the protections against discrimination in the workplace will become more important. Basically GINA states that an employer may not discriminate because of genetic information; GINA restricts an employer from acquiring genetic information; and GINA limits the disclosure of genetic information.

Disclosing my experience with pancreatic cancer to the general public disqualifies me from employment protection; this law won't benefit me. But, perhaps, if researchers find a genetic link, and if my child has that predisposition, then she might benefit from that employment protection.

Researchers still don't know the genetic links for pancreatic cancer, unlike other cancers where they have been able to identify a genetic marker. The work to uncover this for pancreatic cancer is very far behind.

Controlled journeys, with set destinations and routes, convenient stopping points, and places of interests are wonderful, but they are rare. They are the journeys of carefully choreographed vacations. Most of life is not so predictable. Cancer throws that control out the window. ■

R U Ready? READY TO QUIT!?

Every year in Wisconsin, nearly 7,000 years of life are lost to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people because of their tobacco use.

Tobacco use represents a private crisis for LGBT people in Wisconsin; it comes at a huge public cost to us all.

WHY DO WE SMOKE MORE?

One of the leading factors associated with LGBT people smoking is minority stress—the stress related to the stigma and discrimination we feel in our daily lives as LGBT people. Even those who have successfully quit for a period of time are more likely to state they returned to smoking because of the stressors of our lives.

WHAT WORKS?

- You can double or triple your chances of a successful quit by combining strategies. Cold turkey rarely works.
- Build a social support network among your friends and family that cheers you on.
- Work on changing the habits of smoking. Think about where and when you smoke. What triggers your smoking behaviors? Be aware of the feelings that increase your desire to smoke and work on those.

GET HELP.

Check out www.rm2breathe.org

Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** for loads of resources, including nicotine replacement products.

rm2breathe



This program is funded by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's Wisconsin Partnership Program



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op-ed

MARRIAGE EQUALITY IS KEY TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

by Democratic candidate for
Lieutenant Governor **Henry Sanders, Jr.**

IN A TOUGH ECONOMY, CITIES, REGIONS, AND ENTIRE states must do everything they can to compete. That means providing the best infrastructure, talent pool, and economic incentives necessary to attract and retain jobs. Among the most important factors businesses consider as they seek out sites to locate or expand operations is workforce. That's why marriage equality is a key plank in Progressive Recovery, my 18-point job creation platform.

Marriage equality would lead to a significant immediate windfall in the tourism and hospitality industries, sectors that have especially suffered during the recent recession. A study by UCLA's Williams Institute projects that recently enacted marriage equality policies in the District of Columbia would grow the city's economy by more than \$52.2 million over the first three years. The local tax base is expected to jump by \$5.4 million as a direct result of marriage equality. More than 700 new jobs will be created almost immediately through increased marriage licensing needs, tourism, and other work related to the wedding industry. This immediate positive impact results from a population only one-tenth of that of the State of Wisconsin.

Perhaps more important, however, are the long-term implications in terms of human capital. Studies show that the next generation of workers increasingly choose a place to live first, and then find a job there. These same workers are more attracted to places they see as inclusive, places that accept and embrace people of all races, backgrounds, and family types. As the economy continues to evolve, and the aging Baby Boom generation retires, attracting and retaining these workers will become increasingly important for the health of Wisconsin's economy.

Since 2006, discriminatory language directed against marriage equality written into our state's constitution has hampered Wisconsin's ability to attract and retain the human capital necessary for economic development. In the public sector alone, tens of millions of dollars in research grants and federal funds have been lost due to the departures of university faculty. For example, three recently departed faculty members interviewed by a U.W.-Madison newspaper cited inequality concerns as a major factor in their decision. The departures resulted in a loss of nearly \$10 million in grants and dozens of staff positions. This trend will only worsen over time, with a ripple effect that

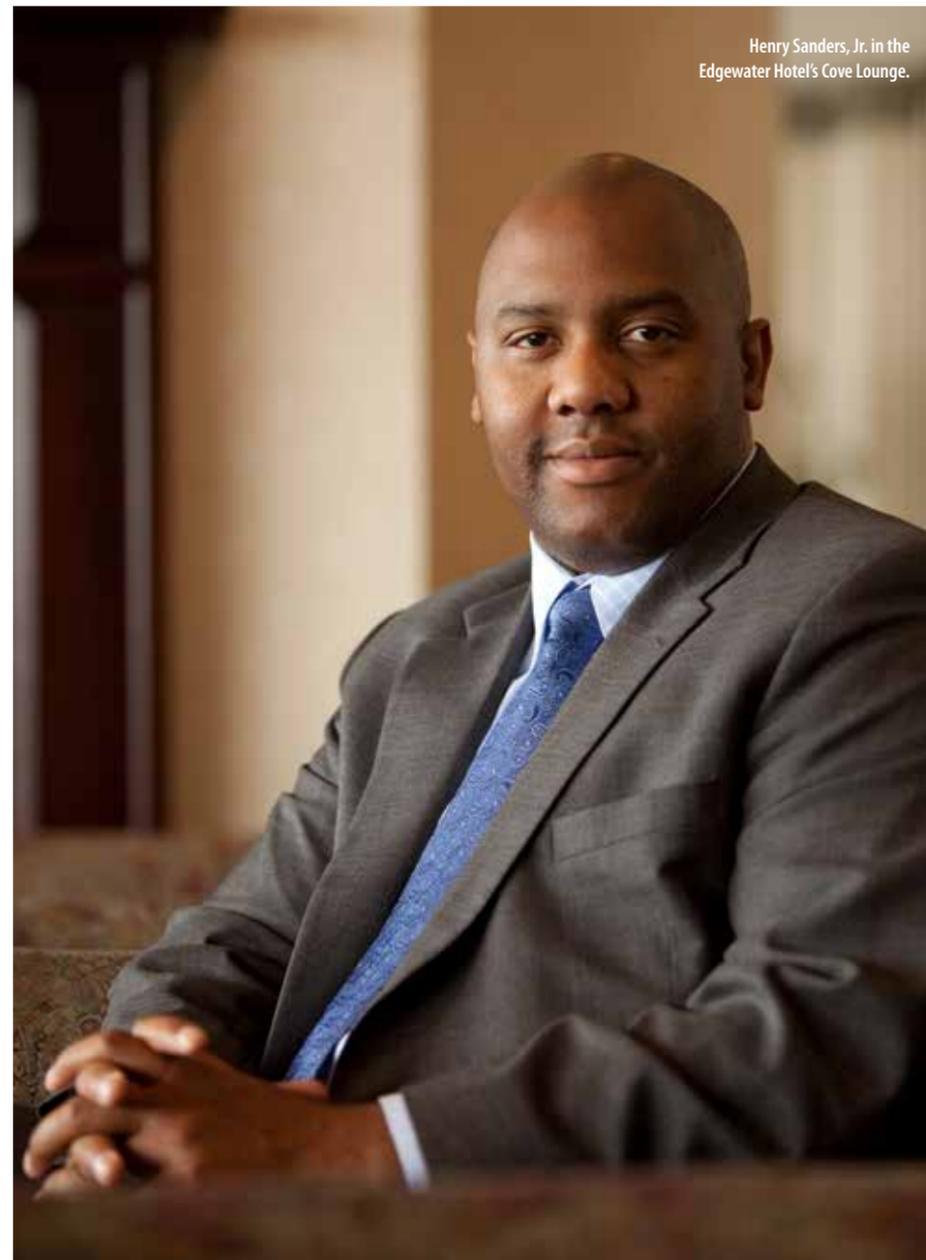
will be felt across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Conversely, a significant number of highly skilled workers would be attracted to Wisconsin in order to take advantage of benefits such as inheritance and medical protections. In addition to Washington, DC, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont have all capitalized on these economic benefits by guaranteeing full equality for all couples.

The private sector already knows this. Half of the Fortune 500 offer full benefits to same-gender couples, as do more than 7,500 major corporations nationwide. They do this because they need to remain competitive. It is far past time for the state government to catch up.

For our state to compete economically in a national and global marketplace, we must take the necessary steps toward guaranteeing full equality for all couples in Wisconsin. The next administration and legislature must work to repeal the discriminatory language in our state constitution and pave the way to equality for all Wisconsin families.

Henry Sanders, Jr. is a Waunakee non-profit executive, small business owner, and Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor whom party leaders and grassroots activists favored by a 2-to-1 margin at the recent Democratic Convention. Read more about Sanders' job creation and economic development experience at www.henrysanders.org.



Henry Sanders, Jr. in the Edgewater Hotel's Cove Lounge.

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Jeanne Marshall is seen by many as one of the ACT Ride matriarchs. OutReach recognized her last year as their "Ally of the Year" for her work with groups like GSAFE and Proud Theater.



THE FACE OF COMMITMENT

Veteran ACT Rider **Jeanne Marshall** chronicles her journey toward understanding diversity and explains why and for whom she rides—until AIDS is over or she is.

AIDS IS NOT A GAY DISEASE, BUT a human disease, affecting more and more women every year. For that reason and in honor of so many good friends who live with HIV, I will keep riding until AIDS is over or I am.

Pre-awareness

Growing up in a household where homosexuality was either not discussed or at best misunderstood, I have been on an evolutionary journey for many years toward a clearer understanding of the diversity of my fellow human beings. I can't say that I was aware of many of the early significant events as members of the LGBT community sought to be recognized as equal members of society in the first two decades after Stonewall.

Witnessing Stonewall Parade

Twenty years ago that all changed with a trip to New York City for a running event. On the Sunday morning of that trip in June of 1989, I watched with amazement as Riverside Church's

delegation walked out of the sanctuary to join the Gay Pride march. My best friend and I followed the parade from Times Square to Greenwich Village. Amazingly, I was in New York for the twentieth anniversary of Stonewall! Although I didn't fully comprehend the significance of that day, in my heart I know that is when my life changed in a significant and positive way.

A Friend Dies

In 1991, I learned that a former coworker had died of AIDS. Unfortunately, I did not stay in touch with Ken after he moved to Washington, DC, and started a different job. Learning of his death at age 36 hit me pretty hard. His personality was such a bright spot in our office—he was so helpful and warm toward all employees. Ken grew up near Waupun on a dairy farm and had been a dairy herd manager in Florida before returning to Wisconsin. My participation in ARCW AIDS Walks in the 1990s and later the ACT Ride, the Wisconsin AIDS Ride, grew out of a need to help those living with HIV/AIDS in Ken's memory.

A New Spiritual Home

I joined First Congregational Church in 1995 because I wanted a Christian congregation that welcomed and supported the LGBT community. A year later, I joined a delegation from the church that spent several days in DC to view the last time the full AIDS Quilt was displayed. During that trip I learned that Ken had a quilt panel. I was so happy that he was remembered in this way. On the last day, we found a note thanking us for all the signs we had put in the windows of our van. The individual who wrote that message has become a member of First Congregational and a good friend of mine. Now I ride for him as well as Ken.

The ACT Ride Community

While being just a rider for two years, I learned that the Ride community enhanced my life with friends, presented an opportunity to become a better rider, and created a common goal which makes life on the ride very unique. When I made the decision to ride for the third time, I also decided that I should start giving back to this wonderful community. I thought the best way to give back was to help other riders prepare for the ride by leading training rides and to raise as much money as possible so friends who live with HIV/AIDS will have access to AIDS

Network services. I really love helping new riders learn to ride their bikes more efficiently, so they can actually enjoy riding 300 miles.

Training Rides and Steering Committee

Over the last four years, it has been a life-changing experience to organize all the training rides and help plan as a member of the steering committee. Each year, I still worry if everyone is getting in enough training and whether we have enough rides with hills like those on the Ride. Then at the end of the summer, once more I witness how much difference a supportive community can make. It is so much fun to see those first-time riders going up and down the hills because they believe in the cause and themselves.

The Cow

Each summer, I look forward to decorating my helmet with a cow. The cow represents several things to me: it is a thank you to the dairy farmers of Wisconsin who have provided my employment for 30 years; it reminds me that we have great roads to ride on because of the dairy farms; and it is a very special way to remember that Wisconsin farm boy in whose memory I ride. With a cow on my helmet, I will keep riding until AIDS is over or I am over. ■

feature

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MANY PIECES, ONE CLINIC

Jill Nebeker takes us inside the construction of the new AIDS Network Dental Clinic and examines the people and elements that came together to make it happen.

IT IS MAY 2010. CONSTRUCTION IS UNDERWAY at 600 Williamson Street. White, dusty shoeprints congregate at the entrance of the office. A “red carpet” of sorts runs down the hallway: brown butcher paper, taped to the floor, is dotted with more shoeprints. Five-gallon buckets, paint cans, and brushes stand at the ready. What was once a restaurant will now be home to the AIDS Network Dental Clinic, right next door to AIDS Network.

A dental clinic isn’t a new idea for AIDS Network. They know the research. Those with HIV and AIDS often fear stigma when telling a dentist about their status, so they don’t seek dental care. Those with HIV and AIDS who don’t receive dental care aren’t able to maintain proper nutrition and often get opportunistic oral infections. Then there’s the fact that oral health is predictive of overall health. A dental clinic is not a new idea for the clients at AIDS Network, either. Through feedback groups, they have expressed their desire for access to dental care in

Madison. (Currently, some clients trek to AIDS Resource Center in Milwaukee.)

But several complex pieces—funding, designing, building, equipping, staffing, and managing—make up the puzzle of starting a dental clinic. In early 2010, the starter piece fell into place. Governor Doyle released the State of Wisconsin Capital Budget, which includes a grant to AIDS Network, to the tune of \$300,000. Because of the contingencies of the grant, the AIDS Network needed to find a location, secure a lease, and start building in a hurry.

As AIDS Network considered several locations, Karen Dotson, Executive Director, heard the restaurant next door was closing, making that space available. They moved on it quickly. Having the clinic next door, as Board Vice-President Gerry Haney says, “was a no-brainer.” He goes on to say, “Transportation is an issue for some of our clients. In choosing a location, we didn’t want to add to that.” The location will be ideal not only for clients but also for AIDS Net-

work, as the clinic will share a reception area with the current office.

According to Dotson, AIDS Network and the owner of The Gateway Building (the mixed-use plaza where AIDS Network leases office space) have a long-standing and very good relationship. The owner not only leased the space to them affordably but he also directed them to a builder and allowed them to store equipment in a vacant office space during construction. Dotson says, “He believes in our mission and wants to keep us as tenants.”

This kind of generosity has been common throughout the process of opening the clinic. Dr. James Mooney of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, a semi-retired dentist, donated dental chairs and other equipment. The company hired to move the dental equipment to Madison charged half their regular rate. The AIDS Network is lucky, too, in having Dr. Tamim Sifri, dentist and former Board member, on hand from the start. Dr. Sifri has provided guidance and advice on all things dental including the technical aspects of purchasing, installing, and maintaining equipment for three operatories. Haney says, “Dr. Sifri gave us insight along the

The dental clinic will share a reception area with the AIDS Network office.

way—or more like a reality check,” which he’ll continue to give after the clinic opens.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will celebrate the clinic’s opening in July. Clients of AIDS Network will then be able to receive full-service dental care (minus dentures and surgery), provided by one dentist and one hygienist, both familiar with the needs of HIV-positive patients. Initially the dental clinic will be open one to two days a week, but AIDS Network intends to have the clinic open more hours. The goal is to enable AIDS Network clients

to combine appointments so they can see their case worker and/or nutritionist, visit the food pantry, and get dental care in one visit.

Dotson is excited not only because the clinic is a now reality but for another reason well. AIDS Network is working with local dental providers, legislators (such as State Representative Mark Pocan), and others to expand the clinic to serve uninsured and under-insured people who are not AIDS Network clients. This venture—offering a full-scale health service to the community at large—would be a first of its kind for AIDS Network. Daunting? Maybe for some, but not for Dotson and AIDS Network. ■

feature

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feature

Our History by Richard Wagner

A Gay Boulevadier for Madison

Ted Pierce graced our city and state with style and eloquence, leaving behind notes and memories of a gay culture gone by.



Madison may not have an Eiffel Tower but it has on its streets those who are as colorful as any in Paris. *Wisconsin State Journal* columnist Doug Moe dubbed Ted Pierce in 1998 as "a droll and fastidiously mannered

boulevadier." Indeed many of my most fascinating conversations with this gay man were chance encounters on the streets and public spaces of Madison. Moe's French-style characterization was most apt. Born in Chicago in 1907, Pierce would term the period of his birth as the end of the Belle Epoque.

Though born in Chicago, he spent all but his earliest years in the family home at 1442 Williamson Street where his maternal uncle, Sam Pierce, raised him as a son. Also living in the household was Pierce's grandmother Hattie, a former enslaved woman who at her death in 1944 was reputed to be 115 and the oldest person in the city.

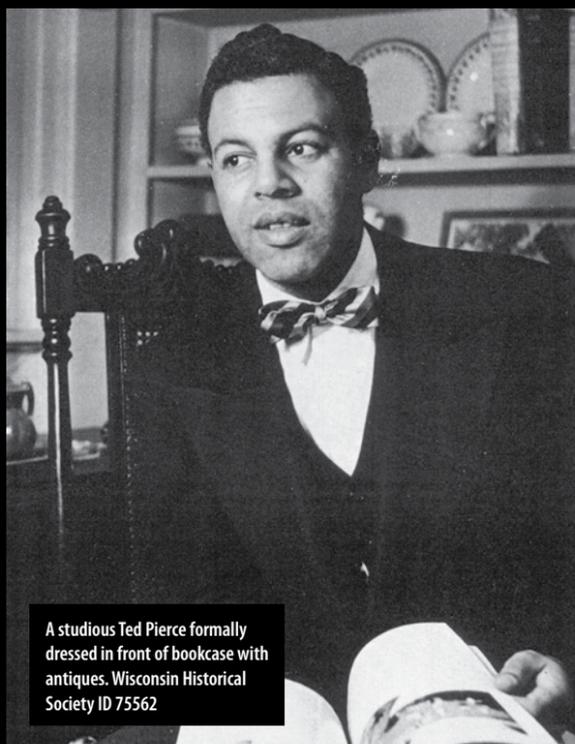
The Pierces' oral tradition supported by an old family Bible had his grandmother born in 1829 in North Carolina and moved as a child to Louisiana where she married the enslaved John Pierce. Freed by emancipation, John went on to become a member of the Louisiana state legislature. The family was living north of New Orleans when they were warned of action by the Ku Klux Klan and fled to the Crescent City.

Sam Pierce was for many years a Pullman porter, one of the jobs open to African Americans that provided mobility. After travelling the country, Sam Pierce selected Madison for his home. He served the Chicago and Northwestern line between Milwaukee and Madison for nearly 20 years where he met the likes of William T. Evjue of the *Capital Times*. As the Northwestern station was at the foot of King Street on Blair Street, locating his residence on Williamson Street made sense. Many railroad folks lived on the near east side. From there, Ted's mother made pies to sell at Tuttle's, a lunch counter in an old railroad coach.

Pierce recalled that his mother sewed him a little Lord Fauntleroy suit of black velvet with knee breeches and lace collar when he was very young. The 1924 East High yearbook gave him the tag line, "Our fashion plate." The yearbook also noted he was in chorus, the Latin Club, and the Technical Club. Ted studied two years at U.W.-Madison.

His father gave Ted maxims to live by like, "There is a nice way out of all situations." In addition to maxims, his father also gave him precepts like, "America is run by women." Ted Pierce frequently praised cultured and wealthy women in Madison because of this concept.

In 1925, Sam Pierce was appointed as executive messenger by Governor John J. Blaine, a progressive Republican. He served five governors, and when he died, Progressive Governor Phil La Follette requested that flags at the Capitol be at half-mast. Governor La Follette then appointed Sam's son Ted as his replacement as executive messenger. Ted also served five Governors before Governor Oscar Rennebohm cut the position. Ted Pierce later worked in the acquisitions area of the university library until his retirement in 1972.



A studious Ted Pierce formally dressed in front of bookcase with antiques. Wisconsin Historical Society ID 75562

For 10 years before he was appointed as executive messenger, Ted ran his father's tailoring shop in the Lorraine Hotel, the premier place to stay in the city with its own Governor's suite and fancy ballroom. Later he would recall the bellhops and elevator operators at the hotel were part of the subrosa gay scene that operated in the city. Perhaps some weary travelers enjoyed their Lorraine stay in a special way.

Writing fragmentary memoirs later in his life, Ted Pierce noted, "1987 demands one's sexuality, a very moving factor in the current period." He viewed his sexuality as already set when he was born saying he was given "the titles Urning, a Froeder, Gaye, in Greek, homosexual ... and many peoritive[sic] variations ..."

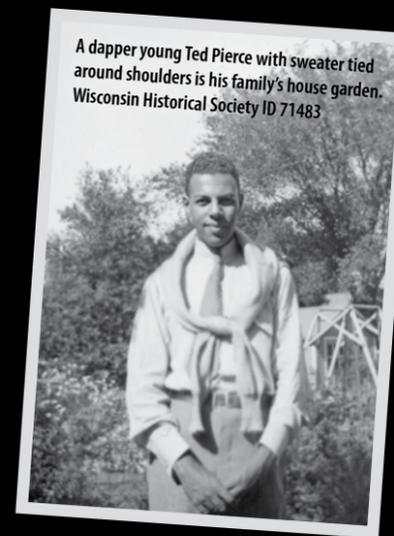
Pierce's correspondence with many individuals, included among his papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society, shows themes from gay history from the 1940s onward. In 1945, a straight man in New York writes to him complaining of "the presence of half-men in dance" who use homosexuality to advance their careers. In 1951, a Milwaukee correspondent writes of a friend of 24 who hung himself presumably for unrequited gay love and the pressures of concealment. In 1953, his friends Keith and Joe urged him to join them in visiting Europe. Herb Kubly wrote to seek to "put up at the Pierce Youth Hostel if reservations are still available."

Ted wrote to the Committee of the Marquette/Williamson Garden Tour that while his family lived in the house at 1442 the family grew food on the grounds. His own inclination, he noted, was something more romantic. With the aid of architectural fragments, some from Mansion Hill, he likened his garden to the concept of the Villa of the Roman emperor Hadrian at Tivoli. He referenced for them a Chicago society garden as a copy of a villa in Florence.

Ted Pierce was not an activist for civil rights but he did befriend the black actor Canada Lee who campaigned for Negro rights. He may have met him when Lee played in Madison for three performances at the Parkway Theater on the square in 1942. Lee was the lead in "Native Son" produced by Orson Welles Mercury Theater. During the same year, Lee gave an interview to the *Milwaukee Journal* asking for equal rights for Negro soldiers. He told the paper, "There are no Jim Crow bullets."

When touring in Chicago during a 1945 production of Shakespeare's "Tempest," Canada Lee was a guest of Ted Pierce in Madison. He was also honored by a reception hosted by the local NAACP that weekend. When Lee died in 1952, his front-page obituary noted he had been a guest of Pierce on that Madison visit.

Ted was part of the "lively and highly witty group" that was centered on the 700



A dapper young Ted Pierce with sweater tied around shoulders is his family's house garden. Wisconsin Historical Society ID 71483

block of Jenifer Street. He referenced it as a "magic group" for its time in the 1950s. He thought it mirrored the French aristocracy and referred to the salons that were held in homes. Ballet dancers, when in town, would be invited for social occasions. He called himself a "bal-letomane."

As a boulevadier, Ted Pierce walked the streets and even wrote a reflection entitled "Williamson Street or A Search for Splendor." This appears dated 1965, or reflects on that year, when, in his frank view the street, "at this moment must rank as a slum." He noted it was not the street of his childhood when Williamson was "a most gracious, and always most interesting street."

He referenced it as a "magic group" for its time in the 1950s. He thought it mirrored the French aristocracy and referred to the salons that were held in homes.

In his eighties he wrote of "my intention to write a study of Madison, (WISC.) comparable to that made quite lengthily by Marcel Proust ... Like Proust, my great mentor ... I am devoted to extensive digressions. But digress, I must."

Very late in his life, Ted Pierce summed things up by saying, "I ... always managed to find a way to make a world of Beauty." What a great thing to search for on the streets and boulevards. ■

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

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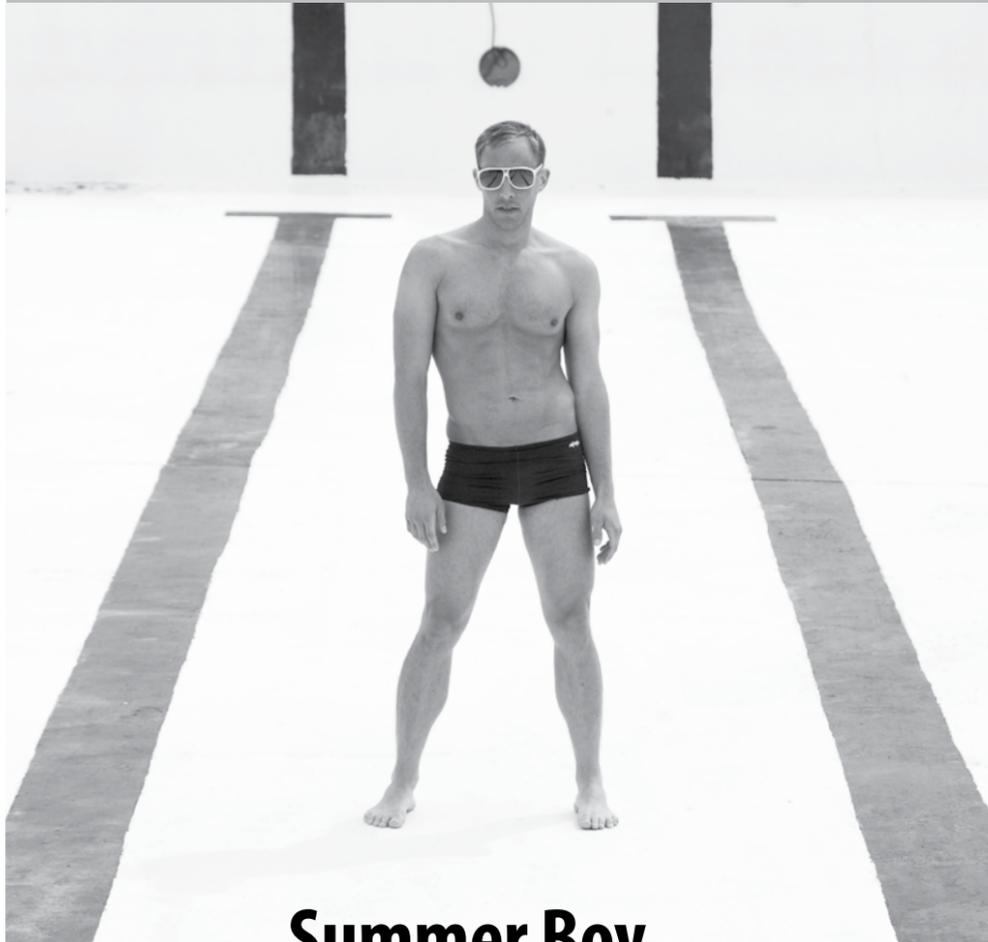
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OUR APPAREL

Summer Boy

Stylist **Bonnie Raimy** dresses Plan B's **Corey Gresen**

Summer is triathlon season and pool season, and the warm weather prods us to shed the layers. Just like any other sport, equipment is key, and the proper swimwear is necessary for those who plan to take their work-outs outside. Sometimes, less is more, so think about upgrading your old trunks for a drag suit, sleeker boy shorts, or go bold with a brief cut. I know what you're thinking, "skimpy swimwear is so European" ... enter Corey Gresen.

Corey is the quintessential summer boy and perfect for our swimsuit and summer clothing feature. He clearly demonstrates that less is definitely more!

It is possible to wear the more form fitting suits as long as you find the proper fit ... Don't go too tight, perhaps one size up from your regular trouser size. The folks at Middleton Sports and Fitness will be glad to help you find exactly what you need to rock the pool this summer.

When you've finished sunning yourself, don't go to the old cargo shorts, tees, and baseball cap. Check out Jazzman's extensive line of short-sleeve, fitted, lightweight button downs to add an element of flair to your wardrobe. The slimmer fit will accentuate all your hard work and, paired with one of their

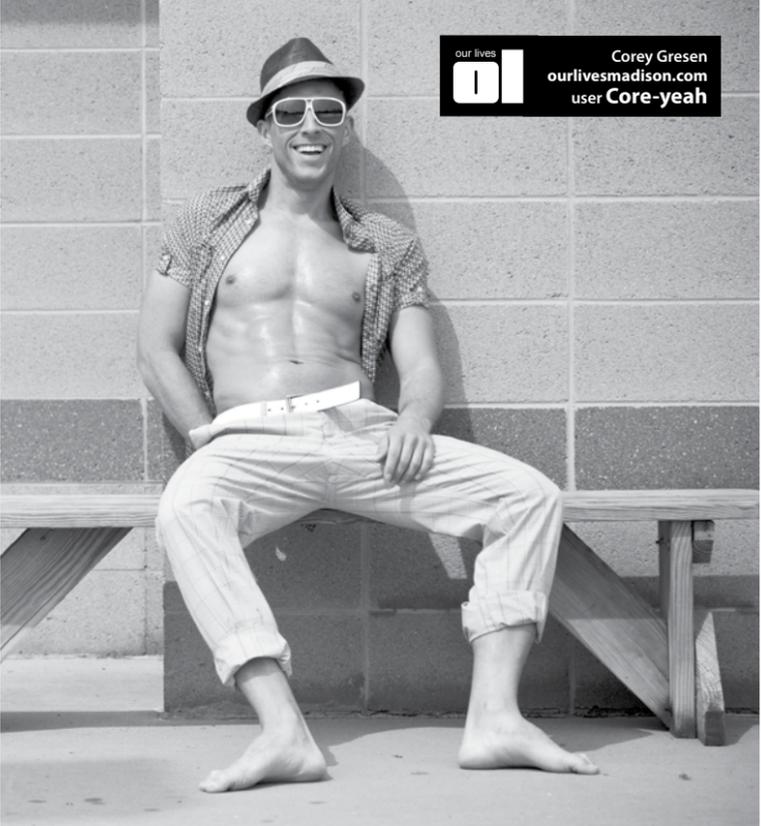
many styles of fedoras, will make for an old-school ensemble that is both current and effortless.

Let's face it, it's easy to look good when you're Corey, but anyone can add a few signature pieces (like the fedora) for a new twist on an old classic.

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Leadership in Our Workplaces

Marty Fox encourages us all to look at how we can become better leaders in our jobs and in our communities.

It is hard to imagine that there is anything new to say about leadership—leadership in the workplace, in the LGBT community, or anywhere that we might invest our time and talents. There is more rhetoric about leadership than you could possibly read during a lifetime. There are so many versions of the “leadership truth,” and yet our collective challenges remain vast, and critical solutions are waiting for champions to step forward.



Having that vision of a better future state is what makes the leaders and visionaries in our LGBTQ community step forward to form groups to support and encourage their fellow employees, community members, and young people.



Here are some of the simple ideas that each of us can revisit in order to be more effective in our workplace and in our community.

Leaders must have a vision for a better future state. No one wants to be part of a hopeless enterprise. Leaders must be willing to let go of the status quo to reach that better place.

Early in my career I worked for a manager (let's call him Jeff), who would come to me with a problem to investigate. Why was the process not working? Why were our calculations incorrect? So off I went on a dig for the truth. Once I found out what was missing, I looked at the potential solutions, weighing each for its cost and potential benefit. After I landed on a good solution, I proudly

brought my information to Jeff along with my recommendation for solving the problem. Much to my chagrin, Jeff responded with a very cautious, “Interesting ... that may indeed be the case, but let's leave it the way it is for now and keep watching what happens.” As you can imagine, I walked out of that meeting discouraged and disappointed. Jeff didn't have a vision for building a better future state and left his team powerless.

Some weeks later, I learned of a corporate restructuring that meant I would be reporting to a different manager; let's call this one Fred. Once again, I set off to investigate a problem and brought my findings and a solution in hopes of playing a small role in process improvement. Fortunately, Fred had a completely different approach than Jeff. He believed we could make the systems work for us. He had a vision that we could build that brighter future state. He said, “I think you may be right. Let's make this change right away—after all, we can always change it again if we need to.” And the entire team was empowered.

Fred's vision and willingness to listen, act on a recommendation, and try something new increased the possibility of our success tenfold as his entire team was now inspired to make changes and be creative problem solvers.

Having that vision of a better future state is what makes the leaders and visionaries in our LGBTQ community step forward to form groups to support and encourage their fellow employees, community members, and young people. They believe that greater fairness and understanding is possible. Cynics will learn that few are willing to follow them into the abyss.

Leaders must be willing to take risks. Step forward when others step back. Don't be afraid to make mistakes; be afraid to stand still. Speak your truth; the world needs to hear your story, your point-of-view.

A young woman who worked for me as I was making some progress climbing the corporate ladder took a risk, and I am thankful that she did. One day, Ellen followed me into my office and very politely told me how the world felt from her perspective. How I was becoming focused on senior leaders at the expense of those who worked on my team. She proceeded to coach me into being a better manager. Ellen

Kraft Flies the Rainbow Flag

Our Lives would like to congratulate the **Kraft Rainbow Council Employee Resource Group** for flying the rainbow flag in honor of Gay Pride Month. Thank you KRC for your strong leadership in the workplace!



took a risk by having this conversation, but it was the ultimate demonstration of her coaching and leadership skills. Not only did I continue to check in with Ellen and members of my team, but I also worked hard to give Ellen the chance to lead her own team.

Coming out as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person is a risk. So is coming out as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. We may lose some relationships with those who “can't go there,” but we find our strength and our voice.

Leaders appear at all levels and in all capacities. Actively lead, and leadership titles will follow. Each time you stand up for your principles or beliefs or defend an underdog, you are leading. Lead a project, a team, or a conversation.

Leaders must be willing to listen to others. Great leaders don't lead all the time. Learn when to lead, follow, and step out of the way. Have you ever been on a team where everyone tried to lead? Not fun, not effective. A good leader will listen and follow when appropriate.

Learn from those who are different than you or from those who have different ideas. Don't be limited by your own horizon. Participate in Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or employee networks that will stretch you. Find out how others celebrate their differences. Look to peer organizations to build your courage and then reach out to listen to those who may be singing a different song.

Being authentic is the true foundation of leadership. Each of us who struggles to be who we were meant to be and takes risks to be fully that person is in a better position to lead others to a place that helps bring out the best in others. Coming out is just one step in the lifelong journey to being authentic. No one wants to follow someone playing a role. We're all looking for the real deal. Be the real deal. Be a leader. ■

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. She and her wife, Catherine, have five adult children and a French bulldog named Lily.

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OUR RIGHTS

The State of Our Unions

Tamara Packard reviews recent Wisconsin history with regard to same-sex relationship rights.

[Editor's Note: What follows is a slightly abridged and updated version of Tamara Packard's keynote speech given at the May 1, 2010, community seminar, "Addressing the State of Our Unions."]

If you have paid attention to politics anytime in the last 40 years, you know that our fight to be treated with dignity and respect, to be treated as human beings under the law, has inspired a great deal of resistance.

Recently, opponents to the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) tried to scare legislators away from supporting the bill by calling transgendered people mentally ill and unfit to teach children. In



Over 150 employers in Wisconsin, including (as of January 1 of this year) the State of Wisconsin, offer domestic partner health insurance.



2006, those same forces generated support for an amendment to Wisconsin's constitution banning marriage for same-sex couples by falsely claiming that without it, churches would be forced to marry us, and next, people would be marrying their dogs.

Yet despite the resistance, the movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights has made enormous progress since Stonewall. Forty years ago, the acts that society used to define us as gay, lesbian, and

bisexual—sex with a person of our same gender—were, in most states, criminal acts. People caught in these acts, or even in gay bars, were arrested, reported in the news, and consequently lost their jobs and their families. Today, our sex—at least when done in private—is constitutionally protected and cannot be criminalized. Twenty-one states, including Wisconsin, have laws that protect us from losing our jobs and our housing based on sexual orientation. A dozen of those states also protect against gender identity discrimination. The United States Congress is on the brink of providing nationwide job protection against discrimination for LGBT people.

Extending employer-provided health insurance coverage to our life partners was a radical idea in the 1990s. Today, 57% of Fortune 500 companies provide those benefits. Over 150 employers in Wisconsin, including (as of January 1 of this year) the State of Wisconsin, offer domestic partner health insurance. Corporate America gets it and the government is following along: equal pay for equal work is good business.

Yet even with an inclusive ENDA on the books, our brothers and sisters in the military will not be able to serve openly until Don't Ask Don't Tell is repealed. A compromise recently passed in the House, so it is up to the Senate to get this done. Survey after survey shows that people in the military don't care if the soldier next to them is gay or straight. Those wishing to serve our country honorably and honestly should not have to wait one more day.

On a more personal level, 40 years ago same-sex couples had few protections in times of crisis. Those who could afford it, and find a willing attorney, could create estate plans to pass property after death. If lucky, the deceased's biological family wouldn't make a stink. But hospital visitation of a partner was at the whim of hospital staff. In Wisconsin, we have had hospital visitation rights since the early 1990s, but only with prior written instructions. In 2009, with passage of Wisconsin's Domestic Partnership Registry, we gained not only the right to visit our partner in the hospital—no extra paperwork needed—but also to admit our partner to a long term

care facility and share a room in a nursing home, among many other things. This spring, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum requiring virtually every hospital in the nation to respect patient wishes to allow visitation to same-sex partners.

This spring, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum requiring virtually every hospital in the nation to respect patient wishes to allow visitation to same-sex partners.

But what about marriage? During the past 40 years, the people of the gay and lesbian rights movement have worked to undo punitive laws and gain piecemeal rights and protections. In the process, we have gained allies and changed the minds of many about who we are and what our relationships mean.

On the horizon, there are three lawsuits to watch: First, the federal Defense of Marriage Act is being challenged in federal court in Massachusetts. If that challenge is successful, the Federal government will have to recognize our marriages. Second, a federal court in California will soon decide whether California's gay marriage ban is a violation of the United States Constitution's guarantee of equal protection. That case could wind up in front of the United States Supreme Court and has the potential to void all of the marriage bans across the country. Third, watch for a decision from the Wisconsin Supreme Court on whether the Wisconsin marriage ban is void for violating another provision of the Wisconsin Constitution. At this writing, the decision was not yet known. ■

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



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A Closer Look at State's Rights

In 1999, no state allowed us to marry or provided any comprehensive relationship protection. Today, five states and the District of Columbia offer marriage licenses to same-sex couples:

Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire

Two states recognize same-sex marriages formed elsewhere:

New York, Maryland

Five states offer "civil unions":

California, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey

Four states offer important, though more limited, protections for same sex couples:

Hawaii, Colorado, Maine, Wisconsin

A bill that would move Hawaii from the "limited protections" category to the "civil unions" category passed the legislature and awaits action by the Governor. When Wisconsin enacted Domestic Partnership protections last year, it became the only state to also have a constitutional amendment banning same-sex couples from marriage, or anything substantially similar to marriage.

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The Days of Our Lives

Dr. Sue Gill explores the reasons behind lesbian drama and suggests ways to improve boundaries in your relationships, regardless of your gender/preference.

Lesbian drama. Just reading those words makes many of us smile and nod and say, "Oh, I know it well." Why does lesbian drama seem so intense? How is it that we get so easily sucked into it? Is there something special about lesbians that makes us prone to getting sucked into dramatic twists and turns of relationship dynamics? By the way, if you aren't a lesbian, you can keep reading this. I have the feeling that lesbian drama exists in your world too—maybe under a different name.



Such drama exists in part because we belong to such a small sub-community that overlapping relationship dynamics are probably inevitable.



Jane is mad at Kathy because some dyke kept eyeing Kathy when they were out at the bar last weekend. Lisa is figuring out how to keep Claire away from Lisa's ex when they go the picnic next week so that Claire doesn't find out that Lisa's ex and Claire's ex are dating one another. Sherry couldn't decide if she would play softball this year because she has friends on three different teams and doesn't want to hurt anybody's feelings. Shannon just hung up the phone after listening to Katie complain about Sara, when Sara calls to complain

about Katie. Shannon definitely feels stuck in the middle of that lesbian drama!

Dual Roles

Such drama exists in part because we belong to such a small sub-community that overlapping relationship dynamics are almost inevitable. This can lead to the feeling that everyone has dated one another and that everybody knows each other's business. In my training as a psychologist, I was taught that I had to be much more careful in situations when relationship roles were likely to overlap. In the world of psychology this is called "dual roles," and the concept might be a helpful way to guide our understanding of how to reduce the intensity of relationship drama.

Dual roles are often tricky because they blur emotional boundaries, and they have the potential to harm if there is a power differential in the relationship. Plus they feel weird sometimes (think about how you might feel if a professor in a class in which you struggled asked you out on a date). I rely heavily on two principles when dealing with situations where dual roles are likely to exist. The first one I call, "Play on Your Own Side of the Tennis Court." The second is "Never Do Something That You Will Later Resent."

"Play on Your Own Side of the Tennis Court."

This is a hard skill for lesbians to learn. We are always trying to live other peoples' lives in the name of "helping" them. Is somebody you know in a bad relationship? Tell them, "I am worried about you as it seems that you are in a bad relationship. I am happy to listen to you if you want. Here are some resources." That's it. The rest of the job is theirs. You have to let them play their side of the tennis court, make their own decisions, live their life in the way that they choose. Trying to play both sides of the tennis court might involve lots of talking with all of your mutual friends about what to do about the friend who's

Pay attention to what is bothering you about the people in your life. Have you clearly expressed your preferences in calm and proactive ways?

in the bad relationship, calling around to find them a therapist, and lots of talking with the friend to convince them that they are in a bad relationship. It will also lead to you feeling burned out and frustrated that your friend won't take your advice, distance between you and your friend, lots of dissenting opinions among all of your mutual friends about "what to do with our friend who's in this terrible relationship," and probably hard feelings on the part of the friend. The real kicker is that all of this "help" will not even lead to any quicker change on the part of the friend. Try to stay on your own side of the tennis court. It works better that way—both in tennis and in relationships.

"Never Do Something That You Will Later Resent."

This is one way to think about "boundaries," a concept in mental health that is often discussed but only vaguely understood. Haven't we all taken a late night phone call from a friend only to hang up pissed off at them for calling so late about something that could have waited? Have you even gotten involved in something sexual that you later regretted, and on reflection felt pressured into? If you feel mad at another person for something you did for or with them or something they did to you, it is a sign that an inner boundary, line, or ethical value that you hold has been violated. This can happen when another person willfully violates a specific request you made (e.g., "Please don't call me after 10 p.m. unless it's an emergency."), or when you did not recognize and voice your own inner preferences. This can be what happened if you notice yourself thinking later, "That was so rude of her. Couldn't she tell that I wasn't _____ (fill in your own example here)." This will happen to all of us on occasion, but there are ways to minimize how often it occurs. This is important because if boundary violations become habitual they can ruin any relationship.

To get better at identifying your own inner boundaries, try some of the following tips. Before agreeing to do something, ask yourself if there's a chance you may later

resent it. If you feel even a tinge of that possibility, think hard before agreeing to do it! There may be room for compromise where you say, "I am not up for doing that, but how about this?" If compromise doesn't work, be assured that saying "no" is better than carrying around resentments in your relationships. Pay attention to what is bothering you about the people in your life. Have you clearly expressed your preferences in calm and proactive ways? It is not fair for you to expect people to read your mind.

Lesbian drama may be an inevitable part of living within small LGBT communities. However it can be significantly lessened if you remember to play on your own side of the tennis court and if you never do things that you will later resent. ■

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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Marcelle Richards stops in to the Co-op to discover how healthy food meets healthy workplace and community practices.

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Willy Street Co-op—where maple syrup flows in bulk and foodies graze aisles of organic flora and former fauna as hordes of vegans forage for Sheba bars near a smattering of gluten-free bakery items for starry-eyed celiacs. It's so many things to so many people. "I feel like it's one of the most friendly, welcoming environments that I've ever been in," says Bakery Coordinator Andy Giamber.

Call it what you like—karma, or a partnership of social justice values and food—but the juju is good in this grocery-store-and-more that was founded in 1973. Every year, the Co-op grants thousands of dollars to community organizations and makes food donations featuring local and organic ingredients to groups like Proud Theater and the AIDS Network.

Want to Chip?

Last year, shoppers contributed over \$100,000 in Community Chip donations. Workers earn fair wages and are privy to domestic partnership benefits. Consumer education is also integral—staff members are trained to help customers make healthy choices, and food-related classes are offered throughout the year.

"When you do the right thing, good things happen to you. And I think that's what Willy Street Co-op can attribute its success to," says Lynn Olson, Director of Cooperative Services.

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Second Location Opening in October

In fact, the growing demand for the Co-op's goods and services will be met with the opening of a second location in Middleton this October. Olson says the second location will still root itself in the "hard-core" social justice principles of the original store, although the new building will be an opportunity to make some aesthetic upgrades.

Customer Faces Reflected in the Faces of Co-op Staff

Olson adds that it means a lot that customers can see their faces reflected in the staff across many gender, age, and sexuality brackets. "Peace is engrained in everything we do so we truly don't need to differentiate here. Everybody's got a voice; everyone is represented," Olson said.

Giamber likes the accessibility that the Co-op provides to its shoppers—good food isn't just for the restaurants. "I really enjoy that I get to make really high quality food for people," he says, emphasizing the prominence of local and organic ingredients in what the Co-op makes.

Catering to Special Dietary Needs

He also takes pride in meeting the challenge of making foods that cater to special dietary needs. "It's always fun to make something like cake for someone who probably doesn't get to eat cake too often," Giamber said.

This neighborhood niche is about food, but it's also about the connections that we share over the food we love. Come learn at a class, come ask questions, come meet an old friend or make a new one. Personally, I've got a pint of Laloo's goat's milk ice cream that I want to pick up in the frozen food aisle ... (wink). ■

Photographed by **Marc Korobkin**

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In Hindsight

Our Lives' ACT 8 Rider Melissa Peyton thinks back on her relationship with her dad. He died when she was 20 and not yet out.

In June of 1970, my parents married. My dad was 20 years old and was pretty sure he was gay. My mom was 20 years old and was pretty sure that my dad was gay. She contemplated not going through with it a few weeks before, but, of course, she went through with it anyway. By March of the following year, these barely 21-year-olds had a baby girl, me.

He and my paternal grandmother wanted it to be absolutely clear: HE DID NOT HAVE AIDS.

I remember very little of my first five years, but the things I do remember are vivid. I remember standing in front of the back door making a giant human X, begging my dad not to leave again (he would leave for days at a time). I remember my parents arguing in the kitchen

while I hid in the pantry, my dad threatening to throw a glass filled with a cocktail of some sort at my mom. After a few attempts by our parish priest to make my dad straight (without success), my parents divorced. I was six.

We didn't talk about my dad's gayness. My mom was clearly a mess and obviously hated the sight of my father, but I never really knew the real reason—not until I was older. In those days, mothers got full custody of the kids, while the dads got visitation. Therefore, I lived with my mom and my stepfather (my mom remarried very quickly) and generally saw my dad every Saturday.

After the divorce, my dad always lived at least an hour away from us, so he would pick me up and we would spend the day at my paternal grandparents' house, which is nestled in the heart of the northern Kettle Moraine. I remember those times with my dad in the woods as really, really good times. Sometimes it would

just be him and me, other times he would bring a friend/roommate. I just thought the men he brought with him were his best friends. Even once he was in a committed relationship with Rick, whom I adored, I simply saw Rick and my dad as great friends who lived in the same house, slept in the same bed, and shared their life together. Interestingly, in my early teens my mom finally put a label on my dad and Rick's relationship, "Melissa, Honey, your dad is gay," and I totally freaked out. I didn't want to talk to him or see him. I pushed him away.

Around that same time period, my dad and Rick moved to Texas. I went from seeing him every weekend, to maybe seeing him once a year. The timing was terrible; because of the distance, my dad and I never fully recovered from my pushing him away. I think perhaps his internalized homophobia and fears of inadequacy as a father prevented him from having the guts to sit me down and talk some sense into me.

In the late 80s, my dad was sick often and spent time in and out of hospitals for various intestinal issues; they weren't able to pinpoint exactly what was wrong, at least at first. He and my paternal grandmother wanted it to be absolutely clear: HE DID NOT HAVE AIDS.

At Christmas in 1991, my grandparents flew me and my aunt to Dallas to spend the holidays together with my dad. As my grandfather was driving me from the Dallas/Fort Worth airport to my dad's apartment, he tried to prepare me for what I was about to see. He said things like,

"Your dad is really weak."
"Your dad will be tired."
"Your dad is really thin."
"Your dad might not look like how you remember him."

Nothing he said could have prepared me for what I saw. My father had always been a gorgeous, tall, muscular, Speedo-wearing, gay man. Think "Greg Louganis." The man in that apartment in Dallas was nothing more than skin draped over a skeleton. That was when I knew my dad had AIDS. One month later, on January 25, 1992, my dad died at his parents' house in the Kettles. He was 40 years old. Rick died within the next two years.

I didn't realize that I was gay until after I graduated from college and after my dad died. Fortunately, I came out to my mom shortly before she died in April of 1998 from breast cancer. Even though I was unable to tell my dad, I bet he already knew. I hope he did. ■

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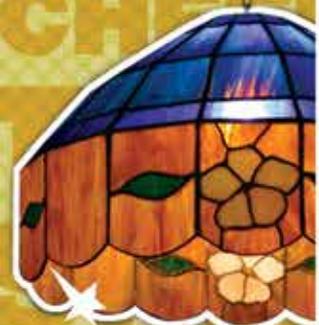


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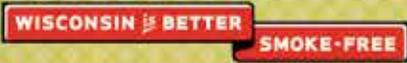
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