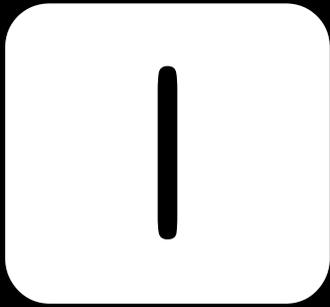


our lives



Madison's LGBTQA Magazine

dining
guide
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September/
October 2007

Pride in Photos

Scenes Recapping
Our Magic Weekend

Theatre Preview

Playbill Listings and
Previews of Our Local
Stages and Troupes

Dear Mom

Paula Orton
reconciles her
coming out
process with her
mother's passing

Women Who Want to Dance

Meet Susana Torres,
the Woman Behind
Both *Women Who
Want to Dance*
and *Women Across
Wisconsin*

Mitch Weber

WKOW News Anchor
and ACT 5 Rider



LGBT Books

Kenji Yoshino's *Covering*
and Max Wolf Valerio
on *Testosterone*

A Personal Look

Inside ACT 5 the Wisconsin AIDS Ride

Channel 27 News Anchor **Mitch Weber**
shares why the ride means so much to him

Barbara McKinney joins the crew

Sarah Covington

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Cover Photo by Paul Swanson

our lives Mental Health Forum
GAY LABELS
Submitted by **ms4denmark**

Most labels have, in their rawest forms, a sexual connotation. Going further, these labels seem to only focus on body type (jock=muscular, bear=heavy set and hairy, twink=slim, hairless and presumably young, etc). Yet, there are terms such as butch, femme and queeny that employ mannerisms as a definition of self. Can anyone be boxed into such a narrow definition without feeling horribly misrepresented?



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My Two Moms

Alta with her parents, Susan & Mary Jane



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Our Two Dads

Ashlyn & Bailie with their parents, Brendan & Vance



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editor

A New Way to Find Each Other



As a community, one of the biggest challenges we face is simply finding each other. We grow through our shared experiences.

There is something incredible about Madison. Few places are progressive enough to release LGBT people from the ghettos that other cities collect us in. You can live anywhere here openly. While that is a tremendous step towards equality, it doesn't make finding each other a simple task. Since coming to Madison, barely a day passes without someone nostalgically mentioning the Hotel Washington to me and the diversity of groups and businesses that once called it home. It made community easier.

In this issue, I'm excited to both deliver something that I believe sends a clear message about where this magazine is headed, and to introduce you to a new way of finding each other. As you read each story and profile, notice the ourlivesmadison.com user boxes. Now you can contact anyone you read about in our pages directly. Please consider building your own account and becoming a part of *Our Lives*, because as one of my favorite proverbs says, "It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story."

With love,

Patrick Farabaugh

EDITOR / PUBLISHER

CONTRIBUTORS



OUR FAVORITE PLACES

Jill Nebeker lived in the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest and the Northeast before calling Madison home. She has worked in online publishing since 2000 and is currently the web editor at a Madison magazine publisher. You can find more of her writing on www.dane101.com.



IMPROVING OUR LIVES

Patrick Erwin has been a Madison resident since 2003. He was born and raised in the Pittsburgh area where he worked for a number of non-profit arts groups, including Pittsburgh's Upstairs Theater, a company specializing in LGBT-themed works. Recently he had an article in the Wisconsin State Journal on Perfect Harmony Men's Choir. He also maintains a blog on Madison.com's "Post" community content page.



EXPANDING OUR LIVES

Ward Holtz has been an industrial chemist, field biologist, environmental educator, curriculum consultant, theatre manager, carpenter, and teacher. He's currently looking for a professional way to pursue his interest in LGBT issues in schools.



OUR BUSINESSES

Tim Foster is a man who likes hats. The few he wears regularly are as the owner of Savoir Hair Styling Studio, a part-time club DJ, and as our Consumer Editor. He is a native of Wisconsin and has been a Madison resident for the past thirteen years. A few other hats you'll find on him look more like helmets. Tim's also a member of the Madison Gay Hockey Association, and recently rode across Southern Wisconsin with over 100 other riders for AIDS Network's ACT 5 AIDS Ride.

Meet our staff and members at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

letters

Readers Respond to Our First Issue

Your magazine is awesome. I am proud of most parts of the LGBTQ community, but sometimes realize "our" media is hard to share with others because it doesn't always cross the bridge—it preaches to the choir.

What I loved about how you did this, is that you really brought a sense of community to the issue. It is accessible not only to those of us already in it, but it is welcoming and readable to those who are not. Supremely important.

Susan Frikken
MADISON



I MADE A QUICK GIFT STOP AT *Tickled Pink* last week and was thrilled when I saw the premiere issue of *Our Lives* just inside the door. Suddenly, it was more important to sit and peruse the magazine than to find my sister a last-minute birthday present.

I had casually pondered bringing an LGBT magazine to the Madison area myself. Although I knew there was a need and had the experience, as a straight, married mother, I was no authority on LGBT issues. (Although I am a loud, vocal supporter of gay rights).

So it was with a sense of relief and pride that I found *Our Lives*.

Jeanne Rosen
MADISON

JUST A NOTE TO CONGRATULATE the editors/contributors of *Our Lives* magazine. I just read the first issue and was impressed by the professionalism of your product; the decision to focus on the lives of individual members of the gay community in

Madison gives your publication a unique edge, one which should appeal to a broad spectrum of readers.

Gary Kriewald
MADISON

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR giving Madison a publication to be proud of. I picked up a copy of *Our Lives* at Pride and truly enjoyed it. The hockey article was indeed very inspiring and made me think about what is important in my own life. Thanks for the inspiration and keep up the wonderful work on *OL* and the Hockey league. Your mission is to be commended.

Harry Zelhofer
MADISON



The website and the magazine are well done. I particularly enjoyed Dale Decker's comment in the magazine that we demonstrate full acceptance of ourselves when we become defiant.

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INTRODUCING OUR LIVES

A Needle in the Haystack

Meet Emily Harris, the 25 year-old owner of the Wylymar farms in Argyle



Photo by Patrick Farabaugh

Where are you from originally? I grew up on a farmette not even a mile away and as a girl I would escape here to work with my grandfather as much as possible.

Tell us about him. Wyllie and I have the neatest relationship. He can give me a hand signal or describe a spot on the farm and I know exactly where he's talking about. If one of us leaves I feel bad for the poor person who tries to understand the directions we use.

Where does the name Wylymar come from? It comes from my grandfather, Wyllie. Make sure you call him by his name. If you call him grandpa, you'll probably regret it. It also comes from my grandmother, Lydia. She's a city girl from Chicago. ...and from their only child Margo—my mom. The first few letters in each of their names spells Wylymar.

What kind of animals live at Wylymar? Mostly black angus beef cows, a few registered and a few simmental crosses. We've got 6 horses and a pony. Curly is a Hafflinger pony that's the most bullheaded pony ever. Whenever my friends and family would go on long trail rides, I'd ride Curly. Once we went to a huge national forest in Southern Illinois where everyone had these big horses with saddlebags. I was on Curly with just my backpack. The guide asked if I seriously thought my pony would make it. Curly stayed right behind his horse all day and if any other horse got near her, she'd lay her ears back and start running. She never even broke a sweat. Then there's Shilo, my dog. He's the happiest, cutest animal out here.

What do you do with all your time? What time? Farm work is never ending. It takes a lot to keep this place going.

Can you describe some of the things in your home? I don't buy things for my home but there's still a lot of stuff in here. There's art from my friends, family, and some of my own. We were cutting trees one day and there were some interesting pieces left over. I made them into a table. It serves it's purpose. And then... there's Veronica.

Veronica? So you live with another woman? She's the "roommate" my mom and friend Jamie gave me for Christmas a few years ago. I talked about making a tall stained glass lamp for a long time, so when they found a tall lamp they created Veronica. She wears all my ancestors' jewelery. She's got my mother's sun glasses that are back in style now. I'm thinking about swiping those. Her hair is a pony tail of mine from when I was a kid. The hairpiece, gloves, and clothes belonged to my great-grandmothers and great-aunts. I guess you could say she lights up my life! ■



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Forward Thinking

Setting a course for advocacy has lead John Quinlan from Outreach to providing a progressive voice for our community on the radio with "Forward Forum."

John Quinlan's first foray into advocacy came in 1986 when he became involved with the Madison Tenant Union and Tenant Resource Center. His efforts to pass fair housing regulations there empowered him professionally. It also empowered him to come out publicly as a gay man, a decision timed to cause another positive change. As he recalls, "Susan Green was the leader of an LGBT group called The United, and got me involved

You may not be creating the stew, but you can add the spices.

in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters issue." At the time, LGBT people were not allowed as mentors in the organization and the work Susan, John and other volunteers contributed eventually lead Big Brothers/Big Sisters to begin accepting gay volunteers.

The United became Outreach, Madison's LGBTQA community center, and in 2002 named Quinlan executive director. By that time, he had worked as a journalist with several publications and was part of a team that launched an LGBT parenting publication. He also continued his work as an activist, working again with the United Way in 2000 in response to the Boy Scouts of America's

stance on gay members. Under John's stewardship, Outreach became a part of the Coalition for a United Dane County, which also encompassed activists in labor, feminist groups, and advocacy groups for people of color. John notes with pride how Outreach and the coalition groups "were, as a group, able to take debates to the next level."

After his tenure came to a close, he stepped into the role he still pursues today—host of *Forward Forum* on 1670 WTDY-AM. John co-hosts the show alongside Laura Gutknecht, and observes, "There's a special power in a gay man and a transgendered woman hosting a talk show about the whole world. It shows we are not all that different."

Originally at Madison's progressive station, 92.1 The Mic, "Forward Forum" spent "a good two years building community to sustain the station" before finding it's way to 1670 WTDY-AM. John appreciates being at The Pulse now because it takes the show out of the progressive radio cocoon and "lets us do more than just preach to the choir—we can talk to a broader audience."

It's clear that Quinlan is motivated by the luxury that radio affords—the ability to delve into a topic that's important to many people, and explore multiple sides of an issue. "You may not be creating the stew," he says, "but you can add the spices." Those "spices" often simmer for days and weeks after and urge listeners to learn more and get involved.

John and Laura use Forward Forum to shed light on subjects,



John Quinlan at the Forward Forum studio (above) and with co-host Laura Gutknecht and Congress-woman Tammy Baldwin (below).

our lives | John Quinlan
ourlivesmadison.com
user MadcityJohn

like traditional health care issues, that affect the community but for which there are precious few LGBT-specific resources. "Forward Forum" has tackled medical topics like mental illness in children, living with chronic illness, and women's health. John says that one of the biggest responses to a "Forward Forum" broadcast came with a show on women's health that featured cancer survivor Peg Lautenschlager, former state attorney general, and Meg Gaines, a Madison resident and fellow cancer survivor. Gaines' experience with illness and recovery led her to eventually establish the

Center for Patient Partnerships, a patient advocacy group. Having a public figure like Lautenschlager speak about her very personal experiences, John says, really affected the audience.

Proud to be a part of something that affects people so strongly, he sees his role as "the director of an orchestra. My job is to tap the baton and get the rhythm going." John is continuing his personal journey as a gay man, one with deep roots in Madison, as he continues the journey he and Laura have started with "Forward Forum". "We have the opportunity to bring a diverse world—one that we hope to help create—to air."

—Patrick Erwin

how to TUNE IN

Forward Forum with hosts John Quinlan and Laura Gutknecht airs Sundays from 7-9 pm CDT On Madison 1670 AM, WTDY and streams online at www.wtdy.com

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SOCIAL ISSUES

Un-Covering Ourselves

Kenji Yoshino explores the ways all minorities mask their identities to assume social roles in his new book, *Covering*

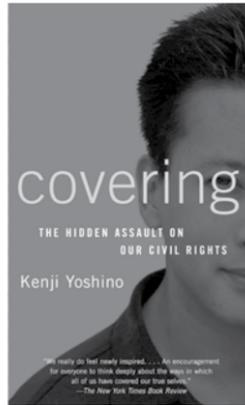
Legal books are seldom compelling to the majority of us. *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights* by Kenji Yoshino is certainly an exception. The combination of legal scholarship and autobiography powerfully explain the personal and societal costs of hiding one's true identity.

The concept of "covering" refers to minimizing minority status to more easily blend into the mainstream. It crosses all minority categories—gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, religion, and disability.

Yoshino explains that one can cover in four different ways: appearance, affiliation, activism, and association. Appearance refers to appearing more

One can cover in four different ways: appearance, affiliation, activism, and association.

like the norm. Covering one's affiliation means how one identifies oneself. Activism covering is the degree to which one politicizes one's identity. Perhaps, as an employee you are openly homosexual but, to make life easier, you choose not to have your partner's photo at your desk or have a sticker on your car. Finally, one may choose not to associate with others of your minority. Personally this brings to mind two young men, life-long friends,



Japanese-American, born of Japanese immigrants, who taught him to "be American" when in the U.S. and be Japanese when on extended visits to Japan. In other words, to cover his otherness wherever he was. Yoshino is also a gay male, challenged professionally and personally to be honest about his identity. It is his own experience with covering his ethnicity in two different cultures and his orientation that give him a depth of understanding and empathy for his subject.

Writing this review, I'm struck by the relevance of this book to the debate over Pride events and public perception. One camp decries the annual public appearance of leathermen and outrageous drag queens as bad for the LGBT cause. They urge everyone to just fit in with the norm. The other side says to celebrate what makes us unique, harnesses and boars proudly out of the closet. In both cases, individuals are trying to decide how others should act. The message from *Covering* is that we all need to be who we are, expressing ourselves as we feel comfortable. That it should be the right of the individual to decide. —Ward Holz

GENDER IDENTITY

Testosterone Author Visits Madison

Max Wolf Valerio brings his journey from female-to-male to life when he stops by *A Room of One's Own* to talk about his book, *The Testosterone Files*

The Testosterone Files is a wonderful, stark memoir of what the hormone did to Max's body during his 5 year transition from female to male. I feel so in debt to brave writers like him who have the courage to tell their stories and not just melt into the herd. Trans people who remain visible contribute so much to the cultural work this infant culture needs done around issues of gender and sexuality if we ever expect to reach adulthood as a society.

When Max read this spring where I work, it was a grand event—even though I wanted to challenge the anti-feminist rants on his blog (maxwolfvalerio.typepad.com/wolf_man_howls). He feels that his most dramatic changes were hormonal and indeed tells some male secrets that women gay and straight should know. Like: Sex can be food to many men, testosterone driven and not really personal. He also raises questions about the value of surgery in gender expression and sexuality.

Although seeming burnt by San Francisco politics and disturbingly aggressive, the disagreements like this that honorable people can debate are something to be grateful for. —Sashe Mishur



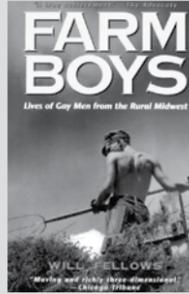
Max at Room

who suddenly disassociated themselves simply because both were suspected of being gay. They felt that being seen with each other brought their orientation into question.

Yoshino is a Yale Law School professor, trained at Harvard, Oxford, and Yale specializing in antidiscrimination law. He is also a

FROM OUR LIBRARY

Local Interest



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Farm Boys:
Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest by Will Fellows

Used for inspiration and background for the movie *Brokeback Mountain*, *Farm Boys* is a poignant and timeless capsule told through individual narratives. It reveals the isolation, sadness and strength of gay men from our farming communities right here in Wisconsin.

Growing Young Again



HARVEST BOOKS

The Little Prince
by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

A downed pilot in the Sahara, the narrator tells the story of a little prince who asks him to draw a sheep. "Absurd as it seemed, a thousand miles from all inhabited regions and in danger of death, I took a scrap of paper and a pen out of my pocket." Doing so stretches the narrator's imagination into childlike directions. Although the author pokes fun at futile aspects of the adult existence, *The Little Prince* is ultimately a heartfelt expression of sadness and loneliness that any of us can relate to and find the beauty in.



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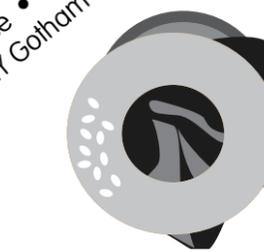
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Above: Dino Maniaci and Jason Hoke in the lobby of Spa Woof. Right: Doggy day care at its best. Below: Designer treats for the pampered pooch.

SPA WOOF

Dog Day Heaven



Couple Dino Maniaci and Jason Hoke show your canine companions a level of care, understanding and style at *Spa Woof* that brings new meaning to “gone to the dogs.”

Imagine yourself as your beloved “Fido” or “Rover” as you enter a place decorated with Corbusier leather seating. It has William Wegman dog inspired fabrics and large format black and white canine portraits by well known local and national photographers. In the background a large screen TV is playing silent episodes of classic lassie reruns. It’s a full on sensory experience for both owner and pet. A four-star getaway for your precious pooch. Think “W” hotels for the canine crowd. This is the idea *Spa Woof* owners Dino Maniaci and Jason Hoke have made real.

Jason is the “dog man,” Dino says. He oversees, runs and administers all daily operations. That means working with their eight employees to set the standards for care, handling and treatment of the dogs, as well as their human counterparts. He’s emphatic about the spa’s cleanliness, as well as the care given to each dog and established systems to record everything from the dog’s toys and treats, to administering medications as needed. Every dog is photographed upon arrival and receives a name card spelling out his specific needs and care guidelines. Then, it gets posted on the door to his “suite.” Dino’s responsibilities lean more towards designing, marketing, and advertising specific events. “I created the look and feel of *Spa Woof*, developed all of our advertising, billboards and collateral materials. Some of those being custom shirts, mugs, caps

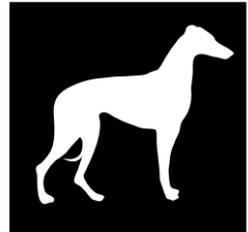
It’s a full sensory experience for both owner and pet. Think “W” hotels for the canine crowd.

and a must for every dog owner—frisbees. The *Spa Woof* signature black, taupe and orange color pallet has helped create a cohesive identity package that customers seem to appreciate.

Community building is an integral part of the *Spa Woof* philosophy. Dino says with pride, “Our staff has been able to participate in community mentoring programs for teens and Goodwill industries, employing persons with special needs.” Dino donated design services to the Madison Aids Support Network (now AIDS Network) as the organization was beginning to take shape. *Spa Woof* also participated in the Red Ribbon Affair last March and hopes to be called upon in the future to help out wherever they can.

Daily boarding and daycare are the most popular services. They offer top-notch care to close to 50 dogs each day. All dogs are screened for behavioral issues and aggressive behavior traits before they are allowed to attend. One of their most unique services is Bark-N-Ride, which allows travelers to park their car and drop-off their dog before being chauffeured to the airport. Upon their return, owners are reunited with their canine companion at the airport in their own freshly washed vehicle. Plans to develop a *Spa Woof* franchise program are underway in the coming year. —**Tim Foster**





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Why do gay people have such strong relationships with their pets? Discuss it in the forums at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

Playbill, Footnotes and Calendar edited by Callen Harty

PLAYBILL

The Return of Rudnick

Stage Q's *Valhalla* brings Paul Rudnick's comedic wit back to Madison

Stage Q and Madison seem to like Paul Rudnick, the author of the upcoming production, *Valhalla*. In 2000 Mercury Players brought us his play, *Jeffrey*, a romantic comedy about a man who swears off sex only to find love. It was produced by Stage Q's founder, Thomas McClurg. Also under the auspices of Mercury Players McClurg produced Rudnick's *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* (not to be confused with *The Greatest Story Ever Told*) in 2001. Rudnick specializes in fast-paced comedies with twists and zinger after zinger of bitchy wit. The previous Madison productions were both enjoyable renditions of his work. While technically not Stage Q pieces, McClurg's production of them is what led to the founding of the organization.

Six years after the successful Mercury productions of Rudnick's work, Stage Q returns to the author with this production of *Valhalla*. In the play two seemingly disparate stories are intertwined.



The first is the story of the Mad King of Bavaria, Ludwig II, a man who was responsible for the building of ornate and expensive castles all over the country, who was Richard Wagner's sponsor, and who was known to become infatuated with many different men in the late 19th century. The second is the fictional story of a 1940's-era Texas teenager named James Avery, a gay boy devotee of opera. This is where their lives intersect and we see the parallels of two gay men centuries apart

in time, but near to each other's souls, revealed in some "grand operatic moments", according to director, Tara Ayres, who is also the group's Artistic Director.

While Rudnick's plays tend to be funny they also tend to look at serious issues. They examine the way in which we see our world. This one examines the ways in which we see and relate to beauty, and how that impacts us, and it is done with what Ayres calls "a beautiful play".

Valhalla opens on October 5 and runs Thursdays through Sundays through October 20, with performances on the Evjue stage at the Bartell Theater, 113 East Mifflin Street. Call (608) 661-9696 x3 for reservations or more information. ■

FOOTNOTES

A Collective Effort

MadStage.com makes finding comprehensive information about local stages and productions a one-stop shop.

There is one vital source of information on all things theatrical in Southern Wisconsin—MadStage. Founded in 1997 by Eric Houghton, MadStage is a website, madstage.com, devoted entirely to Wisconsin's theater and performing arts community. Theatergoers who know about MadStage regularly go to the site to decide what play to see on any given weekend. Actors who have the bug to act go to MadStage to search the audition notices. Directors looking for work search the job listings. It is a complete listing of all plays, auditions, job notices, and listings of theater groups, with links to their own sites where available. In addition there are links to local playwrights, an e-mail list, a page on radio theater, one on dance, a section for free tickets, and more.

Though it started with a heavier focus on Madison theater the site incorporates the surrounding area as well, and there are listings for Milwaukee and farther afield, too. For example, in early August there were listings for seven plays opening the first week of the month. They covered theater groups in Stoughton, Milwaukee, Monroe, Middleton, Spring Green, Oregon, and Mineral Point.

Theater groups are never charged for their listings. Other than a few sponsors, most of which are the theater groups that benefit from the listings, the site depends entirely on donations. There are links to over 200 theater groups throughout Wisconsin and even northern Illinois, and they aren't all from the larger cities. ■



Review local performances and discuss area stages in our online forums at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

THEATRE CALENDAR

A Representative Sampling

Night of the Iguana

by Tennessee Williams
American Players Theater
Spring Green, 6/15-10/5
playinthewoods.org

Cyrano

by Edmond Rostand (translated by Brian Hooker)
Milwaukee Repertory Theater
Milwaukee, 9/5-10/7
milwaukeearep.com

Art

by Yasmina Reza
Strollers Theater
Madison, 9/6-9/29
madstage.com/Companies/Strollers.html

Sondheim Tonight

a revue of songs by Stephen Sondheim
Edgewood College
Madison, 9/7-9/15
theatre.edgewood.edu

Henry IV

by William Shakespeare
Milwaukee Shakespeare
Milwaukee, 9/8-10/7
milwaukee-shakespeare.com

The Book of Liz

by David & Amy Sedaris
Boulevard Theater
Milwaukee, 9/12-9/30
boulevardtheatre.com

Reefer Madness—the Musical

by Kevin Murphy & Dan Studney
Mercury Players
Madison, 9/13-10/6
mercuryplayerstheatre.com

Funnel

by Ethan Mutz
Broom Street Theater
Madison, 9/21-10/28
broomstreet.org

Death of a Salesman

Arthur Miller
Madison Repertory Theater
Madison, 9/21-10/14
madisonrep.org

Water Engine

by David Mamet
University Theater
Madison, 9/28-10/13
union.wisc.edu/uniontheater

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change

by Joe DiPietro & Jimmy Roberts
Verona Area Community Theatre,
Verona, 10/19-10/27
vact.org

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Cultural, Social, Service and Nightlife listings edited by Amanda Hunter



Willy St. Fair
Sept. 15 & 16

The best street fair in Madison is celebrating its 30th anniversary by turning Williamson Street into a parading carnival of impromptu street performances, food, music, arts and crafts vendors. 6 stages spread across the Williamson-Marquette neighborhood's signature street and a community raffle already has over 200 prizes waiting to be won. cwd.org



Michael Cunningham

Wisconsin Book Festival
Oct. 10-14

The annual celebration of literature, bringing readers, writers and bibliophiles together to discuss their *objets d'amour*. This year's fest, is themed "Domestic Tranquility," and will be graced by critically acclaimed writers including Rick Bass, R. Coraghessan Boyle, *The Hours* author Michael Cunningham, Susan Faludi, Jane Hirshfield, and Zakes Mda. wisconsinbookfestival.org



Horror in The Dark
at Olin Park, July 21-22

The Madison Metro Jaycees organize the best haunted house in the area. Proceeds go to the Interfaith Hospitality Network, a charity which works to house, feed, and provide employment opportunities for the homeless. They'd like to meet "people who I can have a meaningful relationship and then murder." myspace.com/horrorinthedarkatolinpark

ORGANIZATIONS

A Representative Sampling

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

Bette Davis Bowlers
dand1957@earthlink.net

Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls
dcandc.org

Dykes on Bikes
dykesonbikesmadison.com

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

First Congregational Church
1609 University Ave., Madison, (608) 233-9751
firstcongmadison.org

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
personalpages.tds.net/~tmclurg

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

Gay Outdoors Group
myspace.com/madisonsgayoutdoorgroup

Gay Softball League
ssblmadison.com

Gay Volleyball League
madisonglbtvolleyball.com

Hermanos Latinos
sneal@aidsnetwork.org

Madison Gay Hockey Association
madisongayhockey.org

Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby
madisonminotaursrfc.org

New Harvest Foundation
newharvestfoundation.org

OutReach Community Center
600 Williamson St., Madison, (608) 255-8582
outreachinc.com

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

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus
perfectharmonychorus.org

Proud Theatre
proudtheater.org

Stage Q
stageq.com

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

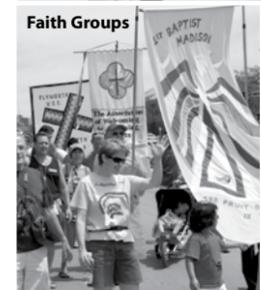
Women Across Wisconsin
womenacrosswisconsin.org

The Faces of Pride

Sights from the Parade, Picnic and Entertainment during Our Magic Weekend



Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby



Faith Groups



Sunday Headliner, Tonya Watts



Desiree Mathews and friends



Chicago's Pulsation



UW - Madison



Madison Gay Hockey Association

PHOTOS BY NIKKI BAUMBLATT AND BRIAN JEUCHENS

our lives **01** Civil Rights & Discrimination Forum
CIVIL UNIONS VS. MARRIAGE
Submitted by **Samus**

In a perfect world, we would be able to confidently stand our ground and demand immediate equality in every fathomable way. The reality is that gay rights are following the same slow-traveled trajectory as black rights, women's rights, and the rights of any other marginalized group of individuals throughout the history of the world; nothing happens overnight, and the battle is never truly over.

recurring

Volleyball League
Continuing through the fall and moving to Keva Sports in Middleton. Starting on **Friday, Sept 7th**, with game times at 8 and 9pm. Pick-up games and some skills clinics are available for interested players. madisonglbtvolleyball.com

Madison Gay Hockey Association
The MGHA kicks off season two as the largest LGBTQA ice hockey league in America at the Madison Ice Arena. Clinics start on **September 23**, games on **October 21**. madisongayhockey.org

Dairyland Cowboys & Cowgirls
LGBTQA folks dedicated to promoting country and popular line dancing in a fun and supportive environment. **Mondays**, 6pm at Club 5. dcandc.org

Frontrunners / Frontwalkers
Runners and walkers, ranging in ages, speeds and fitness levels gather, then afterwards enjoy an informal social gathering in a neighboring cafe. FRFW meets **Saturday mornings**, at 9 a.m. outside the UW Arboretum. personalpages.tds.net/~tmclurg/

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus
PHMC strives to provide gay, bisexual, transgendered and gay friendly men with opportunities to perform choral music in a supportive and affirming environment. Rehearsals are on **Sundays** from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at Meriter Retirement Communities perfectharmonychorus.org

Making Visible the Invisible
September 8 A Madison Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition of abstract works by modern and contemporary artists. mmoca.org

Supercrones Auditions
September 10, 12 The 2007 show included a number of lesbians but limited lesbian content. More, please. croneshow.com

Devil's Challenge Triathlon
September 15 A 4 mile swim, 15 mile bike, 3 mile run around Devil's Lake State Park in Baraboo witriseseries.com

Wisconsin Wolves Women's Professional Football
September 22 The Wolves take on Minnesota at home. wiwolves.com

GSA for Safe Schools Walk/Run Eat: Join the Movement!
October 13 A 1-mile walk, a 5K run and a picnic lunch provided by Queen Anne's Catering. Open to all, so bring your friends, kids, partners and parents. Registration begins at 8:30 AM Franklin Elementary, 305 W. Lakeside St. Walk/run starts at 10:00 AM. www.gsafor safeschools.org

Henry Rollins
October 17 The master of opinionated, out-spoken word comes to the Barrymore. trueendeavors.com

Mad Rollin Dolls Roller Derby
October 20 The Dairyland Dolls return for their last home bout of the season vs. Rocky Mountain Rollergirls. madrollindolls.com

Find more community groups online, view our event calendar, and submit your own listings at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

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Time to ACT

What started as a job turned into something bigger as WKOW 27 news anchor **Mitch Weber** tells *Our Lives* why he decided to make the Wisconsin AIDS ride a part of who he is.

How did you first hear about the ACT rides?

Most people who get involved with the ACT rides do so because they know someone living with the disease. For me, that wasn't the case. I first heard about it in April of 2004. My friend's fiancé was trying to get him to take part in ACT 2. He was making all kinds of excuses, so he suggested to her that maybe I'd be interested. When she approached me, I was curious to know more. At that time, I'd recently moved to Madison and was looking for ways to get involved. Della Hagen, who was part of the ride at the time, contacted me and was so excited that another television personality was considering getting involved. By that time, NBC 15 anchor Mike McKinney had been doing it for a couple years already. So, we setup a meeting between members of the ride committee, my boss, and me. At the lunch meeting the committee members were talking about what the ride stands for and what a life changing experience it is for so many riders and crew. My boss was excited. He leaned over to me and said this is something we should do. After he said that, I signed up.

What happened next?

All I kept thinking about were the excuses. I don't have a bicycle. I haven't been on a bike in about 10 years. I don't want to wear spandex. ... Then, one of the members mentioned that even at the end of the six days you'll wish you were still on your bike. I almost had a panic attack. I committed before really thinking it though. It was already the middle of May. I only had two and a half months to buy a bike, train, and on top of that, raise the money needed to participate. Not to mention wear those spandex bicycling shorts. I was ready to quit before I ever gave it a chance. At that point, quitting wasn't an option though. We agreed I would be doing this. Our promotions department was turning out promotional spots that I would be riding every single mile while producing stories to



Photo by Paul Swanson.
Styled by Tim Foster, Savoir Hair.



introduce our viewers to the ACT rides. I was stuck. I had a new boss I was trying to impress and everyone knew I was going to be doing this. I had no choice. This whole time I was under the assumption it was one-day, maybe two days at the most. I never dreamed it was a six-day ride.

What was causing the excuses?

Truth be told, I was scared to associate myself with a HIV and AIDS organization. I became a reporter to tell stories of people who don't have a voice. But, when you place an AIDS cause onto the shoulders of 'television journalist' the assumption becomes you are gay and you have AIDS. That scared me to death because I felt it would force me to come out faster than I was ready. I still wasn't out yet. Coming out is a process that doesn't just happen overnight—it takes time. Because of being in the closet, something as simple as committing to the ride heightened my pressure to announce my sexuality to the world. I am gay, but I am not living with the disease. It sounds foolish now, but back then it increased my fear exponentially.

Was that fear necessary?

I was harder on myself than the reality was. It was scary, but through this I met incredible people who I learned would support me. They were non-judgmental, supportive and inspiring. They were people I wanted to surround myself with on and off the ride. They gave me the confidence I needed to be myself, which eventually crossed over from my personal life into my professional life.

Were there any surprises on your first ride?

What surprised me most was that everyone on the ride was not gay or male. The gay male was actually the minority. There were parents, siblings, and friends. They made up the majority. This ride actually reflected the world we live in, but not. The people on this ride as I learned did not care who you were, where you came from, who you loved, what you looked like, or what TV station you were on, they would stop on the side of the road and make sure you were okay. It did take a while to get use to that. People were always smiling at you, saying hi, asking how you were and really meaning it.

When did it become more than just a news story?

There were a couple moments, but the one that I will always remember was right after closing ceremonies my first year. I ran into Bob Bowers and Michael Costello. Bowers had been living with the disease for 21 years at that point and Costello's son had passed away from it. They both gave me a hug and thanked me for giving a voice to a cause



Above: Mitch with Cass Marie Downing during ACT 5.
Below: At the ACT 3 closing ceremonies.



Through this I met incredible people who I learned would support me.

many have forgotten. Here are two different men who have forever been changed by the disease. I knew at that point I was changed, too.

The highs and lows I felt everyday on the ride became worth it. The highs included biking everyday in the heat and making it up every hill even when I thought I couldn't go on. The lows included struggling up some of those hills and fighting with my management at the TV station. On the fourth day of my first ride, I wasn't going to make it to my live remote for the 5:00 news. They were demanding I be driven in and I was trying to negotiate a later time. They threatened my job. I felt defeated until my friend and co-worker Elizabeth Hopkins talked me into compromise because at that point I was ready to quit my job. Her idea... get driven in for the live remote, then taken back so I could ride where I left off. It worked. I knew at that point something in me was changing. The ride, the people, and the cause were becoming part of my life.

After committing, how did you get started?

Finding a bike was priority number one. Like many new riders, the ride committee set me up with a mentor who held my hand through the entire training and fundraising. This is one of the reasons the ride is so successful. You are welcomed in from day one and they never forget about you.

Was the fundraising difficult?

I learned over the years you ask anybody and everybody. I started first with family, friends and co-workers. It is difficult to ask people for money, but when you tell them the cause behind their

contribution, they surprise you. Fundraising was the part I was most concerned about and it ended up being the easiest. This last year the ride incorporated web-based fundraising and it is so easy. It doubled the amount I raised last year because you can donate securely online.

And now this year, how much did you end up raising?

It is actually still coming in, but as of right now, almost \$5,400. This year, I sent out corporate sponsorships. That really helped quite a bit.

And where does the money go?

The money we raise on the ACT rides go to people in Southern Wisconsin living with HIV and AIDS. They are clients of AIDS Network who need help with transportation costs to get to medical appointments, paying their utility bills, phone bills and such. AIDS Network could not offer these services without donations.

You just finished your fourth ride. What keeps you coming back?

The people and the cause. The ride has become such a part of my life that I'm to the point of getting a tattoo of the ride's ribbon rider logo. No matter where life takes me in the next year, I will be back for this. It's the annual family reunion that you *want* to go to. You get to see your old friends and meet new ones on a journey that creates the moments that stay with you forever. ■



Scenes From ACT 5

1. McFarland United Church of Christ pastor, Wayne Shannon (far left), with some of his parishioners 2. Matthew Refrno Sargent and Cass Marie Downing 3. David Harer hugging Michaela Torcasso 4. Joe Schraven's sister and mother supporting him at the closing ceremonies. We're all proud of you, Joe. 5. Photographer Kelly Doehring, from Stick People Productions, stickpeopleproductions.com 6. Jim Thompson and his technician 7. Kristin Mathews and Bob Bowers, a.k.a. Da Pirate 8. Vivian Lin, Bri Deyo and Carmen Hotvedt 9. Medic, Dr. Brian Bohlmann taking a break 10. Christopher Walters and Shawn Waldron dressed up as Robin Hood and Maid Marion at the lunch pit for the Disney theme day 11. ACT 5 route planner, the lovely Lora Wilkinson 12. Pieces of classic Wisconsin supporting the riders along the ACT route.

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world" —Ghandi

I Am Grateful!

Volunteering for ACT 5 herself, **Barbara McKinney** discovers the commitment and courage that her late son Mike always described as "a life changing experience"

We were the riders and crew of ACT 5, the Wisconsin AIDS Ride. We assembled together on Day Zero, the day before the ride. Registration, sign-in, pick-up final information, turn in final monies, view the safety video. New faces, some familiar faces... I was so anxious. It was finally down to the wire. This was what everyone had planned for, trained and prepared for. As I made my way through the various stations, I remembered wishing, "if only Mike were here to usher me through this sea of faces." I could also imagine hearing his booming voice, seeing his smile that could light up an entire room. "Life was so much easier when he was around," I lamented. I pressed on.

Mike would say to me, "Mom, you just gotta experience the ride for yourself."



In Memorium:
NBC 15 anchor
Mike McKinney,
1965-2006

At a dinner, one of the organizers, Dana, asked, "Would you like to participate in the opening ceremonies?" What! Me? How humbling was that! When I got home I began to journal some of my thoughts. I couldn't sleep the night before and was up all night. Before I knew it, it was 5:30 a.m. and there I was at the opening ceremony of ACT 5. I was witnessing for the first time the exuberance of an ACT ride opening ceremony. I was virtually overwhelmed by emotion as I looked out at bikes, riders, crew, friends and family embracing, holding hands and shedding tears. Tears easily flowed that morning, but there was something different that I had never felt before. I felt a collective, compassionate, caring and determined community shaping before my eyes. Anticipation like electricity surged through the air. There's Dana...there's Bob Bowers...there's Tracey. Hey, what am I

supposed to do? "Just follow me," was Tracey's response, "You will be one of three people to escort 'rider zero' into the ceremony." When the bagpipes began, we were to somberly escort "rider zero," the riderless bike meant to represent the ones we've lost, through a parting sea of respect. I had seen this ceremony before but this time it was different. On previous rides, I remembered Mike saying, "The ride is not about me, but about the riders." ACT 5 was really about a community of 125 riders and 100 plus crew and volunteers coming together for four days to say to this community that the fight against HIV/AIDS was not over, that the fight would never be over until no more lives were lost because of this virus. For four days, I was in a community with people who had the audacity to believe they could make a difference. For four days we were one body and one community of caring people. The message I received was that we all mattered. Whether LGBT, straight, black, white, brown or purple, we allowed no label to separate us. I witnessed daily execution of such powerful themes as "nothing is unachievable, nothing is impossible." Each day someone demonstrated that no one has power over you unless you yielded that power and authority. I witnessed daily random acts of kindness, love, compassion and even the beginning of healing. Encouragement, support, appreciation and gratitude flowed as freely as the massive amounts of coffee, food and water consumed each day. "Drink and pee" was the mantra. For four days people embraced me

because I mattered to them, many not even knowing that I was Mike's mom until the final evening of the ride. In my head I knew all about the ACT Rides. My son had been involved in the Heartland Ride as well as the Wisconsin AIDS Rides. Mike had talked about his life changing experiences as a rider and as crew. I was at three closing ceremonies. I knew all about the importance and the purpose. I knew the statistics, that the funds raised supported the AIDS Network in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. I knew the devastating facts about the effects of HIV/AIDS, about its impact on communities of color. I knew about the desolation of this disease on family and friends. I knew that in 2007, HIV/AIDS was still taboo in many circles and that many people living with it were still pushed to the edges of society. Although many individuals have had the



our lives
Barbara McKinney
ourlivesmadison.com
user **Barbara**

courage to step up and come out about their status, there are so many others still afraid to be tested or to divulge their status for fear of public censure.

Something happened within me during the ACT 5 ride, from opening ceremony straight through to the closing: I knew that my life had been touched. My heart embraced the entire meaning and commitment to ACT 5. This was real for me. The entire experience of the ride moved from my head to the core of my being. Mike would say to me, "Mom, you just gotta experience the ride for yourself. It is an amazing experience that will change your life forever." I often listen to Mike's taped interviews, especially during those times when I knew that in his heart he felt he was fighting a battle that he would possibly not win. But he continued to speak hope, determination and faith to fight on and not give up. Albert Schweitzer wrote, "Until he extends his circle of compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace." While I participated in ACT 5 to honor Mike, I experienced much more. Throughout my journey I felt Mike's energy. He would always say, "but it's not about me." He knew from his own early life struggles that God had blessed him immeasurably. He knew "to whom much was given, much more was required." He was thankful that in his 41 years, he had been the recipient of a very just and generous God. Because of such grace, he was committed to giving back. His spirit challenged me to "get off my butt and to get involved!" I am so much richer for the experience. Thank you to all those who made ACT 5 happen. To riders, crew and volunteers, thank you for your contributions to the space we occupied together for those four days. You certainly made life a better place for me. This was written to inspire you to join me next year on the ride. May I close with one of Mike's favorite sayings: "Until we meet again, take care of your self." ■

1, 3, 4, 8 BY CORY MOLL, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 BY MITCH WEBER

Finding Her Rhythm

With the first anniversary of *Women Who Want to Dance* approaching, organizer Susana Torres talks to *Our Lives* about coming here from Mexico, beginning to laugh, and *Women Across Wisconsin*

Did you know anything about Wisconsin before arriving here?

I came in September 2002 from León, the city in central Mexico where I was born, to do to a Ph.D. in Industrial and Systems Engineering at UW-Madison. I specifically wanted to come because of a researcher at the University that I wanted to work with. Other than that, I knew Madison had lakes, great cheeses and beer.

Were you out in your community back home?

No. I wasn't able to identify lesbians there. The culture is still very chauvinistic. There's not a lot of opportunities to get away from the very defined roles that Mexican communities have. In Mexican culture, everything you do has repercussions on the group you belong to. The immediate group is your family—therefore your family will be judged by your actions.

In American culture, you are you. The individual is more than the group and people basically go about doing whatever they feel. At least that's been my perception.

Has that helped with coming out at all?

Being embedded in the American culture—yes. I am experiencing independence in so many ways. But truly, what's helped me the most is the great group of lesbian friends I've made here. Hearing their personal stories gives me hope that my family will react positively.

How did you find those women?

I found a group called *Women Who Want to Laugh* in a lesbian events listing. I hesitated to go for a couple months, but finally in October 2005 I went to dinner with them. What attracted me was the description about being a social group with lesbian activism. At that time, I was just coming out of a long-term heterosexual relationship and wanted to take a chance to get to know other women. So, basically, I went for the social group but was curious to get to know other women.

In the group, I found great people. Most of them became role models for me because of their independence, for living the life that they wanted. It was women sharing stories and tons of laughing. I can certainly tell you that for me that was the door to the lesbian world.

Is that where *Women Who Want to Dance* got started?

In June 2006, a woman named Kelly O'Ferrell was talking about how much we needed a place to meet, to see each other and have fun. We all loved dancing, and agreed modern music wasn't for us—we love old songs. This is how *Women Who Want to Dance* was created. Initially we were going

to try it for four months, starting last September. We start with an hour of Latin dance lessons and break the ice by rotating partners. Usually the teachers are different every month, too. In the past, we've had lessons in Salsa, Bachata, Merengue, Tango and Country.

After the lesson, we have music from the 70's, 80's and 90's including slow songs. The music appeals to women of different ages, but the majority are late 20's to 60's. From the beginning, we had more than 100 women coming and those numbers have been increasing significantly as the word spreads. 10% of the cover charge gets donated to OutReach each month.

If you started in September, that means your first anniversary is coming up. Do you have anything special planned?

We are planning to raffle shirts made with a special logo just for the anniversary. We held a logo contest in June and five were submitted. The women who attended our July dance voted on the design and Becky Mugford's logo won. You'll be able to see it in on the shirts this month. We're also going to raffle other stuff, but I don't want to spoil the surprise. The entire cover after paying the teachers and dj will go to OutReach.

And now the dance has led to something else too, hasn't it?

For some time we were relying on lesbians' email lists to spread the word about our events. We saw a need to announce not only our events but also other events for women in the community that not everyone knows about. So we've started *Women Across Wisconsin*, womenacrosswisconsin.org, to be a place where you could find information about different activities for lesbians in the Madison area. Some are open to the entire community. The goal is to offer information about activities in our area where women can meet, communicate, share and help others by participating or volunteering. The site also identifies local women-owned businesses and businesses that support women.

You've gone from being closeted when you arrived, to becoming a kind of activist now. What caused this to happen?

I think the community we are in is responsible for that. I really like seeing a progressive community that is working for equality. I like that—even as I think Madison can continue to become more progressive. So, for me, being part of something that can offer women a safe place to find, hang out and get to know other women offers enormous satisfaction. Just seeing the new faces arrive each month, and more women at each dance... that makes me happy.

All this, while pursuing a PhD. What more could you ask for?

I'd like to meet women curious about that Latin lover rumor. Or possibly a policewoman—I just love that uniform. But, what I'd like most is to just keep finding more *Women Who Want to Dance*! ■



Women Who Want to Dance, womenacrosswisconsin.org

Second Saturday of each month, from 6:00-9:30pm at Club 5, 5 Applegate Court.

Dance Lessons start at 6:30.

Photo by Paul Swanson. Styled by Tim Foster, Savoir Hair. Shot on location at Mediterranean Hookah Lounge & Cafe.



Machinery Row

They wondered how this thing called the Midwest could have such a hold on me.

It's no surprise that last Saturday morning again found me on the bike path. Tricked by all the weekday wake-up times, I got up early. I walked to the Monona Terrace and planted myself under the awning on a small median that divides the bike and pedestrian lanes. I pulled out a little notebook I have for things I want to remember. I wrote about how the sun warmed my hair until it was hot to the touch, and how it had also warmed the things in my head so they could spill onto the paper.

Even in 2003, before I lived downtown, I was drawn to this place. I had been in Madison about four months when Deb and José, contagiously in love and wanting to spread it, visited. It was early November and already sweater-scarf-and-hat weather. They wondered how this thing called the Midwest could have such a hold on me. I took them to the Terrace, where the sky matched the wash of the building and across the lake, a full moon rose. It was dusk and we had the entire place to ourselves. We snuggled together and took pictures of the lake and moon behind us before the cold sent us back to the car. They were convinced Madison was doing right by me. I had to agree, they were right. ■

Jill Nebeker is a web editor at a Madison magazine publisher. You can find more of her writing on dane101.com and some of her web design at <http://small-potatoes.net>.



Monona Terrace

I live just off of the Capitol square, so Madison's downtown is my extended living room. But it's not the Capitol or the campus where I find myself most often. It's not even James Madison Park or State Street. Instead, it's that little strip of pavement skirting Lake Monona where John Nolen Drive meets Williamson St.

On a Sunday evening, when I want to catch up with family, I walk to the bike path and take a seat on one of the picnic tables. I call home and we talk about the weather, who will host my grandparents' 60th anniversary party, when my next trip home will be. I watch the lake as we talk. A muskrat ferries sticks and grass from the shore over to a nest on nearby rocks. A quick splash and before I can look up, the fish that made it is long gone. Much better than Sunday night television.

Last summer, when friends Alix and Max passed through town, I took them to Machinery Row. I love this building. I can picture the wheeling and dealing that took place in the early 1900s as farm equipment changed hands. Now it houses the restaurant Sardine and business and office spaces. And of course, there's Machinery Row Bicycles, which was what we were after. We rented matching blue Gary Fishers and off we went. We rounded the lake, then went up a small dirt trail and out onto a pier. Alix took out her camera and I offered to take a picture, but she declined. She first wanted a self-shot photo of her and the Madison skyline.

Along the Water's Edge

When searching for balance and serenity, Jill Nebeker finds it along the urban shores of Lake Monona where Williamson Street meets downtown.



Jill Nebeker
ourlivesmadison.com
user [jillneb](http://ourlivesmadison.com)

Area Businesses

Sardine Restaurant,
517 Williamson Street
(608) 441-1600

Machinery Row Bicycles,
601 Williamson Street
(608) 442-5974

Monona Terrace,
One John Nolen Drive
(608) 261-4000



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Understanding Denial

Learning how to recognize when denial is doing more harm than good can be challenging. **Dale Decker** shows you the difference.

“denial ain’t just a river in Egypt!” We’ve all exclaimed that at one point or another, haven’t we? I can’t help but call up images of Kathryn Hepburn in *African Queen* as she’s reading her book and sporting that stylish headscarf while swatting at mosquitoes. But I digress. Really though, why would any sane person do such a thing? Well, Freud made a career of it in his day and it turns out he was largely correct. We tend to see denial as something negative, but really we couldn’t survive without it.

For one thing, our perceptual system is based on a sort of sense denial. Our senses constantly screen out noise. If we truly heard every voice in a crowded room, our minds would never understand a word. If we paid attention to every detail while driving, the



We tend to see denial as something negative, but really we couldn’t survive without it.

road would look like bumper cars at an amusement park. So even at the very basic level, our minds are ignoring the noise and allowing us to focus on what’s important.

Of course, denial also works in complex social and emotional spheres. The classic example of healthy denial is grieving. If the loss of a loved one crashed down all at once, we wouldn’t be able to handle the strain. Our minds temporarily send us into denial to protect us. We’ve all attended a visitation with a smiling widow comforting other

mourners--the picture of steely fortitude. For a while, we can function normally and then something reminds us and we fall in a puddle on the floor again. These trips into denial keep us going until we can emotionally process the loss.

Denial also plays a part in queer people’s lives by submerging the discomfort we feel. Therefore, it’s a good thing that our minds give us some breathing space. During the election last year when the marriage amendment was being debated, my mind would not allow me to slip into oblivion and the results were not pretty. I have since seen several people in my practice who became depressed because they couldn’t find respite from the constant worry and perception of bigotry.

Denial isn’t always adaptive and these circumstances are very familiar to us. I’m sure you’ve had a friend who just can’t see the way they are sabotaging the love they so desperately search for. It’s practically a household word in the world of substance abuse. Without denial who would willingly go through the pain and destruction that nurturing an addiction requires?

A potentially subtle and more dangerous side effect of too much denial is that we turn apathetic. We deny our ability to make change. We deny that fact that a problem even exists. Pushing away that deep inner voice that speaks the truth leads to many obstacles. This is the flip side of submerging our discomfort about societal attitudes regarding us. If we live in a happy world where everyone loves us, we can be broadsided by prejudice and never notice until it’s too late.

Since denial can be healthy or destructive, how can you tell the difference? Well, a clear sign would be if the people around you are angry or concerned about you. If this is the case, consider taking a hard look at your behavior. One example: if you make repeated promises to yourself and then are unable to keep them, be very suspicious that denial is possibly blinding you to something.

How We Can Help Ourselves

Given the chance that you discover a problem, what can you do about it? The best advice would be seeing a counselor or psychotherapist. They are trained to spot repetitive patterns and help you recognize and change them.

Denial also plays a part in queer people’s lives by submerging the discomfort we feel.

If a therapist isn’t a reasonable option though, there are a few ways you can ferret out denial without professional help. Self help organizations such as twelve step programs are free. There are special meetings that are GLBTQA friendly and the options you have might surprise you. You can start by visiting www.alcoholics-anonymous.org or in many communities you can dial 211 for help finding a meeting and other resources. If your problem is less serious, talk to a trusted friend who you know has the guts to tell you the truth. Keeping a journal can also be helpful. Read back a month or two and search for patterns you didn’t notice before.

Denial is a powerful force in everyone’s life. Used correctly, it makes us better people and helps us through the difficult moments in life. Abusing it comes with a heavy price. Sometimes it’s OK to take a trip down ‘de Nile. However, keep your eyes open for waterfalls! Oh, and don’t forget the book and the headscarf. Just because you don’t know where you’re going doesn’t mean you shouldn’t look your best. ■

Dale Decker has been a psychotherapist and substance abuse counselor in our community since 1994. He can be found online at www.daledecker.net



Area Resources

OutReach, Madison’s LGBT community center hosts a variety of gay-friendly support groups. outreachinc.com

The Serenity Club in Fitchburg, offers 12-step programs and support groups. You can learn more at area75.org

Getting in too deep?



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How does denial affect your life? Offer advise and ask questions at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

Achieving Balance

In search of some seriously sophisticated feng shui, **Tim Foster** uncovers a few places worth paying a visit.

Savoir Faire

1701 Deming Way, Middleton
(608) 831-7800 sfcardsandgifts.com

Autumn is a celebration of the color orange. **Impulse glass** will let you do just that for your next party. This **hand-blown glassware** (\$74.85 for pitcher & two glasses) serves up with style. Do your centerpiece proud. **Pebble Vase** (\$59.95), **Faux Botanicals** (\$6.95) and **Pearlescent Pumpkin** (\$46.95) are true showstoppers.



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(608) 280-8053
1725 Monroe St., Madison
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(608) 829-1020
worldmarket.com

Di Maggio's Euro Design

7475 Mineral Point Rd., Madison
(608) 833-4790

Little Luxuries

214 State St., Madison
(608) 255-7372

North Gate Antique Mall

1293 N Sherman Ave., Madison
(608) 246-8402
northgateantiquemall.net

Orange Tree Imports

1721 Monroe St., Madison
(608) 255-8211
orangetreeimports.com

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201 State St., Madison
(608) 258-4141

Peg's

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(608) 216-9839

Pink Poodle

5918 Odana Rd., Madison
(608) 276-7467
thepinkpoodleonline.net

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310 State St., Madison
(608) 256-1966
popdeluxe.net

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670 S Whitney Way, Madison
(608) 274-5575
4207 Monona Dr., Monona
(608) 222-0069
rubinsfurniture.com

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(608) 255-7027
tellusmater.com

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL SWANSON, PRODUCT STYLING BY TIM FOSTER

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Roman Candle

1054 Williamson St., and now also at 1920 Parmenter St., Middleton



Follow the Fireworks

Gourmet pizza and intelligent design collide in two trendy locations.

When the Roman Candle opened its first location in 2005, it transformed a tattered, former Alcoholics Anonymous clubhouse into one of the hippest addresses on Willy Street. The retro-pop themed interior and contrasting color scheme compliments a menu ranging from their banana pepper topped namesake pizza, to a quattro formaggi and asparagus asiago ravioli. Be sure to leave room for a waffle cone of Chocolate Shoppe ice cream—they stock a variety of flavors. A second location just opened in downtown Middleton at 1920 Parmenter Street. **Not to Miss:** The bell pepper soup.

Central

Amy's Cafe

414 W. Gilman St., 255-8172
American, Mediterranean \$
www.amyscafe.com

Angelic Brewing Company

322 W. Johnson St., 257-2707
American, Pizza \$
angelicbrewing.com

Bab's French Quarter Kitchen

1353 Williamson St., 251-1222
French, Creole \$

Bandung Restaurant

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

Bellini Restaurant

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

Blue Marlin

101 N. Hamilton St., 255-2255
Seafood, Steak \$\$\$
thebluemarlin.net

Blue Velvet Lounge

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

The Brass Ring

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

Brocach Irish Pub

7 W. Main St., 255-2015
Irish \$\$
brocach.com

Buraka

543 State St., 255-3646
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buraka.com

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Mexican \$
burritodrive.com

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Continental \$\$

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French, Tapas \$
themomo.com

Cafe Porta Alba

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Pizza \$\$
cafeportaalba.com

Cafe Soleil

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Bread, Sandwiches/Deli \$
letoile-restaurant.com

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French, Croissants \$\$\$
cocoliquot.com

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essen-haus.com

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dottedumplingsdowry.com

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eldoradogrillmadison.com

Essen Haus

514 E. Wilson St., 255-4674
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essen-haus.com

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American \$\$\$
frescomadison.com

Frida Mexican Grill

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

Fyfe's Corner Bistro

1344 E. Washington Ave., 251-8700
American, Steak \$\$\$
foodspot.com/fyfes

Great Dane

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

Harvest

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iansdelivery.com

Johnny Delmonico's

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johnnydelmonicos.com

Johnny O's

620 University Ave., 251-0943
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www.madavenue.com

Jolly Bob's

1210 Williamson St., 251-3902
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Kabul Restaurant

541 State St., 256-6322
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Lazy Jane's Cafe & Bakery

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lechardonnaymadison.com

L'Etoile

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

Madison's

119 King St., 229-0900
American, Burgers \$\$
madisonsdowntown.com

Maharani

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

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1133 E. Wilson St., 257-7216
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forkandspooncafe.com

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bluemoonbar.com

Bluephies

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bluephies.com

Fleming's Steak & Wine Bar

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Steak, Seafood \$\$\$
flemingssteakhouse.com

Glass Nickel

5003 University Ave., 218-9000
Pizza \$
glassnickelpizza.com

Great Dane

357 Price Place, 661-9400
Brewery, Burgers \$\$
www.greatdanepub.com

Inka Heritage

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

J.T. Whitney's Brewpub

674 S. Whitney Way., 274-1776
Brewery, American \$\$
jtwhitneys.com

Jordan's Big Ten Pub

1330 Regent St., 251-6375
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jordansbigten.com

La Hacienda

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

Madeleine's Patisserie

3742 Speedway Rd, 441-0909
Bread, Pastries \$
madeleinesmadison.com

Mickey's Dairy Bar

1511 Monroe St., 256-9476
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Original Pancake House

5518 University Ave., 231-3666
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Tex Tubbs Taco Palace

2701 University Ave., 231-3473
Tex-Mex \$
textubbstacos.com

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1336 Drake St., 260-9898
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1859 Monroe St, 258-9881
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1831 Monroe St, 284-9463
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5957 McKee Rd, Fitchburg, 277-9463

Cafe Zoma

2326 Atwood Ave., 246-2009

Electric Earth Cafe

546 W Washington Ave, 255-2310

Escape Cafe

916 Williamson St., 255-0997

Espresso Royale Caffè

208 State St., 259-0800
650 State St., 259-0300

EVP Coffee

1250 E Washington, 294-6868
3809 Mineral Point Road, 236-9690

Fair Trade

418 State St., 268-0477

Ground Zero

744 Williamson St., 294-8668

Indie Coffee

1225 Regent St., 259-9621

Java Cat

3918 Monona Dr., 223-5553



Jo's Tazzina Cafe and Confectionary

45 S Bassett St., 819-1082

Meeting Grounds

494 Commerce Dr., 826-4200

Mermaid Cafe

1927 Winnebago St., 249-9719

Michelangelo's

114 State St., 251-5299

Mother Fool's

1101 Williamson St., 259-1301

Steep & Brew

544 State St., 256-2902
2871 University Ave., 238-6878
6656 Odana Rd., 833-6656

Washington Hotel Coffee Room

402 W Lakeside St., 441-7599

Dear Mom,

Coming to terms with her mother's recent death helps **Paula Orton** understand that life is too short to be spent hiding who she is.

dear Mom,
It's been months now since you passed away. You are in my thoughts daily and I miss you more than I thought possible. What I miss most is the relationship we never had. You left this place without ever truly knowing me. In the end, I know you loved me...but I always wanted you to love me for who I really was, not who you wanted me to be. When I first told you I was a lesbian you ignored it. I think that you honestly believed if you didn't think about it, or we didn't talk about it, that it wasn't real. I already knew how you felt about gay people. I had grown up hearing the jokes you laughed at and told, yourself. I heard you call people "fruity" and found out from other people what that meant. It was one of the hardest things I've ever done...telling you and somehow knowing in my



The hardest part about not having you here is that you will never really know me now.

heart what the outcome would be before I had even done it. You didn't disappoint in that respect. What you didn't realize was that the reaction I expected and got from you was so painful to receive...I hoped I was wrong. I had crushes on female coaches and teachers all the way from grade school to the day I graduated high school...I attributed it to the fact that they were authority figures. I tried to fit into the mold that society had created for me and that so many times you tried to push on me. You were always so happy when I had a date for anything... like that defined my worth in the situation or something. When I went away to college I was finally able to acknowledge what had

been there all along...it didn't come easy to me and I did a lot of soul searching that year before I decided to be honest with myself and everyone else about it. For years after I told you our relationship was non-existent. I know you kept tabs on me through grandma because, unlike you, she didn't even blink when I told her. She kept on loving me and treating me the same. She met all my girlfriends and very tactfully stated her opinion of them. She still asks about my first serious girlfriend all these years later...only she calls her Faith (which is not her name but it's kind of close), it's pretty cute actually. It makes me quite sad to think now about all the time and connection we missed out on because you didn't want me to be who I really am. I appreciate that you made an effort after I had been with Linda for a couple years. You tried to do sweet things for her and us collectively...the thing that took away from that was that you still referred to her as my "friend" or "roommate." It made it seem as if you were ashamed of what we were to each other. When we broke up after 7 years the first thing you said to me was "good, now maybe you'll find a nice man to marry." I don't think you could ever know how much pain I was in at that moment. Not only had the person I had promised to spend the rest of my life with (through thick and thin) just broken my heart...you totally devalued that pain, and that hurt even more.

The hardest part about not having you here is that you will never really know me now. You will never meet who I choose to spend my life with. You will never meet your future grandchildren. I know you are in a better place now. A place free from the physical pain you endured here on earth. A place free from the emotional pain you struggled through in your life. I only wish you could be here to share with me in all that I'm doing and becoming. But I guess in a way you are here because your death brought about so many changes in my life. I'm thankful for that because they are changes I am proud of and I think you would be too. I am a happy person and a contributing member of society. My life would be so

HOW I CAME OUT

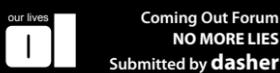


different now if I hadn't been true to myself all those years ago. Your death has renewed my resolve to help make the world a better place for all people and I am so thankful to live in a world where I can be my true self. I am learning more about myself through each challenge and life experience and I can honestly say to you that the process of coming out is making me a stronger person.

I talk to you daily now... I ask you to give me courage to do things I'm scared of.

I talk to you daily now. I ask you to give me the strength to go on and make a better life for myself. I ask you to give me courage to do things I'm scared of. I ask you to give me the confidence I need to go after the things I think are beyond me. I ask you to give me the patience with myself that I have with others. I ask you to show me the way. I know all of these things truly come from inside me...but having you looking out for me now after everything we've been through means a lot to me. I talk to you more now than I ever have...I tell you how I feel and what I really wish for, things I don't say to anyone else. Mom...I am living each day with a purpose and intent I've never had before...and I hope you are proud!

I love you and will miss you until I leave this earth myself...
Your Daughter,
Paula



Being in the closet means telling lies about yourself, and that wastes a lot of your energy. Plus, each time you lie, you tell yourself that who you are is not acceptable. It's all such a burden.

When you start being honest about yourself, you may feel a great sense of relief. Your feelings about yourself may improve. Feelings of depression may lift. You will have the opportunity to meet others like yourself for love and friendship. You may find straight people more supportive than you thought.

Andre Gide, the gay author, said he would rather be hated for something he is than loved for something he isn't.



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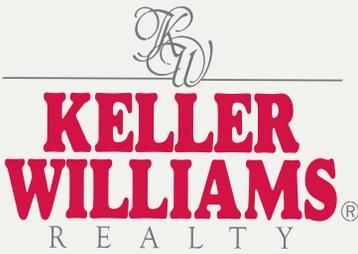
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Darin Scott Thomas

Realtor®

Direct: (608) 219.7267

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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

After serious consideration I have realized that my love for real estate and working with my clients has outweighed my interest in running a retail business. After two years, I have moved into a supportive role with Tickled Pink and refocused my career on real estate. I am overwhelmed with excitement to share with you all that I have joined Keller Williams Realty and am back in business.

I specialize in residential and commercial properties as well as residential income, new construction, and agricultural properties. Three key services I provide include:

- 1) Selling Agent I provide full service, professional marketing consultation to Individuals interested in selling properties.

- 2) Buyers Agent As your buyer's agent, I locate properties for you and negotiate the purchase on your behalf. Real estate is becoming more regulated Litigious. More and more buyers are hiring real estate agents to represent them in the purchase (or construction) of homes. In fact, over half of all real estate transactions now involve buyers agents.

- 3) Referral Services As a nationally recognized Realtor® I can help you or anyone you know purchase or sell property anywhere in the United States.

As I relaunch my real estate business, I continue to appreciate the support you have all offered me. I would greatly appreciate any referrals you could offer and promise to treat each one as if I were working directly with you.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

Darin Scott Thomas

