



Edited by BWMT Milwaukee webmaster, Peter K. <bwmmtmilwaukee@aol.com>

Welcome to the Premier Issue of

CONNECTIONS

Why you are getting this

One of the suggestions made in response to the Survey Monkey questionnaire recently emailed to some 39 present and former members of BWMT Milwaukee by Mark Behar, was, that in addition to our website, we should have a monthly email or electronic newsletter.

Peter K, having had 22 years continuous experience in writing newsletters, has agreed to take on the task, but *promises* a new edition only every other month, in the hopes that a second editor will volunteer to alternate with him.

Doing a newsletter and keeping it up is largely a matter of "Divide & Conquer." Determine an initial list of "Features" and "Departments", not all of which have to appear in each issue. If you are not in the mood to write or edit content for one department, you just may be in the mood to do another. Over the course of the available time, you are likely to be in the mood to it all. It gets done.

Suggested (Optional) Departments

(Items in bold should be part of each issue)

Reports on Recent Activities/photos

A look at the Calendar of Coming Activities

Minutes of last Meeting/Agenda for next one

Project reports if any

Proposed new activities, events or projects

Editor's opinion piece or editorial

Submitted opinion pieces

Letters to the Editor

Feature Articles and Essays

Links to articles and news of interest, other groups

Appropriate Humor

(More departments, and features, can be added.

Hopefully, contributing editors can be found for some of these items.)

**BWMT Milwaukee
CONNECTIONS**

August 2008 - Vol. 1, Issue #1

So here goes Volume 1, Issue #1, August 2008

BWMT Milwaukee Website *Refreshed & Updated at Last!*

When our laptop was stolen this past Easter Sunday, we had a problem. The new MAC would not run the software with which I had created and maintained the website. New software balked at reading the old files. I gave up.

Then, after our meeting on August 16th, I tried reconstructing a page on the new software, and suddenly the software "caught on" and was now able to read the old files. A few hours later we were back in business. *Hallelujah!*

Report on the National BWMT Convention in St. Louis, July 23-26, 2008

by Adan B. NABWMT Board Member

BWMT Milwaukee not only had a healthy contingent of members in attendance, we now have four members on the Board or in Officer positions:

Norbert Young, Black NABWMT Co-chair

D.A. Leonard, NABWMT Treasurer

Adan B., NABWMT Board Member

Mark Behar, NABWMT Board Member

David Siereveld, of Georgia, and a close friend of Adan's whom many of us have had the pleasure of meeting, was elected White Co-Chair.

Congratulations to all of the above. With these changes, the National Organization seems back on course to a brighter future.

In addition Peter K. received recognition for the BWMT Milwaukee website.

Next year's event will be in the City of *Brotherly Love*, **Philadelphia!** Save the dates! July 29th -- August 1st, 2009

The Fall Midland Regional Meeting

SAUGATUCK, Michigan
Friday-Sunday, Sep 26-28

From Walt Barabol, BWMT-Detroit Newsletter Editor. 248-219-0772 bwmtdetroit@sbcglobal.net

Hi Guys, Black and White Men Together (BWMT) does Saugatuck, MI at The Dunes Resort! Come Join Us, the 35 guys who have already registered!

Sponsored by BWMT Detroit,
with substantial contributions from
BWMT Milwaukee and MACT Chicago

Saugatuck is just a short drive down the shore from The Lakefront Express Ferry Dock in Muskegon. It is much less than a 4-hour drive via Chicago. *If you've never done Saugatuck" don't let this one go!*



We are at **The Dunes**, at 333 Blue Star Highway in, Douglas, MI, **the Midwest's largest gay resort / entertainment complex:** disco, pool, cabaret, bistro, game room, Standard Motel Room with 2 Double Beds **\$109/night.**

**REGISTRATION: \$50 all weekend,
\$30 Saturday Dinner only**

Friday Night Welcome Party 6-9pm
Happy Hour at the Dunes Bar 6-9
Infamous Detroit Strippers at 10pm.

Saturday Breakfast 9 am cosponsored by
BWMT Milwaukee / MACT Chicago
BWMT Midland meeting 10am
Lunch on your own at Pumpnickel's
In downtown Saugatuck
Shopping and Taking in the "Sights!"
Saturday Night Dinner Party
at the Blue Moon Bar & Grill - 8pm.

Sunday Farewell Breakfast Party! 9:30-11:00 am

To see about car-pooling with guys from Milwaukee, email BWMTMilwaukee@aol.com, or call James at 414-461-5359

Upcoming BWMT Milwaukee Events

A Holiday Pot-luck with Cal & Yusuf!

Saturday, August 30th 6pm

(Replaces our usual 4th Saturday Dinner Outing)
10040 N. Kirkland Court, Mequon

This address is reached from Donges Bay Road, the first arterial north of County Line Road. Go north on Range Line Road (27th St) to Donges Bay and turn right, or from I-43 exit to Port Washington Road as you approach County Line Rd and turn left on Donges Bay. Turn south to Charter Mall Rd, a circular loop (go in either direction). Kirkland is a cul de sac near the SE bend of Charter Mall. Our hosts are in the first unit of the condo complex right at the corner off Charter Mall.

Cal & Yusuf's Phone # **262-242-1334**

Miller Lite and Wine supplied

BYOB if something else desired.

And don't forget a Pot-luck Side-dish!

This is an **open event!**

Present and former BWMT members are welcome as well as friends and would be members.

Maps will be mailed to all for whom Cal & Yusuf have addresses. Otherwise, hopefully Pete's directions above won't get you lost!

Note: This event probably replaces our customary Labor Day Weekend backyard BBQ at D.A. and Michael's as well, as Michael has been in ill health – *Get well, Michael! – "Miss Echo Chambers!"*



BWMT Meetings Report – Next 09/20

By Peter K

Our last two meetings have been poorly attended as is often the case during the summer months. July 19th, only Steering Committee people showed up, to find the LGBT Center closed for lack of a volunteer to man the front desk. We did meet informally in the building entry hall.

Our August 16th meeting was much more productive plus we had three at large members. Adan B. reported on the recent St. Louis National BWMT Convention, stating that it was better attended than expected and led to a healthy change in leadership. Some of those previously at the helm had become discouraged and suggested that NABWMT had no purpose in today's world and should disband. None of us in Milwaukee were at all sympathetic with such a view. Now NABWMT had fresh blood, and fresh optimism, poised to recharge, regenerate, and renew itself.

Cal & Yusuf gave us all an invitation to join them at their home just across the County Line in Mequon for a Holiday Pot-luck. See the article at left for details.

Responses to the Survey Monkey Questionnaire

The highlight of the meeting was Mark Behar's report on the results of his Survey Monkey Questionnaire sent to current and former members of the chapter, seeking to find out why they have remained members, or why they decided not to renew, as the case may be. Each respondent was asked to comment on the variety of chapter activities as to which they liked the best, which the least. And all were invited to make suggestions for events and activities and programs that would help us reinvigorate the chapter. After going through the responses, the Steering Committee thanked and congratulated Mark on this significant and most helpful study.

While only 16 or 39 addressees took part in the study, the results were very helpful and revealing. Some of the answers were surprising. For instance, some of us thought that it had been a mistake to stop the usual post-meeting bar crawls, but only one of the respondents said that going out to the bar after the meeting was important to him.

Another observation, made by more than one, was that the LGBT center was a boring place to meet, without atmosphere, and that perhaps we should vary our meeting spot. We had thought that meeting in the same spot at the same time every month would be helpful, because every one would know it and could count on it, and not have to look up where it would be "this time."

Survey Responses Continued

Alternative Meeting Sites Continued

We'll have to take a second look at the Meeting Spot Question. One compromise might to meet somewhere special once a quarter. At our previous location 219 S. Second Street, we sometimes had a "living room" type environment. That was nice. Perhaps once a quarter we could meet in a private home. As the group would be smaller than for a group dinner special, more members might feel capable of hosting such an event. The environment would be more conducive to staying after the meeting ended and to continue informal socializing, movies, games, and so on.

A Monthly Newsletter

Another suggestion was to launch a monthly newsletter, and this is one person's decision to bite the bullet on that score,

A Drive to recruit younger members

A frequent complaint was that the average age of our members is "too high," but there is not much we can do about that. All groups and organizations are "graying": for the same reason. Young people do not feel the need to belong, to do things in an organized fashion. They do join temporary ad hoc groups, but that's about it. BWMT satisfies a need of previous generations to associate with others doubly out of the main stream: not only gay, but interracial. Young people feel no disadvantage and no need to associate with like-soul persons.

That said, we need to look at activities and events that might attract younger persons, even if we can not hold their company for long.

How to avoid the appearance of a "Cliques"

Another frequent complaint was that we were "cliquish." What does that mean? Without examples, none of us know how to handle that.

Positive Suggestions:

An informal "FRIENDS of BWMT" Group

All past members and visitors who wanted to be on our invitation list should be welcome to all of our events, even special events like dinners, backyard BBQs etc. (but at the host's discretion when at private homes). The sticking point is that members' dues keep the group bar supplied. We could ask non-current members to BYOB and not fill up from the club bar. But a more workable idea might be to mail (or give) all members 3 (or 5?) bar tickets for one drink each, and anyone who has no (or no remaining) tickets would pay a donation per drink. That means we would have to have someone do bartender duty.

Our Friends Group as well as current members should get notices of Group Dinner Outings and other activities. At the same time, a strong incentive to rejoin and remain a member is the substantial discount given to members who come to our popular anniversary banquet each October. There is no reason why non-members should not be welcome at that event, so long as they pay for their own meal. All attendees pay for their own drinks.

In other words, this informal “Friends of BWMT” list would be our way of being inclusive rather than exclusive while still providing strong incentives to rejoin and renew as members.

More Hosts for Private Parties

The observation that too few of us are in a position to host the whole dues paying group, much less the wider “friends included” list in our personal homes or on our grounds has been made by many. We need to stop overburdening the regular gracious hosts. **A suggestion was made that now and then we “rent” a public facility for a special event.** In fact, we have looked into this in the past but without coming to anything conclusive. This suggestion deserves a follow-up. Anyone who knows of a suitable venue for a private party where we can be ourselves, can email us at bwmtmilwaukee@aol.com or call James at 414-461-5359.

A **progressive dinner party event** such as those done annually by the much larger Detroit chapter was another suggestion. One host has everyone for appetizers, another for the main course, another for desert and after dinner drinks. We may have to small a membership to do that, but there is nothing wrong with giving it a try, if we can line up three hosts! But that’s a big if.

Reaching out to the Gay Community

More outreach at information booths, and in the local gay media, was another suggestion. We have tried both with little success so far. We do need to grow our Community Profile, our exposure. One specific suggestion was to **rent an entire cruise boat**, then market it to the local gay community as “hosted by BWMT Milwaukee.

We’d have to be identifiable as members and make a big effort to socialize, not just hang around with our own. A more ambitious and pricey option would be a hosted group round trip day long event to Saugatuk via the Lake Express to/from Muskegon. We have, in fact, already hosted a Multi-Cultural, Multi-Racial workshop to the gay community at large, but with very poor response. We must not let that one disappointment keep us

from trying something new that just might do the trick.

Finding **Interracial Films** for the annual UWM Gay Film Festival was a suggestion.

In the Steering Committee’s defense it must be noted that we have continuously been trying new things to attract people to the monthly meeting. For a while, we were showing a gay DVD after each meeting, and someone was contributing snack food each time. We have, on rare occasions, had live speakers. But perhaps we did not advertise enough, or the special extras were not enough to overcome the “uncomfortable” ambiance of our meeting room.

Following up on the Survey Monkey findings

It was suggested that we do a new survey, listing all the positive suggestions, to see which ideas are the more popular. We’d then take a look at these new results and decide which of the most popular suggestions were more practical to “give a try.”

Meanwhile, whether you participated in the Survey Monkey Questionnaire or not, **please feel free to send us your suggestions!** We would not be asking if we did not think that you might have good ideas that have so far escaped us.



Black & White Angels in Embrace

I believe that this image papered the background of the old National BWMT website. It captures the potential of interracial love & friendship.

Next Issue? Make it yours!

Political Action?

We think it should be a matter of choice. The Editor for one, has been *uninterested*. We do our part, but that's not my thing.

That said, recent experience with loved ones and friends in the Wisconsin Correctional System has highlighted for me at least two things, both probably state-mandated, that I believe could be successfully overturned as unconstitutional, with a dedicated effort, even at the federal level.

Whether anyone else in the chapter or the National BWMT is interested or not, we intend to pursue these issues, and I will write about them in the next issue of CONNECTIONS.

What else is coming in the next issue?

Well that may be up to you!

- Letters from readers?
- Cartoons? Humor? (Editor reserves the right to judge what is in good taste)
- Opinion Pieces
- Suggested new meeting places?
- One of your favorite recipes?
- Photos from Cal & Yusuf's party?

If CONNECTIONS is going to have a long run, it has to have some group participation. So if you want this newsletter, find ways to contribute, even small items: newsbits, links, photos, humor, questions, whatever.

Wisdom for today

We all have a fatal STD -- Be happy about it!
Life is a sexually transmitted fatal condition.

Life is what happens to you
While you are busy planning other things

When we are about to die,
It is not the temptations we gave into
That we regret,
But the ones that we didn't give into!

Opportunity never comes
To the one who waits for it!

If it isn't difficult,
It's probably not worth doing!

Now it's Your Turn!

Let us know if you think a newsletter would be helpful to you, and why.

The Editor's current idea is to email it to those on a list, as well as to put it online as a pdf file where members, friends, visitors and the curious can read it online or download it and print it out.

We could mail it to those without email access for an annual fee to cover postage and paper.

Let us know what kinds of things you would like to see in a newsletter. Ideas are not limited to the "department" & "feature" suggestions listed above.

How about "Classified Ads?" (We are talking about things for sale, things wanted to buy, services, not dates or partners: there are plenty of existing services for that!)

How about a hobby show & tell event?

Regular or periodic Contributors wanted.

By all means speak for a department or feature if you would like to contribute that regularly or in rotation with others. Sharing the burdens and the joys of putting together a group rag is a good thing!

How to send Text & File Contributions to future issues of CONNECTIONS:

Preferred:

Email text in the body of the email message
Attach MSWord or Text files or images

Less preferred:

PDF Files – reformatting is necessary

Much less Preferred:

Typed or handwritten hardcopy, especially if long -- we have to key this in from scratch.

If you send handwritten copy, make an extra effort to make sure it is easily legible.

If you mail hardcopy, *send it to the PO BOX*
Or give it to me at a meeting or event

Do provide your phone # in case of questions.

Editor's Contact Information

Preferred email

comfyrock@aol.com

Less Preferred email (visited much less often)

bwmtmilwaukee@aol.com

Phone and Voice Mail

414-342-0705

(Ask for Peter, or leave voice mail)