

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.



The Wisconsin Light

State Sued For Partner's Health Benefits

[San Francisco]- On October 12, National Gay Rights Advocates (NGRA) filed a petition in a Wisconsin Superior Court to obtain health insurance benefits for the lesbian partner of a state employee.

Jerri Lynn Phillips, a Wisconsin State employee, attempted to add her life-partner, Lorri Tommerup, to her group health plan. Phillips' request was denied because the two women were not legally married.

NGRA staff attorney, Cynthia Goldstein, explained that Wisconsin has a statute barring discrimination based on an employee's marital status and sexual orientation.

"Wisconsin's anti-discrimination law is meaningless if Jerri Lynn and Lorri are denied employee benefits afforded to heterosexual couples," said Goldstein. "Equal access to family benefits is central to equal treatment."

NGRA Executive Director Jean O'Leary said, "This case reveals the limits of our rights as Lesbian and Gay Americans when we have protections on paper, only to have them ignored in practice. Lesbian and Gay families will be respected only when we demand equal treatment in every arena. This includes employee benefit programs."

Shelly J. Gaylord of Gaylord, Schuett and Norton is cooperating local counsel in Madison.

Ben-Shalom To Appeal To U.S. Supreme Court

[Milwaukee]- Miriam Ben Shalom's long and arduous legal battle of 14 years with the U.S. Army is about to reach its final chapter as she carries her case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a decision handed down, August 8, 1989, a three-judge panel of the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sitting in Chicago, determined that Ben Shalom was not entitled to re-enlist in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Following that decision, Patrick Berigan, Ben Shalom's attorney since 1985, filed a motion for rehearing "en banc" which asked for the entire circuit bench sitting as a group to rule on the case. On October 11, 1989, Berigan was notified that his en banc motion had been denied.

Ben Shalom's appeal to the High Court is a result of this decision.

Berigan told *Light* that he will first file a motion with the Seventh Circuit Court to stay their decision. This will permit Ben Shalom to remain in the military while the appeals process takes its course.

Berigan then will file a Writ of Certiorari with the Supreme Court. Such a writ is a request to the High Court to hear the case.

Most cases — approximately 90% according to Berigan — coming before the Supreme Court are discretionary.

In order for the Writ to be granted and the Court to hear the case, Berigan said, 4 out of the 9-justices must agree.

If the Writ is granted, the Court will set up a briefing schedule. Given that, the case will, according to Berigan, be heard most probably by arguing the case before the Justices in the Spring of 1990.

Berigan told *Light* that while, in his opinion, Ben Shalom's case meets the criteria necessary to be heard by the Supreme Court, "We can't expect anything."

So now begins the final battle including waiting to see what the Supreme Court will do.

Milwaukee ACT-UP To Protest "Save Our Family" AIDS Rally



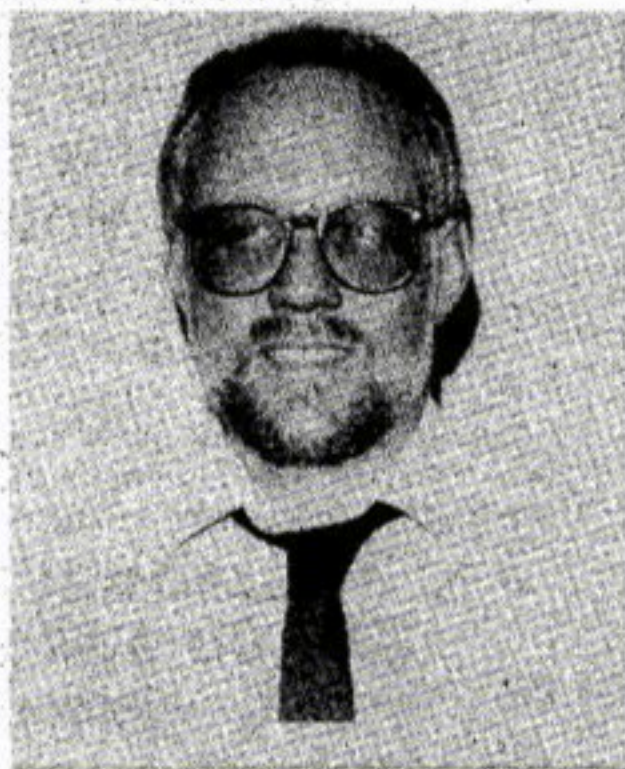
The Fest City Singers present "Faerie Tales" at the Milwaukee Theatre Districts Stackner Cabaret on Oct. 20-22. Pictured are: Vince Lombardi, Gene Guenther and Arlyn Kaurpen as the Good Faeries. Limited seating remains for Friday and Sunday, with Saturday sold-out.

Milwaukee School Board Asked To Adopt Curricula For Gay Teens

By Jamakaya

[Milwaukee]- Michael Lisowski, director of Gay Youth Milwaukee, testified before a committee of the Milwaukee School Board on October 11th about the problems of Gay and Lesbian teens. He urged that the Milwaukee Public Schools adopt new curricula and programs to meet the special needs of Gay and Lesbian students.

Addressing the Board's Instruction and Community Relations Committee, Lisowski questioned whether the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) are in compliance with Wisconsin statute 118.13 which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.



MICHAEL LISOWSKI

"Discrimination is not always an act of commission — what we do to someone — but so much more often an act of omission — what we neglect to do for someone. Quite simply, MPS has neglected its Gay, Lesbian and bisexual students."

The hostile school environment and lack of support by school officials have been a common refrain of many young people served by the Gay Youth organization over the years. Lisowski estimated that at least 3,700 students (or 10% of the total population) in Milwaukee's middle and high schools are Gay or bisexual.

"These students suffer severe emotional and physical abuse from their families, peers and teachers when they disclose their sexual identities... Sadly, most of them suffer in silence, since there is no one or nowhere to turn to either at school, their churches, their neighborhoods or their friends."

Lisowski cited two recent studies which make the need for the schools' intervention with gay students more urgent.

A federal report by the Department of Health and Human Services' Task Force of Youth Suicide found that "suicide is the leading cause of death among Lesbian, Gay and sexual minority youth." The study revealed that Gays and Lesbians constitute up to 30% of the suicide deaths of all young people in the United States. (The report is careful to state that this "homosexual" factor in suicides results more from anti-Gay hostility than from homosexuality itself.)

Equally disturbing, over the last two years, there has been a 40% increase in cases of AIDS among those 13 to 19 years-old.

To alleviate this crisis, Lisowski made numerous recommendations to the Committee. He asked that MPS develop curriculum "with accurate and positive information about homosexuality" for its middle and high school students.

He recommended that Gay recreation and support groups be established and

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MASN Urges HIV Antibody Tests

[Madison]- The Madison AIDS Support Network (MASN) encourages individuals who are at-risk for HIV infection to be tested for HIV antibodies. Further, MASN encourages those persons who test positive to seek routine medical assessment. These recommendations are made because of medical advances in the treatment of HIV infection and opportunistic diseases. These advances can slow the progression of HIV related disease and significantly increase the quality and length of life for those infected with HIV.

These recommendations are possible because of legislation protecting the rights of those infected with HIV.

MASN recognizes its obligation to assist all people who test positive, including healthy seropositive people. MASN will help by providing emotional assistance, providing assistance in understanding rights, help with immediate living and health concerns and help people with AIDS, ARC and who are HIV positive to plan their futures.

By Tony Frisch

[Milwaukee]- The Milwaukee chapter of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) will hold a demonstration on Sunday, October 22 at MECCA's Bruce Hall beginning at Noon with a Die-In.

The action is being held to protest the "Save Our Family" rally sponsored by the Family Concerns Coalition (WVCY-FM, WVCY-TV, WKSH-AM, WYLO-AM) that will take place at MECCA at 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Lorraine Day, San Francisco's controversial "space suit" surgeon, is set to headline the WVCY backed event.

Day, who was shown on television wearing an outfit resembling that of an astronaut, believes that health care workers are poorly protected against HIV infection. She has debated traditional transmission modes for the virus and has voiced her opinion that the Federal government is involved in a cover-up about how AIDS is contracted.

Her speech to the WVCY rally is titled, "AIDS: What You Don't Know Could Kill You."

In Day's line of work as an orthopedic surgeon, flying bits of bone and blood are common. However, according to Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP), "Dr. Day is completely out of step with her own protection against HIV transmission."

"With few exceptions," Nelson said, "Milwaukee hospitals, physicians and nurses do not accept Day's extremist and misleading viewpoints on health care workers' protections."

Nelson, who watched Day on TV, continued by saying, "The bottom line for Dr. Day is that she has chosen to discriminate against HIV patients which is unacceptable in Wisconsin."

According to Tim Grair, an ACT-UP Milwaukee member and spokesperson for the organization, ACT-UP is offended by Day's up-coming speech. "Knowing the sponsors (WVCY-FM and WVCY-TV), 'the facts will be in short supply,' he said. "But," he continued, "that's why ACT-UP will be there; to keep the VCY rally in check."

Details of ACT-UP's Sunday demonstration are not being released.

ACT-UP last held a Die-In at MAPfest in September. A Die-In is an event at which the names of those who have died of complications due to AIDS are read while people lie on the ground to have their outlines drawn with chalk. The chalk outlines symbolize the more than 60,000 people who have died in this country since the AIDS crisis began.

This is more than the 58,000 lives claimed in the Vietnamese War and the number is growing.

On-lookers at a Die-In become participants in this solemn ceremony by writing names, messages, farewells and notes of love to accompany the chalk outlines.

ACT-UP Milwaukee's last demonstration was held in front of Milwaukee's federal building on August 25, 1989 to protest the government's dilatory handling of the AIDS crisis.

ACT-UP is a diverse, non-partisan, political action group united in anger and committed to the end of the AIDS crisis.

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