



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

The Wisconsin Light



Jerry Johnson

Peter Neubert, Mark Shepard and Lee Scherz at a recent Oberson club night at Milwaukee's Shaft.

Leather Fraternity represents true brotherhood, camaraderie

As a group within the Gay/Lesbian community in Milwaukee, Madison, or anywhere else in the country, they are about as far removed from the experience of most as are the drag queens. To some, they are intimidating, to others, forbidding, while a few even see them as threatening even though they are hardly that. But however they are viewed, it is usually with some lack of understanding and a degree of failure to realize the subtleties of lifestyle that this group within a group enjoys.

"They," of course, are the Leather Fraternity for such is how they like to refer to themselves. They are the ones in the black leather jackets, heavy looking boots of one kind or another and sometimes wearing full leather (which can be frighteningly expensive if it's the real thing), who seem to carry, by their dress and manner, the concept of the macho male to its ultimate extreme, making that idea, as some have said, a parody on itself.

As part of the outfit, decorations or symbols of one kind or another are worn. These can include badges, pins, chains, studded arm and wrist bands, handcuffs and other paraphernalia all designed to enhance the image of the conspicuously assertive, virile male. This, in part anyway, is what the Leather mystique in the Gay world is all about; symbols, scenes, that underline a stereotypical maleness that throbs with sexuality.

Meet Steve. He's a young man, somewhere perhaps in his late twenties, and handsome in his own way with close-cut dark hair. He is dressed in a tanktop

showing muscular arms, a black leather vest, tight levis and calf length boots decorated with glistening chains.

"I'm not really into leather," he says a bit unconvincingly. "But it makes me feel good, more like a man, to wear this stuff. I like guys who look and act like men, you know? Somehow leather says that to me." He smiles engagingly and half-apologetically. "It's a turn-on, you know?"

Those into leather, to which is often added the word "Levi" to signify the cowboy, western image, tend to frequent bars and clubs where the decor supports the expression. Rough woods predominate along with bare floors, tables and chairs are rudely fashioned of barrels, boxes and western wagons while boots, whips and sensual advertisements for other leather bars around the world adorn the walls. The bars have distinctive names, nothing frilly or in any way suggestive of "femininity"; names like The Eagle, Ramrod, Badlands, Trucking Company or here in Milwaukee, the Wreckroom, Bootcamp or Shaft. All of them unmistakably and assertively masculine, rugged and sensually sinister.

Meet Ron. He is an architect, he says, from a city in Iowa, who visits Milwaukee regularly. His leather jacket is covered with a collection of badges from various motorcycle clubs. He wears a heavy looking set of keys and a set of bright metal handcuffs hanging from the thick belt on his right hip.

"There's no pretense in the leather community," Ron says. "No games."

TURN TO LEATHER, PAGE 17

RAWHIDE AMENDMENT DIES IN MADISON

Reports appearing in some Wisconsin Gay/Lesbian publications indicating that our community "lost on Rawhide" are somewhat exaggerated. This, according to State Representative David E. Clarenbach, Speaker pro tem of the Wisconsin Assembly.

In a letter sent by Clarenbach to Wisconsin Light, he stated that "The 'Rawhide Bill' has been permanently set aside by the Wisconsin legislature in favor of a 'creative alternative' that protects the integrity of the state's civil rights law."

"Rawhide's proposals (Senate Bill 301 and Assembly Bill 527) would have created exceptions to Wisconsin's Fair Employment Act by allowing discrimination against three protected classes: sexual orientation, marital status and religion.

"Instead, the legislature approved a clarification of existing law which allows legitimate religious associations to grant preferential hiring treatment to members of their own creed.

"The change allows the hiring preference where bona fide occupational qualification exists and if the job description demonstrates that the position is clearly related to the religious teachings of the association.

"Assembly Bill 916 was drafted with advice from leaders in the Lesbian and Gay community and is based on provisions outlined in a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision."

The Supreme Court decision Clarenbach

Hate crime bill passes assembly

Wisconsin's State Assembly has approved increased penalties for Gay bashing and other crimes motivated by bigotry. The vote was 97-0, and that margin surprised even the sponsors of the bill.

State Representative David Clarenbach (D-Madison), who introduced Assembly Bill 599 with over twenty legislative co-authors, declared during debate on February 24th, "This sends the message that, in Wisconsin, we consider 'hate crimes' to be especially offensive."

"The state has an interest and a duty to protect minorities from harassment," Clarenbach said.

"Despite the gains in civil rights during the past few decades, violence still rears its ugly head in the form of race hatred, religious intolerance and Gay bashing," said Clarenbach.

AB 599 establishes penalty enhancements for violence that is motivated against any group or individual due to their minority group status. Fines would be increased by up to \$10,000 and prison sentences may increase by five years.

The bill still requires approval by the State Senate prior to adjournment on March 24th. Senator Lynn Adelman, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, opposes AB 599 and can kill the bill by refusing to allow a vote in his committee.

referred to is titled "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints et. al. v. Christine J. Amos and was handed down on June 24, 1987. The case arose when a building engineer employed at a non-profit gymnasium operated by the Mormon Church was fired because he was not a member of the church in good standing.

In its decision the High Court found for the church. Writing the majority opinion, Associate Justice Byron White stated that "This court has long recognized that government may (and sometimes must) accommodate religious practices."

In a concurring opinion Associate Justice William Brennan stated that "a religious organization is able to condition employment in certain activities on subscription to particular religious tenets." Justice Brennan further stated that "a religious organization should be able to require that only members of its community perform those activities." But he also noted that "religious discrimination be permitted only with respect to employment in religious activities."



Rep. David Clarenbach

Clarenbach speaking over the phone told Light that in the case of AB 916, that there were only three options. 1. Let the Rawhide Amendment pass. 2. Modify existing law or 3. to stand pat. Clarenbach dismissed the third option as no option at all. He argued that the supporters of the Rawhide Amendment had the votes to pass it thus, it was either the compromise which was eventually passed, or the Rawhide Amendment itself.

"This is the real world of politics," Clarenbach said. He told Light that he had consulted with Lesbian and Gay leaders, with the American Civil Liberties Union, with representatives of religious organizations and that all had agreed that the

TURN TO RAWHIDE, PAGE 4

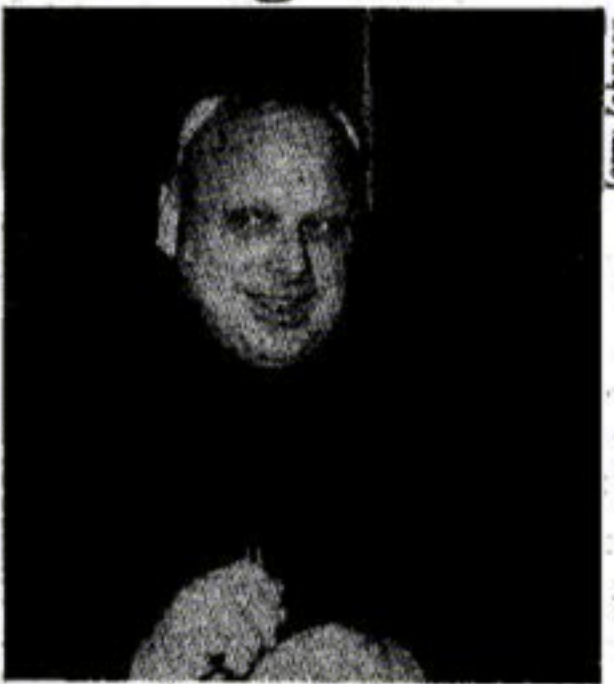
Gov. opens AIDS Awareness Month

Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson's news conference opening AIDS Awareness Month in Wisconsin was held March 1, 1988, at Milwaukee's War Memorial. Between 70 and 80 high school journalists attended along with representatives of the major media. If the impression to be gained was that young people were the main targets in the state's campaign against the dread disease, that impression was entirely correct. Thompson told the young people that their's was the group at risk when it came to AIDS.

Dr. Constantine Panagis, Milwaukee County Commissioner of Health, introducing the governor, told the group that by the end of 1988 7500 to 12,000 persons are

TURN TO AIDS, PAGE 16

Divine Dies in Los Angeles



Jerry Johnson

As we go to press, word has been received that Divine, a.k.a. Harris Glenn Milstead, died Monday, March 7, in his sleep in a Los Angeles hotel room at the age of 42. The cause of death is currently under investigation. The character actor who has been described as "a cult-film idol", became a star portraying outrageous women in 11 films and in clubs world-wide. His last movie was "Hairspray" which is playing in Milwaukee and 79 other theatres across the country.

One of Divine's last appearances was in Milwaukee's Club II-XIX on February 18. In the afternoon prior to that, he granted an interview to Wisconsin Light which appears on page 7 of this issue.

One of Divine's great ambitions was to achieve respect in the entertainment industry as an actor and openly Gay man. "It was happening," said his manager, Bernard Jay. Now it's over.

Inside:

Editorial Page.....	Page 3
Karen Lamb.....	Page 4
Books.....	Page 5
Politically Speaking.....	Page 6
A Boy of Summer.....	Page 8
Medically Speaking.....	Page 9
Our History.....	Page 11
Jamakaya.....	Page 13
Religious Outreach.....	Page 15
Trivia Quiz.....	Page 18
Sports.....	Page 20