



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

# The Wisconsin Light

## Amnesty Int'l. Adopts Gays As 'Prisoners of Conscience'

[Washington, DC]- In a historic decision for Gay men and Lesbians worldwide, the human rights group Amnesty International (AI), at its biennial conference in Yokohama, Japan on September 7, voted to adopt people imprisoned for their homosexuality as "prisoners of conscience."

International Gay and Lesbian groups were ecstatic that the 12 year campaign to gain support for homosexuals from the prestigious human rights group had finally reached a successful conclusion.

The Gay and Lesbian Task Force to Change Amnesty International, a worldwide coalition formed this year to pressure the organization, issued the following statement:

"We, as representatives of thousands of Gay men and Lesbians around the world, would like to thank Amnesty International for taking this long-needed step. We offer our deepest thanks to Amnesty sections [chapters] that worked so hard to achieve this victory, especially the USA, Canada, Ireland and Norway. The Task Force has faith that Amnesty will implement this important decision immediately."

Until now, AI has assisted some imprisoned Gay activists but not those arrested for simply being themselves or those arrested on the basis of sexual conduct. The Yokohama decision represents a radical change in AI policy.

The Yokohama resolution states, in part, that AI "decides to consider for adoption as prisoners of conscience persons who are imprisoned solely because of their homosexuality, including the practice of homosexual acts in private between consenting adults;...instructs the International Executive Committee, in consultation with sections, to draft guidelines regarding AI action on behalf of imprisoned homosexuals, taking into consideration the cultural background of various areas where we have sections and

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## Compelling Tales of Police Abuse Dominate Commission Hearing

By Jamakaya

[Milwaukee]- "If a society's police do not adhere to the rules, we can easily and quickly move from a free society, a democratic society, to a police state. And I submit to you that today, right here in Milwaukee, for some people in certain parts of the city, a police state exists."

That was the stark conclusion of Kitty Barber, of the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee, as she gave testimony before Mayor John Norquist's Blue Ribbon Commission on police-community relations at the United Community Center September 17.

The Commission was established in the wake of allegations of police negligence in the Jeffrey Dahmer serial murder case.

### Litany of Abuse

Speaker after speaker presented compelling testimony about police harassment and abuse of Gays and Lesbians and of arbitrary and inconsistent enforcement of the law by the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD). Some of these charges came from police officers themselves.

Mary Thoreson was pulled over by Milwaukee police officers on Locust Street in 1978.

"I was yanked out of my car and slammed up against the side of it. I was thoroughly searched by two male officers. They both roughly handled my breasts and one grabbed my crotch and told me, while laughing, that I wasn't a boy but a 'fucking dyke.'"

The police, who were looking for a boy in a stolen vehicle, let her go.

In January of this year, Thoreson was the victim of a Gay bashing. Though she reported it to police, she never heard

## Pride March, NAMES Quilt In Madison, October 4-6



Jerry Johnson

"Tommy Thompson, you can't hide/We charge you with homicide!" shouted activists at ACT UP's September 9 prison issues protest in Madison.

## Eleven ACT UP Members Arrested Protesting Treatment of Inmates

By Jamakaya

[Madison]- Eleven members of ACT UP chapters from Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis and Minnesota were arrested at the State Department of Corrections on September 9 while protesting the mistreatment of inmates with AIDS and HIV infection in Wisconsin's prisons.

The rally, march and sit-in were called by ACT UP to demand a new investigation into the death of Donald Woods, an HIV-positive inmate who died of asphyxiation while being restrained and gagged with a towel by prison guards at the Waupun Correctional facility one year ago.

anything afterward.

Said Thoreson: "The police are paid to protect and serve all of us no matter who or what we are. As a resident of Milwaukee, I demand equal protection and service now."

Scott Gunkel reported that after leaving Club 219 on S. Second Street one night in 1989, he and his friends heard officers in a squad car, using their vehicle microphone, yell out: "Hickory-dickory dock, some young blond is sucking my cock" and "You're all sick fucking faggots!" The slurs were made while the police held their high-powered spotlight on the victims.

Gunkel filed a formal complaint and was given the run-around for 13 months. When he inquired about the status of the complaint at the Second District, he says police there tried to "intimidate him," making him repeat the epithets out loud. Ultimately, the officer involved received a reprimand.

Evidence by many who testified suggests that shining police spotlights is a common tactic of harassment. One woman reported that while leaving a Gay bar one night, she was greeted by a "blinding light" as she emerged from the door. Ironically, she had been attending a seminar on crime prevention led by a Milwaukee police sergeant who remained in the bar. She wondered what his reaction might have been had he emerged to find himself in the spotlight.

Dennis Bunch was arrested in 1989 and, shortly after being placed in a holding cell, was asked by the inmate across the hall whether he had AIDS. Bunch asked why, and the other man told him an officer had placed a card on his cell

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"AIDS did not kill Donald Woods," declared Dan Savage of ACT UP/Madison. "The State of Wisconsin killed Donald Woods."

After rallying on the Capitol steps, almost 200 angry activists, shouting "Tommy Thompson, you can't hide/We charge you with homicide!" converged on Republican Governor Tommy Thompson's office. Dozens of towels were thrown at the locked and guarded doors in symbolic protest while some activists, as they have on a daily basis since April, delivered peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to the governor's door.

Wisconsin inmates with HIV/AIDS, like Roger Hillman at Waupun, who are supposed to receive high caloric diets and frequent meals, are currently given just one extra peanut butter and jelly sandwich per day by prison authorities.

After occupying the Capitol rotunda and conducting a die-in, protesters re-enacted the death of Woods and marched to the Department of Corrections building where a phalanx of Madison police officers guarded the entrance.

A brief shoving match occurred and, ultimately, eleven activists were arrested on disorderly conduct charges for sitting in front of the doors. Two were charged with resisting arrest.

In January, Royce A Finne, a Special Prosecutor appointed to investigate the death of Donald Woods, exonerated the guards involved, claiming their gagging of Woods "was not an unreasonable precaution against biting or spitting, which the staff reasonably feared would risk their exposure to the HIV virus."

Outraged by the finding, ACT UP has joined the State Public Defender's Office and the American Civil Liberties Union in demanding a new investigation into Woods' death.

Mary E. Waitrovich, First Assistant State Public Defender and former counsel to Woods, demanded a John Doe probe. She called the state's investigation a "whitewash," citing the Special Prosecutor's failure to interview the prison guards who had restrained Woods.

In a strongly worded rebuttal to Finne's report, Waitrovich noted that the guards involved donned full riot gear while subduing Woods - face masks, rubber gloves, heavy boots. They also carried a 6 x 4 foot plastic shield.

Contrary to Finne's findings, Waitrovich concluded: "I believe that the officers placed a towel around Mr. Woods' mouth and thereby caused his death because of an unreasonable, irrational and unwarranted fear of AIDS exposure."

[Madison]- Up to ten thousand people are expected to converge on Madison, Wisconsin, Saturday, October 5 for the city's second major March for Lesbian and Gay Rights and Pride. The March will be the centerpiece of an extended weekend of concerts, workshops and events, most notably, the largest Midwest display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. (See the many related stories in this issue.)

Madison's Pride Rally begins at 1 p.m. Saturday at the State Street corner of the State Capitol.

Madison City Alderperson Ricardo Gonzales will welcome participants to Madison and introduce two distinguished keynote speakers: Urvashi Vaid, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and Joe Eider, a University of Wisconsin Professor active in Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and in efforts to end discrimination against Lesbians and Gay men in the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

The March will step off at 1:30 p.m., proceed down State Street to Lake Street, then up Langdon to James Madison Park. Participants are encouraged to bring signs, banners and boom boxes tuned to WORT, 89.9FM. Madison's listener-sponsored community radio will be playing march music.

Following the March, there will be a Celebration in James Madison Park from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Celebration will include food, booths, information tables, speakers and entertainment. Featured performers are: On the Verge, the popular Madison women's folk/rock band; and Jan Wheaton, jazz vocalist with the Harris Lemberg Trio. MC for the afternoon Celebration will be popular Madison comic Linda Finn. It is also expected that some "surprise guests" (including a certain Gay male quintet and a nationally-known comedienne) might just show up for cameo appearances.

Jan Wheaton is one of Madison's long-time favorite song stylists, although she performs infrequently since her job as Associate Athletic Director of Academic and Student Support at the UW-Madison keeps her busy. She has sung at jazz clubs in Kansas City and New York, as well as in most of Madison's clubs over the past 25 years. (She will be performing at the Lake Monona Pub on September 27 with the Stan Godfriaux Trio.) Jan has a recent album *Small World. Isn't It.*

Candidates for elective office, David Clarenbach and Tammy Baldwin, will speak at the Celebration. Rep. Clarenbach, who is celebrating his 20th year in politics, is a long-time sponsor of legislation protecting the rights of Lesbians and Gays. Clarenbach is preparing a campaign for the U.S. Congress. Tammy Baldwin is an openly-Lesbian County Supervisor who is planning a run for the State Assembly. If elected, she would be the highest openly-Lesbian/Gay elected official in Wisconsin.

The Rally and Celebration will be interpreted for the deaf.

In addition to justice in the Woods case, protesters called for the compassionate release of prisoners with AIDS and full implementation of recommendations by the National AIDS Commission and Gov. Thompson's Advisory Committee on the treatment of HIV/AIDS in the prison system.

In May, 1990, Thompson's Committee issued 34 recommendations for the treatment of inmates with HIV/AIDS. They include: distribution of condoms, bleach and clean needles; ongoing education programs for both inmates and staff; strict confidentiality of HIV status; medical personnel trained in HIV caregiving; and an end to segregation and work restrictions for inmates with HIV/AIDS.

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