



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

The Wisconsin Light

Victory Fund To Support Tammy Baldwin's Election Bid

[Washington, D.C.]—Wisconsin's own Tammy Baldwin is one of six openly Gay and Lesbian candidates selected by the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund to receive contributions from its nationwide network of member donors, according to William Waybourn, Executive Director of the Victory Fund.

Baldwin, a Lesbian attorney who is currently a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors, is seeking a seat in the Wisconsin Assembly vacated by Rep. David Clarenbach, who is running for the U.S. Congress. She has an excellent chance to become the first openly Lesbian or Gay person in the Wisconsin Assembly. Redistricting is still unresolved, but the 78th Assembly District has a large Gay and Lesbian population with liberal voting patterns.

Baldwin was first elected to the Dane County Board of Supervisors in 1986, where she has led the battle for AIDS funding in the county. As an attorney, she represented many Gays and Lesbians in anti-discrimination cases and lobbied for the creation of a county AIDS task force, serving as its first chair.

Local Benefit for Baldwin

A local fundraiser for Baldwin will be held on Thursday, March 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Cafe Europa, 102 King Street, just off the Capitol Square in Madison.

Suggested donation for the event is \$30, but any contribution is appreciated. For more information about Baldwin's campaign, call (608) 258-9298.

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund which is supporting Baldwin is a nationwide organization of members who



Dane County Sup. Tammy Baldwin

join with a \$100 contribution. Members agree to support at least two candidates with contributions of \$100 or more over a two year cycle. The Victory Fund enables qualified Gay-supportive candidates to gain access to early money, which is critical in establishing credibility.

The Victory Fund has also become the nation's first organization to utilize new 900-number technology to raise funds for openly Gay and Lesbian political candidates. The Victory Fund's national donor network is the first to become operational after recent approval by the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) of 900 numbers by political action committees and candidates.

Donor Network Operational

The number [1-900-678-3863 or 1-900-67V-FUND] allows anyone from anywhere in the U.S. to call and contribute \$19.92 directly to five recommended candidates or to the Victory Fund itself. Callers hear a personal message from the candidate, plus updates on their respective campaigns.

The 900 number is being announced in a national ad campaign, beginning with *The Wisconsin Light*, *The Advocate*, *The Washington Blade*, *The Dallas Voice*, *The Weekly News* (Miami), *Chicago Outlines* and other Lesbian/Gay publications

TURN TO VICTORY FUND, PAGE 11

Fate Of Hate Crimes Law Up To Gov. Thompson And The Courts



Jerry Johnson

EASY PICK-UP—Tarzan had no problem finding a date at the Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball held at Milwaukee's Mitchell Park Horticultural Domes on March 1. The Ball attracted a diverse crowd and raised several thousand dollars for Milwaukee's Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee, whose annual parade and festival is set for June 14.

MASN Receives \$1.2 Million Grant To Build The Rodney Scheel House

By Terry Boughner

[Madison]—Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) announced on February 28, 1992 that the Madison AIDS Support Network (MASN) will be awarded a \$1.2 million grant by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to build the Rodney Scheel House for persons living with AIDS.

HUD officials telephoned Kohl's Madison office on Thursday, February 27 to notify him of the award, the only project of its type to receive funding in Wisconsin in 1992. Formal written notification of this major grant will be sent by HUD to MASN shortly.

"Last Summer I heard about the fundraising efforts of the many friends of Rodney Scheel who were working so hard to fulfill his life-long dream of providing housing for persons with AIDS," said Kohl. "I am delighted that we were able to identify a new program at HUD as a source of funds for this project and work throughout this highly competitive application process."

Scheel, the owner of Rod's bar in Madison and a long-time activist in the Lesbian/Gay community, died of AIDS on July 12, 1990. He had been a tireless worker in the fight against the disease which took his life.

Madison Couple Loses Court Appeal But Won't Give Up The Fight

By John Quinlan

[Madison]—In the latest round of a five year legal fight, the 4th District Court of Appeals in February upheld a lower court's decision denying family health insurance coverage to the Lesbian partner of a state employee.

However, in an interview with *Wisconsin Light*, it was clear that defeat was the last thing on the minds of the women who filed the suit, Jerri Linn Phillips and her partner, Lorri Tommerup, of Madison. Both women—who will celebrate their tenth anniversary together next year—see their case as just one part of a larger struggle to gain recognition for Lesbian and Gay families.

"We weren't just in this for the victory. As a matter of fact, in the current legal morass around what constitutes a family, we weren't really expecting a victory," said Phillips. "I look at what we've accomplished as a necessary part of the process—the definition of the issues."

"Rodney's dream was that persons with AIDS could live their lives in a comfortable, warm family environment," said Pam Geisler, a member of the Board of Directors of the Rodney Scheel House Foundation.

For this reason, following his death, friends worked to raise money for the Rodney Scheel House. Geisler said that in one year, \$60,000 had been raised to build and furnish the house. Now organizers will get the HUD grant.

In speaking to *Wisconsin Light*, Geisler was obviously excited and thrilled. "We went crazy!" she said when the news reached Madison. "We are so happy, so grateful, so proud."

Geisler spoke too of the apprehensions that she had as the grant was being written. There were rumors that HUD never funded first-time projects; that HUD wasn't interested in projects like the Scheel House and so on. All these things and more, she said, were going through her mind as they pushed the grant proposal to completion. But, as they sometimes do, the fears proved groundless.

"Madison Should Be Proud"

Geisler spoke glowingly of the people of

TURN TO HOUSE, PAGE 11

"Health insurance is just one of those issues, particularly for Lesbian and Gay families with children," she added, citing child custody laws, adoption procedures, and property rights as just a few areas where the law doesn't offer equal protection to Lesbians and Gays in Wisconsin. "Our families need and deserve equal protection under the law."

Doing Their Part

"We have had so many people come out to us to tell us they're in similar circumstances," Tommerup said. "Lesbians and Gay men all over the place are doing various things as families to identify the problems they face. This is our part in that."

"The issue of committed partnerships is new for people," she observed. "They don't understand that we can form committed relationships because the stereotype is that we don't. People need to hear our stories if they're going to be able to identify with us."

TURN TO FAMILIES, PAGE 9

By John Quinlan and Jamakaya

[Madison]—A flurry of judicial and legislative activity late last month placed the fate of Wisconsin's hate crimes law in the hands of Gov. Tommy Thompson and the State Supreme Court. The United States Supreme Court is also expected to rule soon on the constitutionality of a St. Paul, Minnesota hate crimes ordinance.

On February 25, the State Supreme Court heard arguments in a case challenging the constitutionality of Wisconsin's hate crimes law. A decision in the case is expected in June of this year.

On that same day, just hours before the justices heard the case, a revised version of the hate crimes law, which strengthens and clarifies its language, passed the State Senate by a 26-7 vote. The bill, which the Assembly passed earlier, is now awaiting Gov. Thompson's signature.

The hate crimes law enhances penalties for crimes against people and property which are motivated by bigotry based on race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry. Attorneys for a Kenosha man have challenged the law on the grounds that it violates his First Amendment right of freedom of expression.

Hate Crimes Appeal Case

In October of 1989, a group of black youths beat up a white teenager in Kenosha. It was determined during the trial that the youths had just returned from the movie *Mississippi Burning*, which featured a scene in which a black child was brutally beaten by a Klansman. Todd Mitchell, 23, was charged in the case.

As 14 year old Gregory Reddick passed the area where the youths were gathered, Mitchell reportedly said: "Do you all feel hyped up to move on some white people? There goes a white boy, go get him." The subsequent beating landed Reddick in a coma for four days.

The effect of Mitchell's conviction under the hate crimes law was a doubling of his original two year sentence for battery to four years. His attorney, Bernard Goldstein, acknowledged the fact that the racial motivation of the crime had an added impact on its victim. "That, however, does not address the question of whether we should now be punishing motive, free speech and other factors in the case," he said.

Assistant Attorney General Paul Lundsten said that it was clear that Reddick had been singled out because of his race. "What we really have is a legislative judgment that when you combine intentional selection with the underlying crime you have something that's more serious than the underlying crime itself," he told the court.

Chief Justice Nathan Heffernan replied: "All I can say is, I'm not convinced."

Justice William Bablitch expressed concern about the "vagueness" of the law, saying he was unclear whether bigotry had to be the sole motivation or just part of the motivation for the crime for the statute to be applied.

Law enforcement officials have occasionally found themselves in the same quandary, encountering several obstacles to enforcing the law. In some cases, criminals have escaped the hate crimes penalties because they were wrong about the victims' minority status; in others, they have been cleared because bigotry was only part of the motivation for their crime.

Revised Hate Crimes Bill

Assembly Bill 507, now on Gov. Thompson's desk, makes two changes to address that problem. First, it allows a jury to find that a hate crime has been committed if the criminal acted "in whole or in part" because of the victims'

TURN TO HATE CRIMES, PAGE 11