



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

The Wisconsin Light

LAMM Proposes Lesbian Community Center

[Milwaukee]- At a recent meeting of the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee (LAMM), four women presented plans for a proposed Lesbian social facility.

Bonnie Austin, Rosemary Caravella, Mimi Memmel and Jill Sanfilippo advised the group of representatives from various Lesbian organizations that they have formed a core committee to initiate the action necessary toward the purchase or rental of a building to serve as a gathering place for Lesbians.

The proposed building will be called "The Women's Cultural Community Center" and will operate as a non-profit facility, the purpose of which will be to provide a chemical free and smoke free social and event space for Lesbians in the greater Milwaukee area.

Stating that they had recognized the need for and are willing to take the initiative to create such a place, Memmel told the group that the core committee had originated at a West Side Dykes Association meeting in response to a strong interest and support for a centralized space for socializing, such as experienced at Apple Island in Madison.

A Unifying Force

Caravella elaborated on the purpose of the committee by stating that it was their intention to provide and maintain a facility to be used as a social and information center for Lesbians in the Greater Milwaukee area; to centralize the availability of services for Lesbians; to provide a supportive and safe environment for women's gatherings; to function as a unifying force among organizations and individuals serving Lesbians; and to reinforce and maintain the ideals and principals of feminism.

Among the committee's goals, Sanfilippo listed: The acquisition of a women's building and the centralization of information and activities occurring in the Milwaukee Lesbian community.

Austin presented a chart that showed that the development and operation of the proposed center would be handled by a Board of Directors. Various committees would be formed. Among these are: activity, information, cultural diversity, event production, facilities management, finance, fundraising, membership, newsletter/publicity and volunteer coordination.

The core committee said that they were in the process of incorporation. The members urged their listeners to demonstrate their support by completing one of the volunteer questionnaires that they had distributed.

Those interested in giving their time and energy to this project should write to: WC, c/o P.O. Box 71230, Milwaukee, WI 53211.

NOW Endorses John Benson For State Superintendent of Schools

[Madison]- At a press conference in the Senate Parlor in the Capitol in Madison, the Wisconsin National Organization for Women (NOW) on March 23, 1993, endorse John Benson in the election for State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

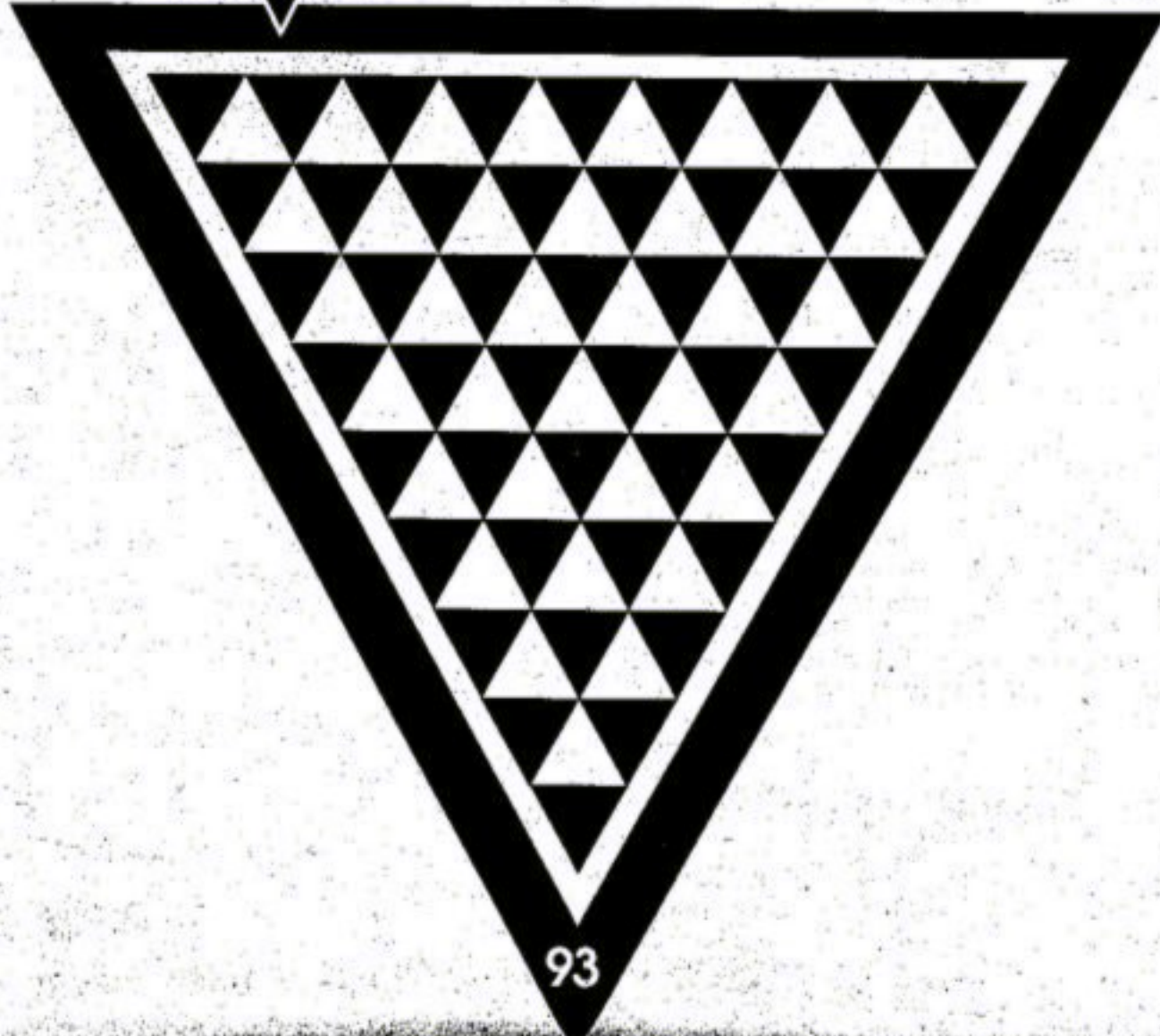
According to Wisconsin NOW President Margaret McMurray, Benson is the best candidate to ensure that thousands of Wisconsin school children are protected against discrimination. McMurray said that Benson has "promised to name women to half of the appointive positions in the department and will work hard to ensure more employees of color are recruited for the agency.

By contrast, McMurray noted how Linda Cross, Benson's opponent in the race, is unfamiliar with basic laws supporting the prohibition of discrimination in public schools, despite her years in the classroom.

Cross supports abstinence-only sex education programs that have met rejection from experts around the state

Angry Neighbors Threaten Madison's Scheel AIDS House

F O R W A R D
I N P R I D E



The Milwaukee Lesbian Gay Pride Committee has announced that this above art work will be this year's logo for the June 12-13 Parade and Festival.

Students Asking Marquette To Help Stop Campus Homophobia

[Milwaukee]- In mid-October, 1991, when Katherine Leinart, then a Junior at Milwaukee's Marquette University, walked into her Physiology class, she got quite a shock. On the side of the blackboard where announcements are written, she read, "Gay Beating Contest, Saturday, 1:00 p.m., Schroeder Beach."

In the nearly year and a half since then, over 20 incidents of Gay-bashing have been documented on the Jesuit campus. The incidents range from name-calling to anonymous signs to physical violence, over half of them directed at women.

Incidents like these happen all the time according to Steve Wilger, a member of REASON, an acronym for Rights and Equality for All Sexual Orientations. Wilger said that REASON had been in existence for under a month.

In October, 1991, the Marquette

University Student Government asked that sexual orientation be included in the university's non-discrimination policy. The resolution was sent to Father Albert DiUlio, Marquette's President, but, Wilger said, there was no response. REASON was formed to force a response.

Cross: A Christian Stealth Candidate

"Linda Cross is a stealth candidate of the Far Right who hopes to fly under radar to avoid detection of her extreme positions," McMurray said.

In the Sunday, March 28 edition of the Milwaukee Journal, it was reported that a marina that Cross operates with others has a history of repeated late payment of state taxes. Cross has maintained that she wants to run schools like a business and has listed her co-ownership of the Waupaca County marina as one of her qualifications to run the Department of Education. Cross blames the marina's difficulties on the recession.

McMurray said that NOW seeks a proven "administrator who has shown a commitment to educational equity — that person is John Benson."

REASON does not consider itself either a protest or activist group, but only a group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and heterosexual (more than half) students who are frustrated at what they consider to be the University's lack of response to the violations of rights on campus.

Wilger was asked what it was like to be Gay on Marquette's campus. He answered, "It's pretty bad. It's just a very oppressive atmosphere. It's not one at all in which anyone would feel comfortable in coming out." Wilger said that of Marquette's some 10,000 students, only approximately 50 are out. "That's insane," he said.

Marquette has other problems, besides homophobia. Wilger painted a picture of the University that is, as he said, an "institution that is predominately white, predominately upper-class." There is racism directed at African Americans, Hispanics and Asians along with sexism directed against women.

Asked about faculty attitudes, Wilger said that "there are extremes." For example, he said, the Psychology Department has included sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policy as has the English Department, the Theatre Department and the Social Work Department.

Wilger was asked what REASON wanted from Marquette. He replied that they wanted the university to acknowledge that "we exist." We want some "basic human dignity," he said. "We want a statement from the administration that this kind of behavior (anti-Gay violence) will not be accepted.

A Demonstration for Rights

On Tuesday, March 16, 18 students and one alumnus poured into O'Hara Hall to deliver a letter to DiUlio. The letter asked two things. 1. An official, written

By John Quinlan

[Madison]- A number of residents of an east side neighborhood responded with homophobic invective and threats of arson when given the news that a special facility for people with AIDS would be built nearby.

About two dozen highly inflammatory calls were received at the Madison AIDS Support Network and the homes of members of an MASN housing committee in the days following the sending of a letter to neighborhood residents describing the new facility. Persons who heard a tape recording of some of the telephoned threats were deeply shaken by the intensity of the anger — and the ignorance — of the callers. Several callers explicitly made threats to burn the facility down. The Madison police are investigating.

The developments come at a time when years of hard work are beginning to pay off. The Rodney Scheel House, named after the late community leader and Gay bar owner, is envisioned to be a 23 unit building for people with AIDS who can't live on their own. Over \$60,000 has been raised privately, which will be combined with a \$1.2 million grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HUD will provide rental subsidies under a 20 year contract that will keep the units affordable. While MASN and other community agencies will provide basic support services, the house is not planned as a medical treatment facility.

Callers who identified themselves as potential neighbors of the project betrayed an ignorance of the means of transmission of the AIDS virus. Several remarked that a nearby park would no longer be safe for themselves or their children. In a front page article in the Capital Times, an elderly resident said that she could live with a house for the elderly or the poor, but that she was afraid that the presence of the house would put her at risk for AIDS.

Inquiries with AIDS support organizations elsewhere in the country reveal that making the location of such a facility well known is very much the exception rather than the rule. One agency official compared such a facility to a battered women's shelter in that the administrators of both types of facilities generally try to keep the location of the facility a secret in order to protect the occupants from people who would do them harm.

MASN Scheel House Committee Chair R. Richard Wagner explained that, in this case, construction of the house required a conditional use permit that necessitated a public hearing. "We wanted to get out the word in advance of that hearing — to introduce ourselves to the neighborhood," he told the Light. "Besides, this is a town that requires that there be a public process."

Wagner emphasized that "there are many in the neighborhood who are supportive. To those great and kind individuals we offer our thanks." Both Mayor Paul Soglin and Ald. Henry Lufser have also been highly supportive of the project.

The Hauk Avenue site is in the neighborhood several blocks north and west of the East Washington Avenue Ella's Deli. It has many multi-unit buildings similar in size to the proposed facility and it is believed the new facility will blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. The site was also chosen because of its closeness to buslines and other vital services in the context of a quiet neighborhood.

Wagner praised the efforts of those who have worked for many years to make the house a reality. He expressed great satisfaction with the design arrived at by the development team.

Wagner said that he wasn't so much

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