



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

The Wisconsin Light

HIV Prevention Coordinator Named for Gay Community

(Milwaukee)— Responding to the Gay community's concerns about the state of prevention programming in southeast Wisconsin, the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) has created a new position that specifically addresses HIV prevention in the Gay community. Rod Johnson was hired in March to fill this position.

Light recently had a chance to talk with Rod in his office at MAP. It was a sunny day. There were boxes stacked everywhere, but Rod paused in his unpacking to sit over coffee and chat.

Rod said that his official title was "Prevention Specialist for the Gay Community." That means, he said, that he would be designing prevention programs for the Lesbian and Gay community and implementing strategies. In doing this, he will be starting from scratch inasmuch as none of this has existed before specifically for the Gay community at MAP.

Rod said that he will be going to the organizations and the bars, designing some programs, as he said, in conjunction with the organizations and the bars.

The programs he envisions will be "multifaceted." Included will be the handing out of condoms and pamphlets, but "We will also expand into developing support programming in terms of doing workshops dealing with issues that range from grieving to self-esteem to building relationships.

Some of the programs will be prevention-type programs to support safer sex activities within different communities. Among those he mentioned were the Leather and Transgender communities.

Rod emphasized strongly that this is a community project. "The reason why this position was created in the first place was because the community stood up and spoke out."

He pointed out that he couldn't develop the program alone. The community had "to come in and be a part of this whole process," he said. "It is going to be the community's project."

To cultivate community support, Rod will be developing a "coalition or council" that will cooperate with him in putting the program together.

He strongly urged that anyone "who has a concern" to contact him; to get involved. Even as we spoke, he was getting ready to send out a letter to the bars and organizations asking people for their support.

He will be hosting meetings, both with groups and with individuals, to seek their help in finding out what issues need to be addressed.

It was mentioned that in recent times, there was a perception among some that a gap had developed between MAP and the Gay community. "You're directed right to the Gay/Lesbian community?" he was asked.

"Exactly," he responded. "I think a lot of things have happened since MAP has grown, a great amount over the last several years. Part of that has been pulling away from the Gay/Lesbian community," he said.

He added, "We really need to start looking at how we can start putting things in place that we know will be there, that we know will serve our

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Miller Brewing Co. to Receive Cable Car Award for Community Service

(Milwaukee)— Miller Brewing Company and Golden Brands Bottling, its distributor in San Francisco, have been selected to receive a Cable Car Award for their service to the Gay and Lesbian community in that area.

This is the 20th anniversary of the Cable Car Awards, which are presented each year to corporations and individuals who have demonstrated support for Gay and Lesbian concerns.

The award going to the brewer and its distributor is in recognition of their fundraising efforts for the AIDS Emergency Fund through a program called *Rainbows for Relief*. This program, initiated by Miller and strongly supported in San Francisco by Golden Brands Bottling, allows beer drinkers of legal drinking age to purchase paper rainbows for \$1. These are displayed in bars, convenience and liquor stores and restaurants as a visible sign of support. Proceeds from the purchases are given to the fund.

Miller Brewing Company has printed thousands

Medical College Designated National Center for AIDS Prevention Research



IT'S BOOGIE TIME!— British pop star Elton John, left, and U.S. transvestite comedian RuPaul perform Elton John's popular "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" during the Sanremo Song Festival in the Rivera resort recently. Both were guests at this famous Italian song marathon.

Milwaukee's Byers Elected Secretary of National Law Board

By Carmen Alicia Murguía

(Milwaukee)— Attorney Stephen M. Byers was elected Secretary of the Board of Directors of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA) at the Association's Winter Board of Directors meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Byers, a native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, is a veteran of over 10 years of legal service to the Lesbian and Gay community and to individuals

who are affected by HIV and AIDS.

Byers was first drawn to NLGLA in 1992 when he attended the National Lesbian and Gay Lavender Law Conference. "On the day before the Conference," he said, "they have what is known as the AIDS Law Conference, which is what I was doing exclusively. I was so impressed by the caliber of NLGLA's Lavender Law Conference that I signed up then."

Shortly thereafter, Byers was elected Regional Representative of the five state area that included Wisconsin.

Byers, an openly Gay man and a graduate of Marquette University Law School, began working as an attorney on the Board of Brady East STD Clinic in Milwaukee in 1982.

"I represented the very first one or two people who came in with HIV infections in 1984," Byers said. "Initially, when AIDS was primarily rooted in the Gay community, it was also my friends and acquaintances: It was people in my community who had died. There didn't seem to be any appropriate response coming from the federal government, nor was there anybody else out there saying 'No, you can't just walk all over folks with HIV.'"

Byers joined the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) as a volunteer legal director and became a staff member in 1989. As Managing Attorney of the Legal Assistance Program at ARCW and a Staff Attorney with the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, Byers and fellow Staff Attorney, Janet Mueller, and numerous volunteer attorneys provide direct legal services to ARCW's clients.

In addition, Byers provides community education and training to professionals in the health care field and personnel directors on issues regarding HIV and AIDS.

(Milwaukee)— At a press conference held Wednesday, March 23, the Medical College of Wisconsin announced that it had been awarded \$4 million by the National Institute of Mental Health to establish a new Center for AIDS Intervention Research (CAIR). This is the only Center of its kind between New York and California.

The award, announced by Wisconsin Senators Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold and Congressman Tom Barrett, will create an AIDS Research Center focused on the development of improved HIV prevention, mental health and health behavior interventions.

The Center will be under the direction of Jeffrey A. Kelly, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Mental Health Sciences. Dr. Kelly has received nearly \$18 million in grant support since 1990 to conduct prevention and mental health research on AIDS.

T. Michael Bolger, President and CEO of the Medical College, cited the Center as one more proof of the College's commitment to the community. Bolger praised Dr. Kelly for getting the award and reaffirmed the College's dedication to eradicating AIDS and easing human suffering from the disease.

Leonard Mitnick, Ph.D., Associate Director of the Office of AIDS Research for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIH), offered congratulations from NIH to the College and Dr. Kelly. Mitnick said that this was the first time Office of AIDS had made such an award. He called the Center's work on prevention, intervention and behavior change "the only hopes right now in stemming the tide of HIV."

Harry Prosen, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Mental Health Sciences at the Medical College and Chair of the Department, called the award "a magnificent event." He added however, "That it is with mixed feelings that we have the best research group working on the worst disease."

Prosen praised Dr. Kelly for his work in establishing the Center, calling Kelly "a genius" for what he has done.

Dr. Kelly spoke of the fact that in 1979, there were 12 cases of AIDS diagnosed in the country. Two years later, he said, in 1981, there were 38 cases diagnosed.

"Now, in 1994," he said, "there are more than 500,000 cases of AIDS that have been diagnosed."

Kelly's statistics were chilling. "AIDS and HIV infection," Kelly said, "are the second leading cause of death among adult men under 45 in the U.S. AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death among adult women under 45 in the country."

Kelly went on to say that "It is very clear that we are in the midst of an enormous epidemic. A million people in the U.S. have HIV infection. About 12,000 people in Wisconsin have HIV infection right now."

Kelly said that initially, AIDS ravaged the Gay community. "But now we have entered a second wave. That wave is affecting people in our inner cities, people with all the problems that go along with social disadvantage."

He pointed out that women constitute "the most rapid" rise in new HIV infections right now, especially poor women in the inner cities.

"What we need," he said, "is a major, coordinated, comprehensive prevention effort for HIV in the United States. He said that in order to do that, "we have to go beyond basic AIDS education alone and help people and entire communities implement changes in order to curtail the epidemic."

Kelly said that there was more to prevention than education. People often know what is good for them, but this knowledge doesn't translate into behavior. The research to be conducted at the Center is intended to find the link between knowledge and behavior, "particularly in the areas of sex and drug abuse" which he called "difficult to change."

Kelly cited the work of the Medical College for the past three years. "We've learned a lot. We've learned how to integrate and bring AIDS prevention programs into primary care clinics in the inner city. We've done that a lot in Milwaukee," he said.

"We've learned how to mobilize communities of Gay men to change standards of behavior to prevent future cases of HIV in the Gay community."

Kelly cited the Manhattan Project as an example of what is needed in the epidemic. "The award from NIH is going to help us do that in a certain way right here in Milwaukee," he said.

Kelly said that the Center will bring together behavioral scientists, physicians from disciplines

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