



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

# The Wisconsin Light

## Researchers May Have Found the Way HIV Turns Into AIDS

(Philadelphia, PA)- The discovery of a protein that may trigger the AIDS virus into developing into the fatal disease may lead to new treatments, researchers said.

But a leading AIDS expert warned against giving false hope to people who are HIV-positive.

HIV-infected people can be healthy and live for years before the virus begins reproducing and attacks the body's immune system.

University of Pennsylvania scientists now say that they have found a protein in a gene, unique to HIV carriers, that appears to tell infected cells when to start reproducing the virus. Their research was published in early November in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

"We understand a new pathway the virus uses," said study chief David Weiner, an assistant professor of pathology and medicine at Penn. "We now have an opportunity to design drugs to inhibit it."

Dr. Nava Sarver, one of the chief scientists in the AIDS division of the National Institutes of Health cautioned that the study, while interesting, is very preliminary. Usually, studies such as Weiner's that are conducted in the laboratory do not hold up when tested in bodies, she said.

"Many questions need to be asked to confirm these findings," Sarver said. "I feel it is not right to give hope to patients who are desperate for any type of therapy."

But Dr. Alfred Saah, an associate professor in the School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, said, "It's a hopeful sign and I think it's worthy of pursuit and if it pans out, it will be quite an advance."

The study centered on one of nine known HIV genes, "vpr." The gene produces a protein, known by the capitalized abbreviation "Vpr," that apparently must be present before infected cells can produce new, infected viral particles that in turn infect other cells., Weiner said.

Scientists need to know how the virus multiplies before they can design drugs to inhibit it, Weiner said.

Weiner's research team found in laboratory tests that the stage of infected people's disease corresponds with the level of Vpr protein in their blood.

People in the early stages of infection had low levels of the protein; those with fully developed AIDS had high levels.

By exposing cells to the protein in the laboratory, the researchers turned latent infection into active infection.

Weiner's team also found that it could block the production of new virus by exposing the cells to Vpr antibodies. Weiner said his team is now trying to develop a vaccine that would create Vpr antibodies.

## New Brain Study Gives Evidence that Biology Influences Sexual Orientation

(New York)- A study of brains in Gay and heterosexual men gives new evidence that biology may help determine a person's sexual orientation, researchers say.

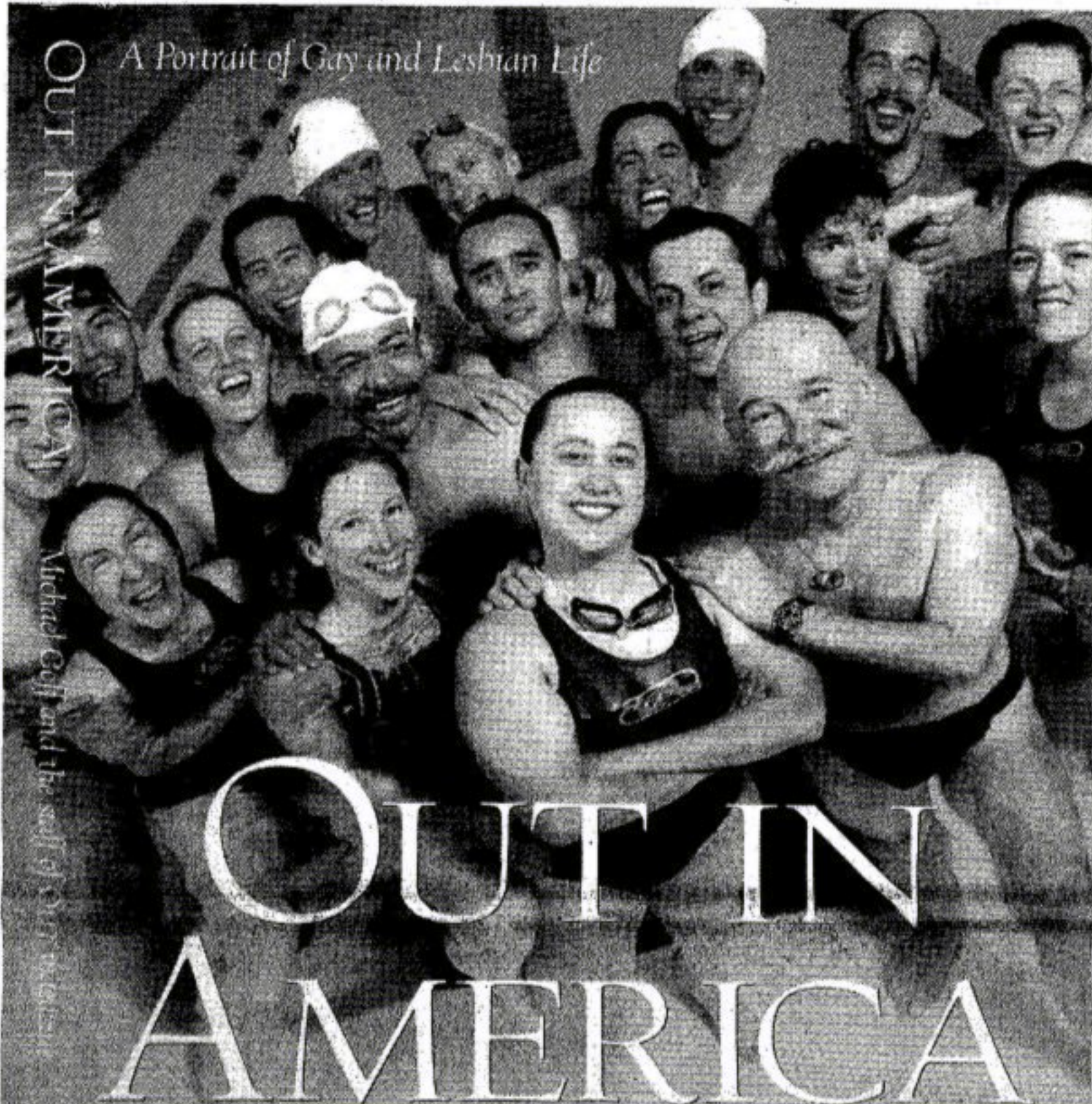
Scientists found an anatomical difference between the two groups. In Gay men, a communication conduit connecting two parts of the brain was thicker on average than in heterosexual men.

The parts of the brain connected by the conduit are used for understanding spoken language and perceiving objects.

The finding suggests that sexual orientation may be part of a larger package of brain characteristics, so that Gay men as a group may have a different pattern of mental skills than straight men, said researcher Sandra Witelson.

Witelson is a professor of psychiatry at

## Sixty Percent of Religious Right-Aligned Candidates Are Victorious in Recent Elections



OUT IN AMERICA

Michael Gott and the staff

Book Section--Pictured above is the cover of the new pictorial book "Out In America," which presents a portrait of Gay and Lesbian life in America. See the Winter book section, beginning on page 6.

## Governor Proclaims AIDS Awareness Week as November 28-December 4

December 1 is World AIDS Day

(Madison)- Wisconsin's Governor Tommy Thompson has issued a proclamation declaring November 28 through December 4, AIDS Awareness Week in the state and December 1 as World AIDS Day.

The theme for the 7th Annual observance of World AIDS Day is "AIDS and Families: Protect and Care for the Ones We Love."

Dr. Michael H. Merson, Executive Director of the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS, stated that "If we all do our utmost within our families of choice--whether they are the people who share our home or those who share our planet--we shall help immeasurably to defeat AIDS in every family."

More than 189 countries, including the U.S., will observe World AIDS Day as a way to

draw public attention to the AIDS pandemic.

Locally, World AIDS Day will provide a unique opportunity for groups and organizations to sponsor activities. Memorial and memory observances are being conducted in communities throughout the state.

Communities in southwestern Wisconsin will sponsor lectures, staff information tables and distribute red ribbons. An interfaith vigil, "Naming Our Family, Healing Our Wounds," will be held on the eve of World AIDS Day in Madison, while several local art institutions will be observing a "Day Without Art."

For those unable to attend such observances, it is being asked by AIDS activists around the country that you put one blue light in your

TURN TO AIDS DAY, PAGE 15

## Post-Election Poll Finds GOP, Democrats and Independents Support Equal Rights

(Washington, D.C.)- An election-night poll of people who voted in the 1994 midterm elections showed that voters who changed the face of Congress continue to support ending discrimination against Lesbian and Gay Americans.

In the first-ever post-election poll that measured voter attitudes toward Gay people, majorities of Republican, Democratic and Independent voters supported equal rights for Lesbian and Gay people, who face widespread and legal discrimination with no protection from federal law.

Voters also strongly supported increased efforts against HIV/AIDS and expressed worry about a "religious right wing agenda."

The poll, conducted November 8 and 9 by the independent firm of Mellman Lazarus

(Washington, D.C.)- Nationwide, 60 percent of candidates aligned with or supported by Religious Right political groups were victorious in November 8th's elections. This, according to a report issued on November 11 by People For The American Way, a nonpartisan organization fighting for progressive causes.

The percentage of wins gives the Religious Right access to all levels of government and increases their power dramatically, the report says.

"Religious Right leaders provided the core support for officials taking seats in Congress, state capitols, school boards and other local offices around the country," said Arthur J. Kropp, President of People For.

"Now it's payback time as more politicians than ever owe their jobs to the organizing and financial support supplied by Religious Right groups," Kropp said. "That support came with a price. Anyone familiar with the movement knows that its leaders will not be content to be background music. Their expectation is that the Right-Wing agenda will receive top priority in the next two years."

People For's state-by-state report includes nearly 600 candidates for national, state and local offices.

In Wisconsin, Mark Neumann who won election to Congress in the 1st District is identified in the report as being "tied to the Christian Coalition." He received support from the ultra-right Eagle Forum.

Toby Roth (R-8th District) was featured as a "political friend" in a Christian Coalition promo video.

In the State Legislature, the report lists Scott Walker (R-14th Assembly District) and Sheryl Albers (R-50 Assembly District) as being supported by and supporting the Christian Coalition.

"The Religious Right's election day victories reflect several years of hard work on their part at the grassroots," said Kropp. "Their investment in organizing has paid off. Now it's time for the rest of us to play the game. In other words, the time for complaining is over. Opponents of the Right have to organize and take part in the tough job of door-to-door campaigning while making the case for an alternative vision for America."

But, as the People For report notes, the Religious Right didn't win everything.

Notable among their defeats were the downing of the anti-Gay initiatives in Oregon and Idaho.

"The Oregon Citizens Alliance has twice tried to convince the people of Oregon that discrimination should be enshrined in law," said Kropp. "Oregon voters have twice said no. This year Idaho voters also rejected institutionalized discrimination."

"Religious Right leaders and their allies in Congress should get the message--confirmed in every poll--that most Americans are opposed to discrimination based on sexual orientation," Kropp said.

Lake, Inc., surveyed a random sample of 800 people who had voted in the midterm election. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

Among the findings: 70% of those surveyed said Gay people should not face unfair job discrimination, but rather have "equal rights in hiring and firing"--with 77% of Democrats, 71% of Independents and 64% of Republicans supporting the idea;

57% supported the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that would "extend current civil rights laws in the workplace to cover Gays and Lesbians"

78% favored "increasing efforts for AIDS research, prevention and care";

TURN TO EQUAL RIGHTS, PAGE 3

TURN TO BIOLOGY, PAGE 15