



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

The Wisconsin Light

Madison's Message to Cracker Barrel: We'll Be Watching You Very Carefully

By John Quinlan

Madison-- The grand opening of a new Cracker Barrel restaurant here on January 30, included an unscheduled "welcome" ceremony from a group of activists and public officials. The national Cracker Barrel chain has a recent history of blatant discrimination against Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual employees. The group made it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated in Madison.

Carloads of activists--representing a broadly based coalition--shuttled out to the new restaurant's location, not far from East Towne. They bore placards for a silent protest, which was followed by a press conference.

Featured speakers were openly Lesbian or Gay public officials from all levels of Wisconsin and local government including City Council member Ricardo Gonzalez, County Board Supervisor Mark Poca and State Representative **RETURN TO CRACKER BARREL** Page 15

Milwaukee AIDS Project Begins Unique HIV Testing Program

Milwaukee--People think they may be at risk for having the AIDS virus now have a new option to be tested. The Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) has implemented an HIV counseling and testing program aimed at early diagnosis of HIV disease. The testing is free, convenient and anonymous.

"Knowing your HIV status is the smartest personal strategy for living in the age of AIDS," said MAP executive director, Doug Nelson. "Our HIV testing program is free, friendly, and easy to access. We are deeply committed to sensitively helping people gain a knowledge and understanding of their HIV status."

Nelson said that those who test positive for HIV will have all the resources of MAP immediately available to them including individual counseling, support groups, legal assistance, primary health care, benefits counseling and, if necessary, food, housing and financial assistance.

Tests Offered in Three Locations

MAP's HIV testing is offered at three sites. MAP headquarters, 820 N. Plankinton in downtown Milwaukee, offers testing everyday by appointment. Testing is also available through MAP's LIFEPOINT needle exchange program at needle exchange sites and on a walk-in basis at the Dennis Hill Outreach Center, located at 4311 W. Vliet Street.

Because the testing is anonymous, a person wishing to be tested does not give his or her name, but rather is identified by a series of six numbers and three letters. Results are available in two weeks. Each person receiving the free test receives comprehensive pre and post-test counseling.

"By adding HIV testing to our needle exchange program, we are charting a new course in aggressive AIDS prevention," Nelson said. "We may be the only city in the country where these strategies are combined. HIV testing, available for active injection drug users will reinforce AIDS prevention behaviors which will help save many lives."

LIFEPOINT, MAP's clean needle exchange program, began in March, 1994 and is now exchanging over 2,000 needles each week. An estimated 5,000 injection drug users live in the Milwaukee area.

Appointments for testing at MAP can be made by calling (414) 225-1517. They are available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Appointments and walk-ins are accepted at the Dennis Hill Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Noon to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The LIFEPOINT Needle Exchange van offers HIV testing from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at all regular site visits.

New Generation of Freedom Riders Plans To Travel to Camp Sister Spirit in Late Spring Organizers Want Delegation From Wisconsin



A Time for Madness--His Majesty was all powerful and all-knowing. But he wasn't quite all there, so it seemed. Queen Charlotte (Helen Mirren) comforts King George III (Nigel Hawthorne) in "The Madness of King George." (See page 10 for a review of the film and a related story.)

New Study Shows AIDS Fight Should Focus on Slowing Mutant Viruses

Washington, D.C.-- The best tack against AIDS may be to seek ways to increase the sometimes-lengthy latent period between infection and development of the actual disease rather than trying to eradicate the virus, a scientist contended Thursday, January 26, 1994.

John Coffin, a Tufts University microbiologist, said recent studies have demonstrated the extraordinary rapidity at which the HIV virus turns over, with billions of virus-fighting T-cells killed and produced each day in a futile attempt to stop it.

Instead of searching for a drug to wipe out the original virus, researchers should hunt for compounds to slow the development of the inevitable mutations, Coffin wrote in the January 28, issue of the journal *Science*.

"The real disease caused by HIV occurs during the period when almost nothing seems to be happening," said Coffin.

"The final collapse of the immune system is the consequence of the accumulation of damage over the entire multiyear course of the infection, not the result of some new event happening after this lengthy interval," he said.

His article reviews recent studies that have changed the picture of what happens during the long period between HIV infection and actually developing the fatal disease.

The average lifetime of an infected cell is less than one to two days, and the virus replicates itself 300 or more times a year, Coffin said.

The virus genomes present in someone 10

years after infection "are removed by 3000 generations from the virus that initiated the infection," he said.

The mutations explain why doctors can wipe out up to 99 percent of the initial virus with powerful drugs, only to have it quickly reappear in a drug-resistant form.

The most promising experimental drug therapies may be those that slow down or cripple these mutations, possibly doubling or even extending indefinitely that latent period of the infection, he said.

"That is the kind of drug we should be looking for, the ones for which the virus can't make mutations that grow as well as the starting virus," Coffin said in an interview.

Meanwhile, biochemists at the National Institutes of Health reported they have found that minor changes in chemical signals sent to T-cell receptors in the body's immune system can dramatically alter how those cells respond.

The T-cells control the body's immune response to a wide range of viruses and tissue grafts.

"Changing what these T-cells see very slightly can change how they behave," said Ronald N. Germain of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one of the researchers whose article also appeared in *Science*.

Theoretically, this knowledge could help scientists develop drugs to overcome the defense mechanisms of the HIV virus, multiple sclerosis, arthritis and other diseases, he said.

Los Angeles-- A new group of Freedom Riders intends to converge on Laurel, Mississippi over the Memorial Day Weekend, May 26-May 30, 1995. There's really no difference organizers say, from the Freedom Riders of the 1960s. Then and now, the ride to Mississippi will be for freedom, equality, human dignity and rights.

Robin Tyler, a prominent Lesbian activist who originally called for and emceed the 1st March On Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and subsequently produced the Main Stage for the second and third Marches, and Reverend Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, the largest organization of Gays and Lesbians in the world, returned to California from Mississippi on January 29 after meeting with Wanda and Brenda Henson at Camp Sister Spirit near Overt.

At the meeting, Tyler told *Light*, agreement was reached regarding the Memorial Day Weekend Freedom Ride. That weekend, Tyler said, "a thousand of Gays and Lesbians from all across America, will ride to the aid of a Lesbian family and their besieged property outside Overt."

Camp Sister Spirit has been exposed to an ongoing, radical right inspired campaign of violence, harassment, intimidation and death threats.

Tyler said she was looking forward to a delegation from Wisconsin. "Perhaps 'The Wisconsin 40'," she said to compliment representations from the other states.

Tyler told *Light* that the rising tide of anti-gay violence in the country, the murders in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas and the mounting campaign by the radical right against Gay people everywhere led her and Rev. Perry to decide "that something had to be done, something visible and confrontational, something to take a stand."

Perry said that for him and other religious people this Freedom Ride should be a matter of really living what the religious life is all about. "Instead of just praying for these women, we are putting legs on our prayers and inviting people to join us in Mississippi."

Because of the escalating violence against Gays and Lesbians all over the world, an International Lesbian/Gay version of the Clothesline Project will occur during this time at Camp Sister Spirit.

The purpose of the Clothesline Project is to bear witness to the survivors and victims of the war against women, both the casualties of the war and the wounded. This display shows the extent of the problem with a visual impact similar to the AIDS Quilt.

Tyler said that the Gay Freedom Riders Coalition, headquartered in Los Angeles, will contact Gay and Lesbian groups throughout the U.S. and the world to send tee shirts bearing the names of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transsexuals and Transgenders who have suffered violence or death. These will be displayed at Camp Sister Spirit.

While at Camp Sister Spirit, the Freedom Riders will work to help finish the property. Five existing barns need to be remodeled, but the primary task will be to finish fencing in the land. Over 1/2 mile needs to be done.

If you would like to join this historic weekend, you can call or write UFMCCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; Attn.: Project Camp Sister Spirit or call Frank Zerelli: (213) 464-5100, ext. 212.

Although participants will be helping work the land for the four days, they will also have the opportunity to participate in workshops, singalongs, swimming and other activities.

The minimum donation will be \$135 per person. Of this, \$110 will be used to cover food, sanitation, equipment, etc. Campers must plan to bring their own tents and utensils. If you plan to come in an RV, RV's will cost an additional \$40.

Twenty-five dollars from each fee will be used to help Camp Sister Spirit pay for expenses for a Federal Lawsuit to be filed under the Anti-Klan Act for the harassment they have received.

The maximum number is 1,000 participants. If you wish to register, send \$135 per person made out to UFMCC: Project Camp Sister Spirit and mail it to the address above.