



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

The Wisconsin Light

Lesbian Avengers Form Madison Chapter and Hold First Action

Madison-- The Madison Chapter of the Lesbian Avengers is pleased to announce its formation and first action!

The Lesbian Avengers is a direct-action group using grassroots activism to fight for Lesbian survival and visibility. Their purpose is to identify and promote Lesbian issues and perspectives while empowering Lesbians to become experienced organizers who can participate in political rebellion. Learning skills, planning and building strategies together are at the core of the Avengers' existence.

Working in conjunction with the newly established chapter in Chicago and with encouragement from the original New York City Group, the Madison Lesbian Avengers is looking forward to making our already large, out and proud community even more visible.

The first event being planned by the Madison Lesbian Avengers will be held June 25. "The Lesbian Avengers Go to Chicago! A Dyke Field Trip" will be the kickoff event for the Madison Avengers at Chicago's Pride Day parade and celebration.

Once in Chicago, the Madison Lesbian Avengers will be meeting with the Chicago Avengers as well as other like-minded organizations based in Chicago. Interested women need only bring their dyke pride, bad attitudes and a willingness to yell like hell!

The event is still in the organizational stages. Anyone interested in participating, helping with planning, transportation or for more information, should call (608) 255-5973 and leave their name and a phone number where they can be reached.

The Madison Lesbian Avengers plan to hold regular meetings. Date, time and location are to be announced.

Further Evidence Indicates that if You're Gay, You Were Born that Way

Washington, D.C.-- Researchers who transplanted a gene in male fruit flies turned the normally randy insects into Gay males that formed all-male courtship chains and circles.

Communication among courting fruit flies normally involves an elaborate repertoire of gender-specific activities, some of which sound like giant fly orgies.

The researchers, Shang-Ding Zhang and Ward F. Odenwald, at the National Institutes of Health, found that male flies with the transplanted gene formed courtship chains of five or more individuals, "none of which displayed courtship repelling signals (wing flicking, face kicking and/or running away)," the researchers said.

When female fruit flies were added to the mix, male suitors "rarely abandoned their partners to court nearby females," the researchers wrote.

The study, reported in the June issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, adds to the growing body of evidence that there is a genetic component to sexual orientation. What Gays have been saying for years is looking more and more like a fact: If you are Gay, you were born that way.

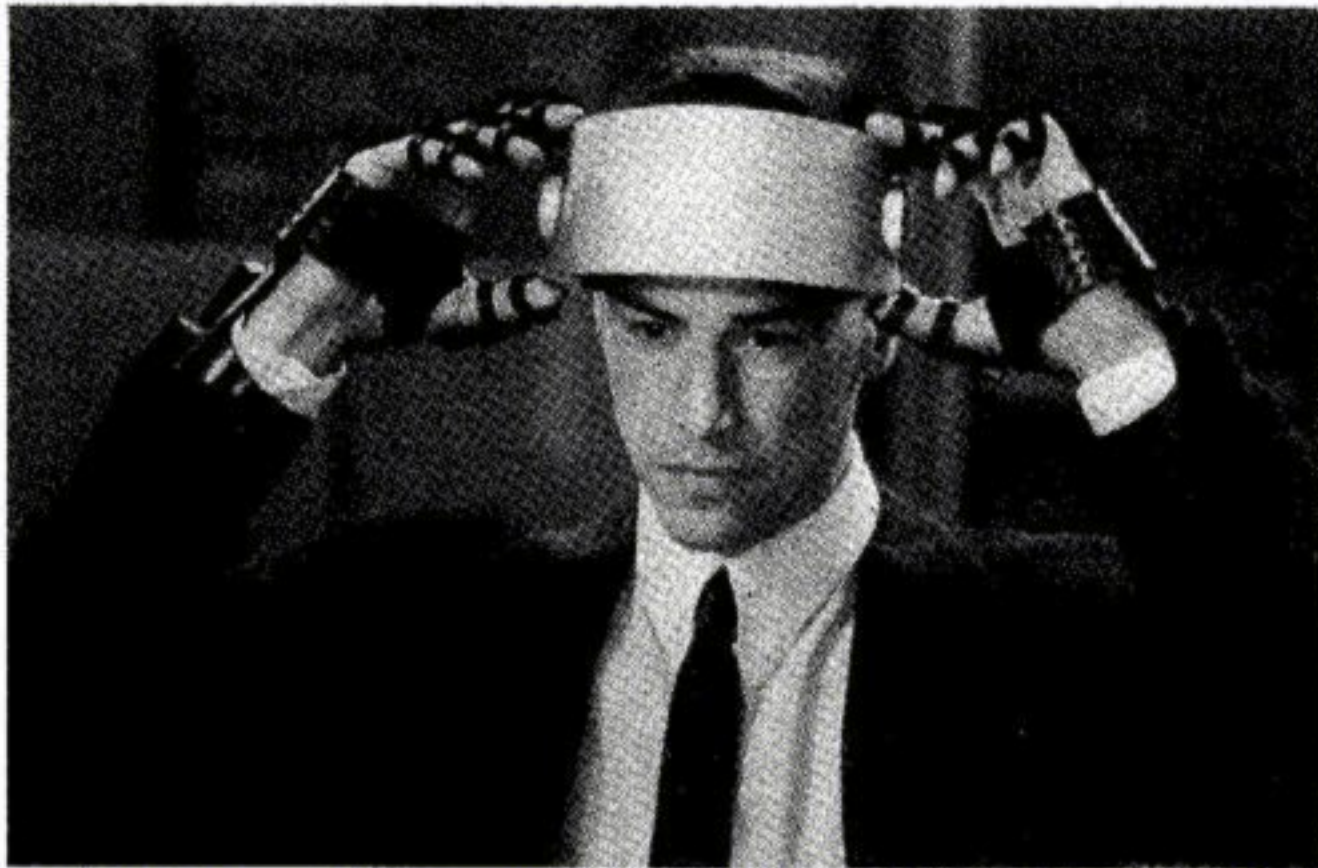
Environment seems to have little effect. In a related experiment, the researchers found that when a group of "heterosexual" male fruit flies was mixed with a larger group of genetically altered "homosexual" male fruit flies, the straights began to act gay, but only for a short while and then not all of them. Within a very short time, the "straights" all acted "straight" and the "Gays" all continued to act "Gay."

And to complicate the picture further, transplanting the same gene into female fruit flies did not produce "Lesbians."

The main purpose of the transplanted gene--which also can cause fruit fly eyes to be white instead of red in a mutated version--is to produce a protein that enables cells to use an amino acid called tryptophan. The gene normally is active only in certain cells, including brain cells and has nothing to do with sexual behavior.

But in the experiment, the scientists inserted a normal version of the gene into embryonic flies in such a way that a copy of the gene was

Sen. Helms Blocks Ryan White Care Act Threatening Crucial AIDS Funding



A High Tech Courier, Johnny (Keanu Reeves), is on the run from a ruthless global crime syndicate in the 21st Century science fiction thriller "Johnny Mnemonic"

Federal Medicaid Cuts Could be Devastating for the AIDS Community

Milwaukee-- As the Congress moves quickly to balance the federal budget, AIDS advocates from around the country are voicing major concern over prospect of massive cuts to the Medicaid Program.

More than 40% of people living with AIDS depend on Medicaid for their health care coverage. Almost 90% of all children with AIDS

rely on Medicaid.

"Medicaid guarantees access to essential health care services and if it is cut in any significant way, we have a major health care crisis for the AIDS community," said Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW), parent agency of the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP).

"AIDS can quickly deplete personal resources because of the cost of drugs and care," Nelson said. "We must vigorously oppose any political effort to dismantle Medicaid and eliminate its entitlement status. People with HIV and AIDS depend on Medicaid for quality health care and that is a right that we will aggressively defend."

The National Public Health and Hospital Institute released a report last week illustrating the essential role that Medicaid has in assuming the cost of care in the nation's public hospitals.

In 1991, 53% of all hospital care for people with HIV disease in the United States was paid by Medicaid. 90% of people with AIDS who obtain treatment in public hospitals rely on Medicaid, Medicare or charity to pay for the cost of care.

Nelson said that the study clearly demonstrates that any significant cut to Medicaid would be a disaster for public hospitals and devastating for people with HIV and AIDS.

"We are concerned not only about cuts, but also by the movement in Congress to block grant Medicaid back to the states and require that Medicaid services be delivered through managed care systems," Nelson said.

"Block grants have seldom served the AIDS community well and managed care most often fails to involve AIDS-specific services and providers who can assure the quality of care," Nelson said.

Nelson expressed great concern with a combination of federal Medicaid cuts and the closing of Doyno Hospital in Milwaukee which provides for indigent care.

"If Medicaid is cut and we lose the Milwaukee County Health Plan, well over half of the clients of the Milwaukee AIDS Project will be seriously affected. We will need to quickly generate some creative alternatives to assure continued access to health care services," Nelson said.

Nelson reported that the Medicaid cuts will be a top priority for discussion at the upcoming meeting of the National AIDS Action Council Board of Directors in Washington, D.C. on June 9-10. Nelson, who is on the Board and chairs its public policy committee will help craft a lobby strategy to protect Medicaid from the federal budget cutting.

Nelson also said that he will be meeting with Milwaukee County Executive Tom Ament and his health care staff to address the troubling issues of the Doyno Hospital closing for the AIDS community.

Milwaukee-- The difficult journey of reauthorizing the Ryan White Care Act with equity formulas to benefit Wisconsin has reached yet another serious road block.

Republican Senator Jesse Helms (NC) has placed a "hold" on the Senate bill that is ready to go to the floor of the Senate for a vote. The Helms' action is a signal to Senate leaders that he will filibuster against the popular AIDS funding bill, thus preventing passage.

"We have always been concerned about the power of Jesse Helms in a Republican-controlled Senate," said Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW), parent agency of the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP).

"A 'hold' by Senator Helms confirms our worst fears that he may have the capacity to block this bill," Nelson said. "We have got to adjust our strategy to convince other Republican Senators to break with the tradition of respecting 'holds' so that we can advance the bill."

Helms was one of only four senators to vote against the Ryan White Care Act in 1990. The bill is up for a five year reauthorization.

While Helms hasn't spoken publicly about his opposition to the Senate Reauthorization bill, *Wisconsin Light* has learned that Helms believes that too much funding is made available to people with AIDS such as Gay men and drug users who could have avoided AIDS by changing their behaviors.

In 1990, Helms said that he was against the Ryan White Care Act because "taxpayers money is being proposed to be used to proselytize a dangerous lifestyle..." referring to Gays and drug users.

"We are worried that Senator Helms can threaten use of a filibuster to either defeat the bill or gain support for negative amendments to it such as mandatory HIV testing, severe limitations on AIDS prevention strategies, and worse," Nelson said.

Ironically, the Senate bill has broad bipartisan with 58 declared co-sponsors of the bill including Republican Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-KN), Chief Sponsor Nancy Kassebaum (R-KN), and both Wisconsin Democratic Senators Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl.

"We are working tirelessly to secure two more sponsors to be assured of 60 votes that will defeat a filibuster," Nelson explained.

"We will need to convince Majority Leader Bob Dole that it is in everyone's interest to bring the Ryan White Care Act to the floor for a vote where we know we can win," Nelson said.

"We are working to have the Republican co-sponsors of the bill to encourage Senator Dole to schedule the bill and the National Log Cabin Republican Club is being very effective in its advocacy with Dole to move the bill," Nelson said.

The Senate bill, known as S-641, is the result of a year-long campaign by ARCW to assure equity in the distribution of funds. The formulas of the Senate bill will mean at least a 65% increase in AIDS funding for Wisconsin and could result as much as \$4 million more in Wisconsin funds over the next five years.

Patricia Fleming of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy predicted that the AIDS bill will eventually pass despite Helms' objections.

David Smith, spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign Fund, which is the nation's largest Gay rights lobbying group, called Helms' action "mean-spirited" and said that Helms "is using his seat in the Senate to Gay-bash once again."

House Bill Not Ready

The House of Representatives has not yet produced its version of the Ryan White Care Act after many weeks of deliberations. Washington sources report to the *Light* that House members from larger states are trying to change the title II formula which would affect Wisconsin.

"The House bill may not be as equitable as the Senate version," Nelson said. "If we get both the Senate and the House to pass their bills, we will be seeking resolution to our equity issue in the conference committee."

Nelson predicted that final decision making on the Care Act would not come any earlier than September of this year.

Donated Art Works Exceed 400 for Art For AIDS Auction

Milwaukee-- A record 400 works of art have been donated for the upcoming Art For AIDS Auction and Brunch on June 25, 1995.

Artists from throughout the Midwest have had an out-pouring of support for this unique AIDS fund-raiser. Several Milwaukee artists have told *Wisconsin Light* that the Art For AIDS Auction has galvanized the artistic community in Milwaukee.

"It will be our best auction ever," said Louise Searing, Director of Special Events for the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). "The works of art are diverse and of a very high quality with total values exceeding \$100,000 which is well beyond our expectations."

The Art For AIDS Auction and Brunch will be held at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee on Sunday, June 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 which include a champagne brunch, a silent auction and a voice auction. They can be purchased by calling ARCW at 1-800-348-9255 or locally at 273-1991.

The auction benefits the services of the Milwaukee AIDS Project, the Madison AIDS Support Network, the Southeast Wisconsin AIDS Project and the Northwest Wisconsin AIDS Project.