



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

The Wisconsin Light



Over the Rainbow—Miraculously, a Rainbow Flag which once flew above the Hotel Washington, survived the devastating fire that destroyed the building on February 18th.

Log Cabin Urges Cross Over Vote Against Buchanan in the Primaries

Gunderson and Birch Challenge Buchanan to a Debate

Washington, D.C.—Pat Buchanan's recent political ascendancy has put the Republican Party into a tailspin, according to Log Cabin Republicans.

"The Republican Party is beginning to reap the harvest of pandering to the Far Right," said Richard Tafel, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans. "Since 1972, Republican candidates thought they could harness the working class Democrat vote to their advantage. Buchanan's tapped into these social conservative and fiscal liberals, many who were Democrats."

"He's played the anti-Gay card, the race card, anti-Semitic card and the corporate bashing card. Ralph Reed [head of the Christian Coalition] now has the true Far Right candidate he's been demanding," Tafel said.

"And now the Republican Party looks poised to tear itself apart and hand Bill Clinton a victory. Buchanan divides the party as he divides the country," Tafel added.

Tafel urged all Gays and Lesbians to vote in Republican primaries against Buchanan.

"The front lines of the battle for the Gay community are in the Republican Presidential primaries. No matter your political persuasion or who your general election candidate will be, voting against Pat Buchanan in the GOP primaries is the most important act for Gays and Lesbians in this political year," Tafel said.

Tafel urged Gays and Lesbians to cross over in those states which allow it, as Wisconsin does, and vote against Buchanan.

"Stopping Pat Buchanan now should be the goal of every Gay and Lesbian American," Tafel said. "His appeal to the working class in a general election could be surprising. If he

continues to split the Republican vote and wins the nomination, don't be so naïve to think he can't win the presidency," Tafel said.

Buchanan Challenged to Debate

Elizabeth Birch, head of the Human Rights Campaign and Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-WI) have challenged Buchanan to defend his numerous anti-Gay statements.

"Buchanan's campaign for president has been the most anti-Gay in history of presidential politics," Birch said at a news conference Monday, February 26th where she challenged Buchanan to debate her.

Gunderson, the only openly Gay Republican in Congress, offered to participate also.

"I join with Elizabeth Birch in calling for a dialogue or debate on these issues," Gunderson said in a statement. "The party of Lincoln, the party of freedom, the party of individuals' rights to chart their own destinies cannot be home to prejudice in any way, shape or form."

Poll Shows Voters Object to Gay-Baiting

Anti-Gay themes being sounded by GOP presidential candidates are not working with at least some of the Republican and independent voters, according to a recent poll released by the Human Rights Campaign.

The poll, taken in New Hampshire just before that state's primary of 443 people, found that 31% of respondents felt it is "wrong to use Gays to score points."

A total of 32% said they "strongly disapprove" of the rally held in Des Moines sponsored by the Christian Coalition to speak out against same-sex marriage and of "mixing extreme religious views and politics."

The poll also found 32% of respondents would be "somewhat less supportive" or "much less supportive" of a candidate who signed a pledge opposing same-sex marriage.

TURN TO PRIMARIES, PAGE 5

Madison's Historic Hotel Washington, Nationally Known Gay Mecca, Burns

Plans are to Rebuild

Milwaukee—The Hotel Washington complex has long been a focus of entertainment and socializing for the Madison Lesbian and Gay community. Its national reputation has attracted visitors from all over the country. On Sunday, February 18, 1996, the Hotel Washington burned to the ground.

Along with the 22-room hotel, including 10 rooms for low-income permanent residents, the building was home to the Club de Wash, the Barber's Closet, the New Bar, Rod's, Café Palms, Café Espresso, Micro Bar, Speed Print and the Barber's Closet Salon. More than 100 people worked in the building.

According to reports, the fire began a little after 6:00 a.m. Jeff Schultz, an assistant manager and resident in the building called the fire department at 6:15 a.m. Within minutes a fire crew was on the scene and discovered "it was a huge fire."

According to Bernadette Galvez, a spokeswoman for the Madison Fire Department, additional fire crews arrived at 6:28 a.m. and began searching the building for victims. The blaze, however, proved to be too great and the searchers were withdrawn.

That no one was killed in the fire was due in large part to three alert employees, Steve Richards, Michelle Dorland, building managers, and Schultz. It was they who ran through the smoke-filled halls rousing the 15 residents and getting them to safety.

For awhile, there were rumors that arson had been involved, but these have been put to rest. According to Greg and Sherry Scheel, the fire was accidental. It started in the office area in back of the Café Palms and Espresso Shop.

The Hotel Washington has a long and rich history in Madison, dating from 1885. The building was purchased by the late Rodney

Scheel in 1975. Scheel, one of Madison's most prominent Gay activists and philanthropists, died in 1990 of complications due to AIDS.

While the old building went up quickly, some few artifacts were saved. These included some pictures and Rodney Scheel's desk.

Plans are now to rebuild. Greg and Sherry Scheel were almost immediately in conference with insurance adjusters and architects.

Rod's bar itself, located in the basement of the building, was somewhat less damaged. Possibly it could re-open by the first of the year, while the rest of the building is constructed over it.

Gay-Bashers Can't Stay Away

As the fire roared, one bible-thumper started preaching to the on-lookers about how they ought to get "saved" and other such religious prattle. The miscreant had a cup of coffee tossed in his face before police led him away.

Ron Greer, the Madison fire-fighter who has come under fire for passing out anti-Gay literature on duty (for which Greer is currently under investigation), came to the scene to watch with his two sons.

"I'm not sorry about some of the businesses that are gone now," Greer is quoted as saying in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. "But I also will add that I won't help raise money to get those businesses started again."

Madison Mayor Paul Soglin and a group of elected Gay officials denounced Greer for his remarks.

"Ron Greer might not have ignited the match that started this fire," said Nikki Baumbatt, co-producer of WTSO-AM's Saturday Night Out. "But he has ignited the flame of anti-Gay sentiments in Madison."

TURN TO HOTEL WASHINGTON, PAGE 16



Landmark Levelled—Fire quickly raged out of control and engulfed the entire Hotel Washington on February 18th.

Log Cabin's Efforts Result in End of Proposed Bill to Ban Same-Sex Marriages

Madison—In the last issue of *Light* it was reported that Rep. Dean Kaufert (R-Neenah) intended to introduce a bill to bar recognition of same-sex marriages in Wisconsin. Kaufert has since decided against introducing that legislation and is seeking a legal opinion on the issue instead.

Kaufert had indicated in a press release

dated February 12th that he did not want actions of other states to force Wisconsinites to recognize same-sex marriages against their will. A number of state legislatures are considering and/or have passed similar legislation designed to preempt any gains Gay and Lesbian couples might make if the Hawaiian Su-

TURN TO MARRIAGE, PAGE 15

Madison's Historic Hotel Washington, Nationally Known Gay Mecca, Burns

HOTEL WASHINGTON

Continued from Page 1

Vigil Held to Mourn the Loss

About 500 people gathered at the steps of the state Capitol to mourn the loss of the Hotel Washington.

"I can't explain how overwhelmed I am by this response," Greg Scheel, co-owner of the hotel, said at the gathering Monday, February 19th.

Many attending the rally said the Hotel Washington was a place where they always felt welcomed and accepted.

"It was like hanging out with my family," University of Wisconsin student Terry Dublinski said. "Someone got it right when they told me it was a place you can go where you loved everyone."

"I've cried a lot today, but I'm not crying anymore because I've decided we've got to work together to be proactive right now," said one member of the Gay community.

Community Rallies in Support

In the wake of the tragic disaster, the Madison Gay/Lesbian Resource Center's Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Business Alliance in association with the Wisconsin Community Fund have created a special Relief Fund to support former tenants of the Hotel. The funds collected will help to support those individuals with transitional housing, food, clothing and other critical needs.

Donations to the fund can be made by sending a check or money order to: *The Wisconsin Community Fund, 122 State Street, Suite 508, Madison, WI 53703.* Please indicate that the donation is for the "Hotel Washington Tenant's Relief Fund."

A Hotel Washington Support Fund has also been established at the *Associated Bank, 222 W. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703.*

Employment Help

The Gay/Lesbian Resource Center's Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual (LGB) Business Alliance is putting together a list of LGB and LGB-friendly businesses who currently have openings for part- or full-time employees to aid those displaced by the Hotel fire.

Several members of the LGB Business Alliance are offering their services (such as resume production and printing) for free or significantly reduced costs.

Displaced employees should contact Greg Scheel for a list of job opportunities or job-related services.

Spiritual Help

On Sunday, March 3, 1996, "Coming Out Coming Together, an interfaith coalition of more than a dozen Madison area churches and other spiritual communities who are inclusive is sponsoring an **Interfaith Service of Remembrance, Healing and Hope** open to the whole Madison community.

The purpose of the service is to grieve the loss of the Hotel Washington which served as a center for Madison's Gay and Lesbian community, and to muster spiritual resources to face the many challenges confronting the community locally and nationally.

Services will be held at University Methodist Church, 1127 University Avenue (on the corner of Charter St.) on Sunday, March 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.

Keanu Reeves

The fire that destroyed the Hotel Washington may change a movie director's plans to film scenes at the old Milwaukee Road Depot next door, a state official says.

The thriller "Chain Reaction," starring Keanu Reeves and Morgan Freeman, was to use the inside of the Capitol for the bulk of its one day of local filming.

However, a nighttime scene was scheduled to be filmed outside the old depot on West Washington Avenue, now adjacent to a pile of rubble.

Filmmakers asked for photographs of the scene as it looks now, said Julia Hertel of the Wisconsin Film Office.

"We won't know until the director sees the pictures whether that scene will remain in the movie," she said.

Stanley Solheim, director of the Wisconsin Film Office, says there's still plenty of room for filming at the depot.

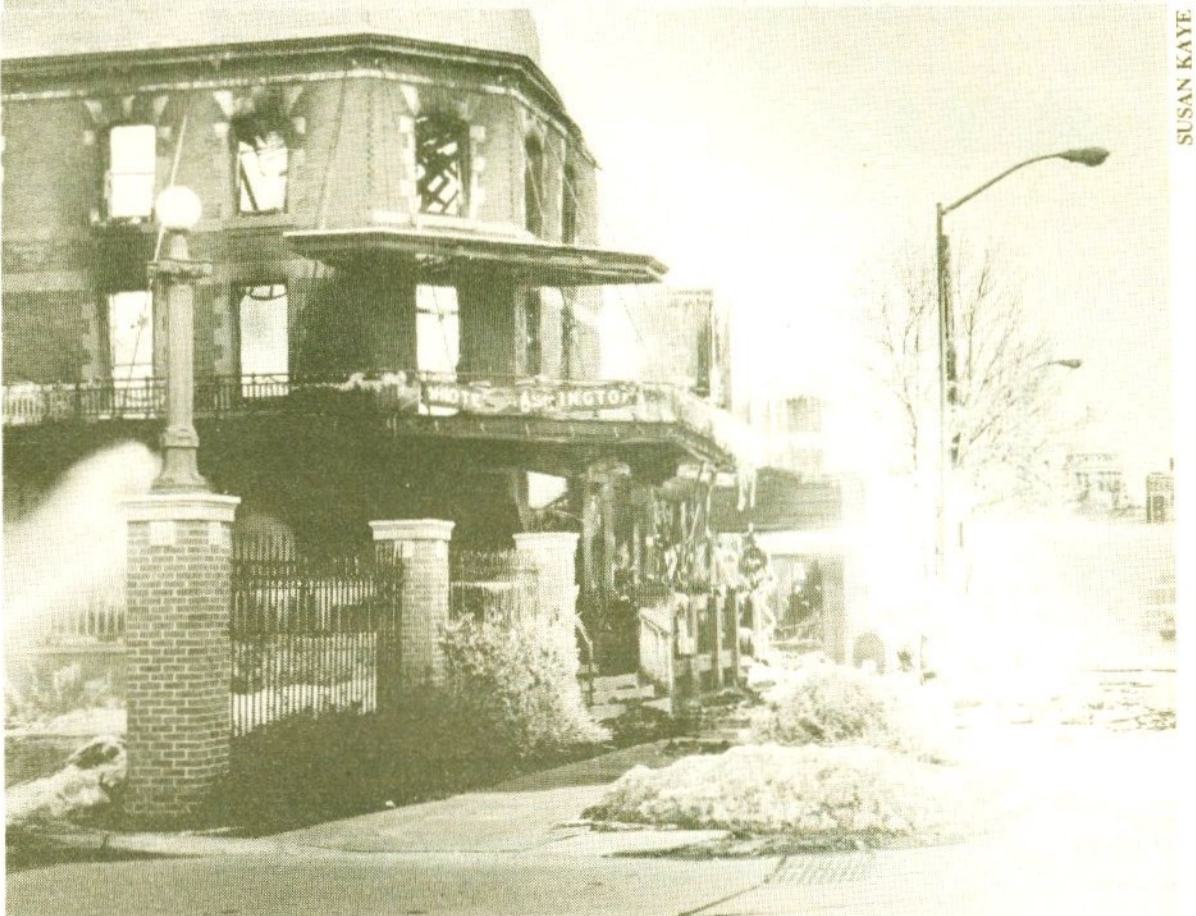
In the film, the Wisconsin Capitol will be standing in for the U.S. Capitol.



Madison's Hotel Washington as it looked at the time of its opening in 1905.



Historic Hotel in Ruins—Madison's Hotel Washington burned to the ground on February 18, 1996. Little more than ruins remained (above) as firemen worked to put out the last of the smoldering debris (below).



SUSAN KAYE



THIS IS IT!



THREE LEAVES SAY "LOVE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS" FROM JOE, JUNE AND STAFF
Happy St. Patrick's Day

**418 East Wells Street
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