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The Wisconsin Light

America On Line Admits Breach of Privacy In Gay Sailor Discharge Case

Washington, DC— In an update to a story in our last issue, America Online (AOL) admitted breaching its policy and said Wednesday, January 21, it regrets disclosing to a Navy investigator the identity of a senior sailor now facing dismissal from the service as a homosexual.

"This was a case of human error under very unusual circumstances," AOL Inc. said in a one-page statement. While criticizing the Navy for the way it sought the information, AOL said of its disclosure: "This clearly should not have happened, and we regret it."

Also Wednesday, Senior Chief Petty Officer Timothy R. McVeigh moved to save his Navy career by filing a case in federal court in Washington. McVeigh charges the Navy pried into his personal affairs in violation of an electronic privacy law and the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military.

The service began investigating McVeigh last fall after a Navy spouse discovered information available through AOL and apparently written by McVeigh that indicated a sexual interest in young men. McVeigh, 36, is a highly decorated senior enlisted man with 17 years in the service, three years shy of the 20 needed to retire with a pension. He is no relation to the convicted Oklahoma City bomber.

"I don't have any bitterness against the Navy at all," McVeigh said outside U.S. District Court. "My only regret is that the Navy is unwilling to follow regulations."

McVeigh, in dress uniform festooned with rows of awards and medals on his chest, stood at attention as U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin entered the courtroom. Later McVeigh changed into a business suit to speak with reporters, observing a regulation against uttering public statements in uniform.

McVeigh's attorney, Christopher Wolf, said the Navy "broke the law" against wresting confidential information from online services. He also contended the Navy violated the Pentagon policy on gays in the military, which prohibits open homosexuality but bars the military from trying to discover a service member's sexual orientation.

Justice Department attorney David
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Domestic Partnership Heats Up Madison School Races



Giving Some Love—Madison Mayor Susan Bazman decorates a heart she purchased to help the "Give Some Love" campaign at Kirby's Klub as owner Kirby Sheldon looks on. The fund raiser is a benefit for the Madison AIDS Network's Emergency Services fund, which provides money to help AIDS network clients to meet emergency medical, transportation and housing expenses. The campaign which is sponsored by Kirby's Klub and *The Wisconsin Light* will end with a gala show on Valentine's Day. Meanwhile everyone can stop at Kirby's and purchase a heart for a minimum donation of \$1.00. The hearts will be used to help decorate the bar for Valentine's Day. Kirby's Klub is located at 121 W. Main Street, Madison.

February 12th Declared by National Coalition to be "Freedom To Marry Day"

LBGT Community Members and Friends Are Being Urged to "Tie the Knot"

New York, NY—February 12 has been declared "Freedom To Marry Day" by the Freedom to Marry Coalition.

The Coalition includes Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; the Human Rights Campaign; the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force; Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation; the American Civil Liberties Union; Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders; the National Organization of Women; Parents, Friends, and Family of Lesbians and Gays; and the National Center for Lesbian Rights; and

the L. A. Gay & Lesbian Center, as well as hundreds of non-Gay and Gay local and state partners across the country.

Why February 12?

Two words: equality and love. Abraham Lincoln's birthday is a time to think about equality; Valentine's Day is a time to think of love. In other words, there's no better day to mark the importance of ending sex discrimination in marriage and allowing same-sex couples to share in the celebration, rights, and responsibilities of civil marriage.

A Hawaii Supreme Court decision on marriage for same-sex couples is expected soon, with national repercussions. Without discussion between Gay and non-Gay America, this tremendous chance for greater freedom and equality may be lost or significantly delayed.

"The choice of whether and whom to marry is one of the most important personal decisions there is," says Evan Wolfson, who spearheads Lambda's Marriage Project. "It belongs to couples in love, not politicians or governments. National

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Sol Kelly-Jones Receives ACLU's Young Civil Libertarian of the Year Award

Madison—On Saturday, January 17, 1998, Sol Kelly-Jones, 11, received the ACLU's Young Civil Libertarian of the Year Special Recognition Award. The Award was presented at the ACLU's annual Bill of Rights dinner in Madison.

Below is Sol's introduction delivered by Dianne Greenley, ACLU of Wisconsin board president, as she presented Sol her award. This is followed by the 11 year-old civil rights activist's acceptance speech.

Dianne Greenley

In March of 1997, a ten-year-old girl from a Lesbian family named Sol Kelley-Jones spoke out at a legislative hearing on a bill prohibiting same sex marriage—in a room filled with over 500 people, some of them openly hostile to her family. Despite the intimidating circumstances, she

By Bill Meunier

Madison— When Madison's School Board voted to approve a contract that included Domestic partnership benefits for its teachers, most observers thought the issue was settled. The reality is that the vote has become an issue in Madison's school board races and has sparked a Republican legislator's call for a statewide law that would prohibit the use of state funds to pay for domestic partnership benefits.

The contract which was finalized late last year, included health insurance benefits for the unmarried partners of Madison school teachers. It was approved on a 4 to 2 vote by the Madison School Board.

In two out of three School Board races in April's election, incumbents are being challenged due at least in part to their votes on the contract. Madison elects its school board on a city wide basis with each candidate running for a specific seat on the board.

In the contest for Seat 3, Mary Joe Rosenak is being challenged by Jo Anne Elder, the President of the Madison chapter of Madison's Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians. Rosenak voted against providing the benefits.

Elder said that she had decided to make the race even before the vote on the contract. "I am concerned about a wide variety of issues not just this one," she said. "I want to see quality education for everyone in Madison's schools." Nevertheless Elder was critical of Rosenak's vote on Domestic Partnership. "It's a matter of equal treatment," she said.

When contacted by *The Wisconsin Light* Rosenak said that for her the issue of domestic partnership benefits was one of cost. She said that the School Board had "given a free benefit" to the teachers union, Madison Teachers Incorporated, without getting anything in return. Rosenak estimated that the cost of the benefits would be \$300,000.

She said this estimate was based on 60 partners taking advantage of the plan at a cost of about \$5,000 each.

Rosenak said, "I believe that the way the health insurance system is structured nation wide needs to be changed, but I don't think a local school board is the place to do it."

She said that she was concerned because the district's substitute teachers currently have no health insurance adding "how can you justify giving health insurance to some employees but not to others. We have a state imposed cap on what we can spend, where will we find the money to pay for this?"

Rosenak blamed the union, MTL, for her lack of support. She said that the union refused to negotiate the issue of health insurance carriers. "Perhaps if the insurance

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clearly and articulately explained how the bill would hurt her and other kids in Gay and Lesbian families. Many legislators were impressed. And the next day her story made headline news throughout Wisconsin.

In April, she conducted a "Survey of Kids' Attitudes Toward Gay and Lesbian People" at her school. Her survey soon received the attention of local school board members and State Superintendent of Schools John Benson. And it was recently entered into the record at a Congressional briefing on homophobia-based hate crimes in Washington, DC.

Sol's work for Gay and Lesbian inclusiveness in the schools is ongoing. Here at

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They're Baaaack!—The cast of the Theatre X production, "Vampire Lesbians From Sodom" starring BJ Daniels is shown above. This is a new revamped rendition of the campy classic that played to sold out crowds last year. "Vampire Lesbians From Sodom" can be seen at 10:30, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. For ticket reservations call 291-7800.