

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



The Wisconsin Light

Bahamian Prime Minister Condemns Christian Right for Being "Un-Christian"

New York, NY—The Bahamian clergy's behavior—and its anti-Gay campaign titled "Save the Bahamas" is proving to be an international embarrassment to the non-discriminating government of the Bahamas.

On Monday, April 13, a large segment of Nassau's springtime tourists, Lesbians, affection, were greeted by a disgruntled coalition of enraged clergy leading their flocks of angry believers in protest.

The believers, up to 1,000 strong, marched only a block from where 800 Lesbians were docked aboard a cruise ship, The Seabreeze. They chanted "We don't want sissies," "Go Home," and "God made woman for man!"

"That last slogan—'woman for man'—probably didn't go down too well on a Lesbian cruise ship," reflected Jeanette Prather, a tour guide.

Most of the Lesbian passengers opted to steer clear of Nassau's shopping district, which is what the "Christians"—hoping to block Lesbian access to shops—had intended. Local Nassau businessmen and women were hardly amused, however, by the "Christians' antics.

A few angry Lesbian women, resenting that they were being made victims of "religiously-inspired" expulsions, confronted the crowd. Five, however, returned to the ship as the "Christians" turned on them in frightening fury. Three of the women, however, forged ahead into town, chased by a group of six believers who wished to demonstrate to the world the transforming power vouchsafed by their "holy" doctrines.

The Bahamas incident marks the second time the vacation plans aboard a cruise ship have been thwarted simply because it carried large numbers of individuals and couples openly espousing the joys of same-sex love.

In fact, mainland Florida too is catering to an ever-growing Gay tourist population. A Washington Post writer, Donald P. Baker, found his recent news report on Ft. Lauderdale reprinted in U.S. papers as distant geographically as The Dallas Morning News.

(See article on Fort Lauderdale in this issue.)

Prime Minister Speaks Out

On Wednesday, April 15, Hubert Ingraham, Prime Minister of the Bahamas went on TV to explain the Bahamian government's position of Gay tourists.

The Bahamas is a nation "based upon Christian principles," Ingraham said. As such, the Bahamian Constitution "provides guarantees for the protection of human rights and liberties of all persons" including those visiting the Bahamas.

After condemning "hysteria" as "breeding a mob mentality," Ingraham said, "My government rejects bias in any form and finds discrimination repugnant. My government repudiates hate mongering."

"I have been chilled by the vehemence of the expressions against Gay persons made by some of our newspapers and over our radio talk shows," Ingraham said. "I have been particularly pained by the position taken by a segment of the leadership of The Bahamas Christian Council."

"I believe that the hysteria being created by certain individuals against Gay persons visiting the Bahamas and who represent themselves as the leadership of the Christian Council is becoming irresponsible," Ingraham noted. "It is also un-Christian."

Ingraham chastised the "Christians" for failing to focus on "serious social problems" instead of focusing hatred on "innocent people."

Ingraham concluded by welcoming all who wish to visit the Bahamas, including Lesbians and Gay men.

Feds Say: Needle Exchange Helps Prevent AIDS Yet Refuse Funding

Activists Say Decision Will Cost Lives



Threesome? Vince — John Pankow, (Right) confronts his girlfriend, Nina — Jennifer Aniston, and her new Gay friend, George — Paul Rudd in the smash hit comedy, "Object of My Affection." The Gay themed movie can be seen throughout Wisconsin. (See our review on Page 18.)

Challengers Name Milwaukee LGBT Community Center as Fund Recipient

Milwaukee— The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center was recently selected as one of three recipients of the 1998 Challenging Party, a fund-raising event started 10 years ago to support Gay and Lesbian organizations.

"Recipient organizations are selected based on their impact on and value to the LGBT community," said Shelli Marquardt, one of the eight Challengers. "We see a tremendous value in the establishment of an LGBT community center in Milwaukee, and we want to give our wholehearted support to this effort," she added.

"We are pleased that the Challengers recognize the Center as a worthy cause. It says a lot about their faith in our mission and vision," said Neil Albrecht, Center Co-President. "Funds raised at the Challenging Party will benefit the Center's programs and provide vital start up funds to open a 'Home of Our Own,'" Albrecht added.

Originally started as a fund-raiser for the Milwaukee AIDS Project, the Challenging Party has developed into one of the LGBT community's largest fund-raising events. Marquardt explained that the eight "Challengers" fully underwrite the expense of the event, which is held in a different location each year with gourmet hors d'oeuvres and distinctive cocktails.

"We raised over \$210,000 in the first nine years. Last year, over 80 guests attended

the party raising an astounding \$24,475.

In 1998, the Challengers hope to exceed that," said Marquardt. Party guests allocate their donations of at least \$250 per person in any proportion to one, two or all three of the beneficiaries.

"The LGBT community is very fortunate to have a group of such dedicated individuals to organize this incredible event. The Challenging Party has provided crucial funds to many organizations serving the LGBT community. As a recipient, we are grateful beyond words," said Albrecht.

The Challenging Party will be held on Saturday, May 30th, when guests will be treated to hor d'oeuvres, cocktails (bathtub gin?) and live music. For more information about the Challenging Party, please call John Wirth, (414) 332-4811.

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is a community-based organization represented by more than 100 volunteers and over 240 members. The Center's mission is to improve the quality of life for LGBT people in the Milwaukee area. This mission is supported by the vision to provide a home for organizations, businesses, culture and diversity; advocate for and provide programs and services that meet the needs of our communities; and educate the public and our communities about our lives.

For more information, call the Center's Hotline at (414) 483-4710.

Sex Panic Supporters are Not the Monsters Their Detractors Make Them Out to Be

Commentary by Jim Baxter

Every publication I open these days—mainstream or Gay-oriented—seems to have something about a group called "Sex Panic." And most of what I read is either misinformation or lies.

Larry Kramer got the ball rolling in the New York Times (December 12, 1997) when he referred to Sex Panic as "an advocate of unsafe sex..." and complained "not one AIDS organization or national Gay and lesbian group has been willing to speak out and condemn or even criticize what Sex Panic is saying."

Never one to miss a moment of martyrdom, Kramer added: "There are only a few Gay men willing to take on the group and we have been vilified..."

Not to be outdone, Rich Tafel — execu-

tive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, a Gay political group — decided to join in the grandstanding with an opinion piece in the San Francisco Chronicle (January 7, 1998).

Sex Panic, he said, promotes "thoughtless unsafe sex complete with HIV infection as the ultimate liberation," and urged "that every Gay and Lesbian organization in the country denounce the antics of... Sex Panic..."

I would like to think that the reason that Gay and Lesbian organizations across the country have not jumped on the bandwagon is because they have actually listened — unlike Kramer and Tafel — to what the members of Sex Panic are say-

Washington, DC — Programs that let drug addicts exchange used needles for clean ones fight AIDS and do not encourage illegal drug use, the Clinton administration declared today, April 20—but it will not allow federal tax dollars to fund the programs.

The administration hopes that Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala's strong endorsement will encourage communities to start their own needle exchanges. But AIDS activists have said that federal money—so far banned—is key, and they see Shalala's decision as a defeat that will result in a great loss of life especially in minority communities.

Reaction came quickly on the Administration's announcement.

"Tens of thousands of additional lives may now be lost because President Clinton and Secretary Shalala have abdicated their leadership role by not allowing Federal funding of these critical needle exchange programs," said Paul Akio Kawata, Executive Director of the National Minority AIDS Council. Kawata went on to say that by leaving it to state and municipalities to fund needle exchange, the Federal government is placing "thousands of Americans at risk for HIV/AIDS."

The CDC has reported that people of color account for 72% of the male and 78% of the female cumulative AIDS cases directly and indirectly related to IV drug use.

"It is an act of audacity for the Clinton Administration to call for a Race Initiative on Health Disparities for 1999, when they have all the power at their disposal in 1998 to make huge inroads in slowing the HIV epidemic in African-American and Latino communities and refuse to employ it," said A. Cornelius Baker, Executive Director of The National Association of People with AIDS.

Baker went on to say that African-Americans and Latinos are communities that the Administration "does not care about."

The Human Right Campaign (HRC) denounced the Administration for the decision.

"It is unconscionable that the Administration can acknowledge that needle exchange programs save lives and then deny funds to implement them," said Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's political director.

HRC joined seven national HIV and AIDS organizations in sending a letter to President Clinton condemning his Administration's failure to lift the funding ban.

"The Administration has chosen the politically easy path," said Stachelberg.

Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) called on Shalala to resign.

Secretary Shalala's failure to lift the federal ban on needle exchange is an abdication of national leadership in the fight against AIDS," Nelson said. "As the country's top health official, if she cannot provide desperately needed leadership on policies that will save the lives of those at highest risk for HIV then she should resign and be replaced by a public health official with the courage to lead."

"Secretary Shalala has established a public health policy that is killing people," Nelson emphasized. "Everyday in America 33 people needlessly become infected with HIV through drug-related behaviors. While Secretary Shalala affirms that needle exchange can save these lives, she has prioritized politics over lifesaving public health policies. This continues the shameful legacy of public health failure in America to aggressively defeat the AIDS epidemic."

"The scientific evidence does show

Please See Sex Panic Page 10

Please See Needle Exchange Page 4