



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

The Wisconsin Light

Bette Midler and Gay Community Contribute to Raising Record Amount at AIDS Walk

By Terry Boughner

She stood on a bridge watching, as thousands passed by on the road below. She leaned forward on the rail, smiling, waving, now and again pointing out one or another for special attention. The people shouted back, "We love you, Bette. Thank you for coming." She smiled more broadly yet, reveling in the plaudits of the crowd.

She was Bette Midler, the Divine Miss M, one of Hollywood's mega-stars, the honorary chair of the 1996 AIDS Walk Wisconsin sponsored by the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) to raise money to help people with HIV/AIDS throughout the state. She had come to Milwaukee to serve, as Doug Nelson, ARCW's Executive director had earlier told the crowd, as "the wind beneath the wings of this year's AIDS Walk."

Now she stood on the Lincoln Memorial Drive Bridge waving to the happily excited crowd. Dressed in a suit of luminous green, in the bright sunlight that bathed her, no one could miss her.

Earlier that day, at the rally in Henry W. Maier Festival Park (Summerfest grounds), Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist had stood on the Miller Stage and proclaimed Sunday, September 22nd, the day of the walk, as AIDS Walk Wisconsin Day throughout the City of Milwaukee. The crowd of nearly 14,000 cheered, but the Mayor was announcing what was already an accomplished fact. It had been AIDS Walk Day from the beginning.

The day had dawned with dark clouds scudding across the sky. The forecast had mentioned rain. But by the time of the AIDS Walk Breakfast, held in the banquet room of the Italian Community Center, the sun had broken through. It was warm. It was bright. It was going to be a beautiful day.

Walk Breakfast

Never before, not in the seven year history of the Walk, had the Walk Breakfast been

TURN TO MIDLER, PAGE 2



BETTE MIDLER

Bright rainbow colored balloons were everywhere. I made my way along the back of the large room. News people were everywhere with their cameras, tape recorders and notebooks. Like everyone else, they were waiting. Why not? Posters announcing Midler's new movies, *The First Wives Club*, had been up for some time.

I heard one guy tell his companion, "All I wanta do is see her, just see her. That's all." The companion nodded. He understood.

Local and state political leaders were there in force; people like Congressmen Tom Barrett and Gerald Klezka, State Representative Tammy Baldwin, State Senators Alberta Darling and Peggy Rozensweig, Dane County Alderman Mike Verveer, Dick Wagner, Milwaukee County Executive Tom Ament, Milwaukee Aldermen Michael Murphy and Susan Braier. There were a lot more. I just

Good-By Hotel Washington

By Bill Meunier

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The struggle to rebuild what many considered to be the crown jewel among Wisconsin's Gay and Lesbian social spots, Madison's Hotel Washington, is apparently over.

The Hotel's owners, the Scheel family, have informed *The Wisconsin Light* that plans to rebuild the Hotel which was razed after a fire last February, 18, have been indefinitely put on hold due to a shortfall in financing money. The shortfall was caused by unexpectedly high construction costs.

Despite the set back, the Scheels are moving forward and looking for an alternative site to accommodate as many of the Hotel's businesses as possible.

"It's really devastating not only to myself but for everyone else," said Greg Scheel in an exclusive interview with *The Wisconsin Light*. "We have orders from the City to fill in the hole. City Regulations only give you so much time to either rebuild or cover up the hole that's left after a fire. Ours must be covered by the end of October."

Construction Costs Too High

Last June, the *Wisconsin Light* spoke with banking industry sources, HUD, the Scheels and local politicians all of whom expressed confidence that the project would come off. The Hotel ran a full page in the Madison Gay Directory. The ad said the Hotel would reopen in the Fall of 1996.

When the contractor estimates arrived, however, it became obvious that the plan to rebuild was in serious trouble. The estimates showed a construction cost that far exceeded the amount of available financing.

When the contractor estimates arrived, however, it became obvious that the plan to rebuild was in serious trouble.

The reconstruction plans called for adding one story to original three floor structure. This would have doubled the number of hotel rooms. The plans also envisioned an expansion of the building to the East occupying the site now used by a gas station.

"It takes twice as much money to rebuild as it does to buy an existing building," said Greg Scheel in an exclusive interview with *The Wisconsin Light*. "After we saw the estimates, we tried scaling back the plans. We dropped down to two floors, one less than we had, but doing that reduced the revenue generating capabilities of the Hotel. That in turn reduced the amount of financing we could get. The hotel's insurance covered its market value not the cost of rebuilding. We needed to be able to get more financing."

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Bette Midler, the Divine Miss M, cuts the ribbon to begin AIDS Walk Wisconsin while Congressman Gerald Klezka (D-Mil) joins in the applause.

David Mixner Speaks to Milwaukee Audience About Clinton, Politics and Outing

David Mixner and his partner, Patrick, visited Milwaukee last weekend for a book-signing reception on Saturday and to take part in AIDS Walk Wisconsin on Sunday, September 22, 1996 where over \$1 million was raised for AIDS services in the state. Mixner read from his book and answered questions about Clinton and outing. These remarks were very moving and we feel important. A transcript of his remarks follows.

How do you feel about President Clinton and are you going to vote for him?

"Well you know in 1992 I voted for Clinton with a great deal of hope and optimism and belief in the future. In 1996, let me be very clear, I am voting for Clinton. I am voting for Clinton for myself and for the community I am part of."

I do not want another Clarence Thomas or Anton Scalia on the Supreme Court of the United States. There is no question that the President and I have had disagreements. I went to jail, twice now. Both times the arresting officers were very cute by the way. I look just adorable in handcuffs. (Laughter). We'll leave it there. I strongly disagree with some of the things he's done. In 1963 John Kennedy sent Robert Kennedy to the South, as attorney general, to ask the Birmingham ministers of Martin Luther King and people who were staging massive demonstrations for freedom, to call off the demonstrations because they were concerned about the impact on the 1964 elections.

Martin Luther King looked at Bobby Kennedy and said, "Who do I tell that they must be a slave so you feel more politically comfortable."

I think it is important to understand that we are in a struggle for freedom. And that many of us are in better shape than most of us. And that it is important to understand that you don't put a movement for justice, every two years for an election, on hold.

That it is possible to have a massive determined unshakable civil rights movement and at the same time be politically practical. I don't know who I would tell.... maybe someone in this room can.... that they should be the victim of a gay bashing because it is not the right political timing; I don't who to tell that they should die of AIDS because it is not politically convenient right now to talk about it; I don't know who to tell that they should be fired from their job because we need just another year to put it together.

Or what mother or father I would like to face and say that their son or their daughter will commit suicide in shame for being gay or

lesbian, because it isn't convenient for us politically.

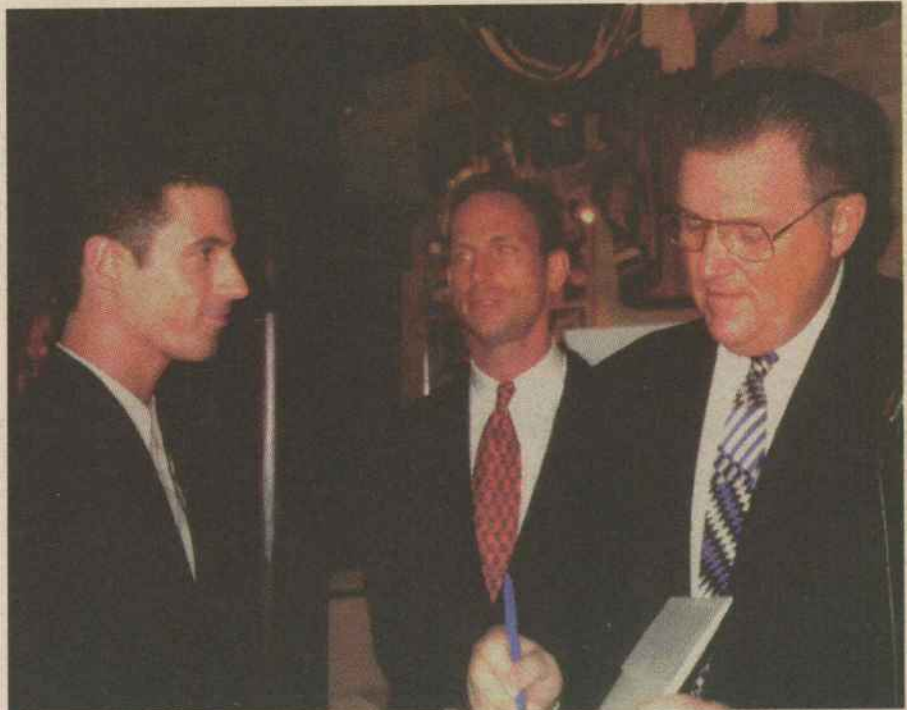
We do not have the right to remain silent, as long as one is not free among us. That means we have to be tough, some times our rhetoric a little inflamed so that they hear us. After I called the President's willingness to sign the Defense of Marriage Act cowardly and unconscionable, they sent three White House staff members out to talk to me.

When they came into my house and they sat down and the three cats sat around to see what is going to happen. Patrick said 'I don't think I can listen to this', and he went upstairs. And they went into this spiel about toning it down that it was an election year.

I said let me very frank, I'm supporting the president, I'm voting for the president, but not at the price of silence in the face of injustice. They said, "You have to, we're your friends." I said, the fact of the matter is, look me in the face and tell me you would be sitting here in my living room talking about our issues if I hadn't said those words." And they said, "No, we wouldn't be."

So I said, "You're teaching us well. Your teaching us well! We now understand that

TURN TO MIXNER, PAGE 27



David Mixner signs a copy of his book at the special reception held in his honor at the Broadway Theater Center in Milwaukee. The affair was a benefit for MAP. David's partner Patrick is standing behind him.

Jerry Johnson

Jerry Johnson

MIDLER

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sold out. It was this time. All the 750 tickets for the \$50 a plate fundraiser were gone. I didn't see them, is all.

The Breakfast was emceed by Carole Meekins news anchor at Today's TMJ-4, along with Miller Brewing, a corporate honor sponsor of the Walk. She is a person with a lively, dry wit, who would preside over the speakers, the politicians and the rest. I figured I'd heard all that before and went outside—to have a cigarette, yes, but like everyone else, I wanted to see Bette Midler—only I wanted to see her first.

She came in through a side entrance, flanked by people from Miller Brewery and its parent company, Philip Morris. Only 5'2", she walked quickly down the hall, smiling warmly to the few of us standing by.

When she entered the banquet room, coming in through the back, the ovation was thunderous. She paused, smiled, waved, and then went on to the head table where she was to sit. She's pure show biz, I thought, warm and gracious all the way.

In introducing Midler, Doug Nelson lauded her for her Oscar nominations and noted that she'd gotten her start in New York City's Continental Baths, a favorite Gay "entertainment" center of that era.

By the time she rose to speak, there was standing room only in the room. The Community Center's kitchen and wait staff was clustered along the back. I heard one of them say in awed tones, "Hey man, that's Bette Midler. She's real!"

Midler told some jokes. The crowd loved it. She spook movingly about the friends and family we all have lost to this disease, and the ones we all yet will lose. A sad silence filled the room.

"After 15 years, many tire of the battle against AIDS," Midler said. "But not in Milwaukee. I am proud to stand before you and amongst you." She received a standing ovation, the second one she'd received that morning, and was again applauded to the echo. (In fact, people wouldn't sit down until she told them to sit.)

Signing Reception

One of the events that had been set up was a benefit reception where, for \$500 you could get your picture taken with Bette and have her autograph a picture. There was a little girl there, perhaps no older than 10, whose par-

ents had given her the money to go. Now, there she was and in the face of THE Bette Midler, she was scared to death. She went, sat in a chair and froze.

Bette went to her at once, sat beside her, stroked her arm comfortingly, and with a tender, soft voice, told her she needn't be scared. Everything would be okay—and it was.

Pre-Walk Rally

I wandered down to the Summerfest Grounds to stand just inside the main gate and watch. There was a large crowd already there and more coming in all the time. There were all kinds of people, young and old, people with kids, and those in groups. There were African-Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, same-sex couples going along holding hands, differing-sex couples doing the same thing. There were people in wheel chairs being pushed by lovers or friends.

There was a young woman in a wheel chair. "I wouldn't miss this for anything," she said to me as she passed.

Here came David Mixner (see accompanying article), with his partner, Patrick. There was Sandy Lewis in her clown costume, as perky as could be. There was Jon Martin, Tom Reed, Tony Rhodes, joining the thousands of others, heading toward the rally site.

There was Judy who operates the switchboard at ARCW. She was right regal in a golden crown, meaning she'd raised \$1,000 plus. It was good to see that there were a goodly number of others wearing those crowns as well.

People passed by carrying signs showing that they had come from places all over the state; from Racine to Superior, from Eau Claire to Green Bay. There was a great, enthusiastic and large group from Madison.

There were people wearing all kinds of T-shirts, those with Mickey Mouse ears on them, and those with slogans, all kinds of slogans. "Jesus Protect Me From Your Followers" is one I remember.

I thought as I watched them all, of what Midler had said in her speech. Friends, lovers, family members, we've lost them all, so many, too many. And I thought of those I know struggling against this hideous virus. There are encouraging new drug therapies, as Meekins had said at the Breakfast, but still no cure, no cure at all.

A woman stopped to talk to me. I don't know her name. She told me that Mark Belling (local Rush Limbaugh wannabe) had told viewers of his Sunday TV show to stay away from this "stupid" walk.

"I wonder," she said, "if Belling has ever

Madison Reacts to Hotel Washington News

Reaction from leaders in Madison's Les/Bi/Gay community contacted by The Wisconsin Light was one of sadness, mixed with determination to carry on. Below is a representative sampling of that reaction.

Rich Maden who owns R Place Bar along with his lover Daniel Neuman "I'm sad to see it go. Greg and Sherry have to make their own decisions and I am sure that they are making the best one they can. I know and I have faith that it won't affect the other activities the Scheel's are involved in. Rodney's dream of a united community will live on. That puts the responsibility to support the Rodney Scheel house and other activities on the shoulders of the remaining bar owners. I am sure we all will continue to do the best we can.

Charlie Wells, General Manager of Manoeuvres (Owner, Ed Grunfeld was out of the country and unavailable for comment), "It's the end of a grand era and now its time to look at all the options for our community. I know that Ed shares the sadness that so many will feel when they hear the news."

Openly Gay Madison Alderman, Mike Verveer spoke with great difficulty when discussing the situation. "The City did everything it could," said Verveer, whose Aldermanic district includes, the site of the Hotel Washington."

"I am just devastated, The Hotel meant so much in terms of jobs, community and the social life of Madison. I came out there. Like so many others for me the Hotel Washington was my home away from home. My heart goes out to the Scheels and everyone who tried so hard to rebuild. Now we have to find ways to fill the void and reopen as many of the businesses as we can in other locations."

Openly Lesbian State Representative, Tammy Baldwin, "I find it difficult to express the sadness I feel. So many people worked so hard to rebuild. I hope they realize that every fight even those where we come up short is still a worthwhile effort. This tragedy has drawn us all closer together. We have learned from it and we are a stronger community for that. I wish to express my gratitude. I know that gratitude is shared by the entire Madison community. Now we must all work together and help the Scheels and others who were counting on the rebuilding effort to succeed."

Steve Starkey, Director of the Wisconsin Community Fund, former Co-Chair of GALVANize "This is a real loss for the community, partly because Madison isn't a real big town. It's not like Milwaukee where there are lots of different bars and lots of possibilities for people to go to. It was a community center, because there were five different bars in that building. There won't be anything that will be the scale of the Hotel Washington for some time. It's going to be difficult for the community. People have been awaiting the rebuilding. It's going to be hard."

stood by the bed of someone he's loved and watched them die?"

"Who knows," I replied. "Who knows what gets into people."

Near where I was standing, was a small stage. On it, performing for the crowd was a group from Burr Ridge, Illinois, called "Those Funny Little People." They were dressed in costumes faintly resembling the Campbells' Kids (if you don't remember, don't worry about it), and lip-synched to various songs. The group is Gay owned and really has a great act. For more information about them, call (630) 325-3320.

At the kick-off rally, there were more speeches—some of them really good.

Doug Nelson talked about the present and increasing growth of AIDS in Wisconsin. But what people said later that really moved them was his forceful determination to continue with ARCW's mission of saving lives through needle exchange and other prevention methods.

State Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-Madison) got up to speak and received a very enthusiastic welcome. She is a powerful speaker, but she is the well-loved leader of our community in our struggle for civil rights. I don't think it's too much to say that she is a female version of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for us.

When Bette Midler appeared on the Miller stage, the crowd went nuts. "Bette, Bette! We love you! We love you!"

Later, some guy—I don't know who he was—told me, "I shook her hand. I shook her hand," he repeated, holding it up for me to see. Would he ever wash it, I wondered?

Bette led the crowd in some cheers that she'd "just happened" to make up. Again she spoke of the losses we've endured, the need for the on-going struggle, the necessity of not giving in. Last things become too heavy, she mentioned the Packers. She hoped they'd win.

The Protesters Where is God?

Sitting in a classic white convertible near the park's main gate on North Harbor Drive, Bette cut the ribbon (with some little difficulty since the scissors were made of wood), and the Walk was off.

Where North Harbor Drive crosses East Michigan, that's where the "Christian" protesters were. There were between 15 and 20 of them, all stony faced men—and a few young boys, holding up signs condemning homosexuality as a sin and proclaiming AIDS

as "God's vengeance." A few of them also waved bibles around and were trying to hand out pamphlets.

Meanwhile, there was a plane flying around trailing a banner saying "Homosexuality is a Sin."

The great majority of walkers walked on by. As one person I overheard say to a friend, "Don't get yourself down to their level."

But a couple of young men, grabbed a sign one of the protesters was holding and kicked it in. If looks could kill, the expression on the "Christian's" face would have dropped them dead.

This is a country of free speech. The hate mongers had every right to be where they were, but they showed utterly no common sense in exercising that right.

The Walkers were thousands of people, Gays and non-Gays, who have been affected by AIDS. We have lost friends, lovers, family members. We have suffered and will suffer more.

How much are we to be asked to endure?

These religionists, judging, mocking, hating, as they do, people completely lacking in compassion and decency, were, by their very presence, rubbing salt into our bleeding wounds. That they got as little violent reaction as they did, was surprising.

A loving, suffering community though the AIDS community may be, but just how much can any people take?

I was going to walk away, but I heard a voice behind me ask, "Where is God?"

I turned just as her companion answered, "God is at the head of the Walk."

A good feeling came over me and I went on my way.

Conclusion

It was a great and glorious day. More than 13,000 teams from corporations, schools, churches and organizations participated in the event. The Walk was co-sponsored by ARCW, the Madison AIDS Support Network and Center Project of Green Bay.

All that's facts. The important thing to me was the individuals there, coming to the Walk one by one to march together for the cause.

In the end, \$1,005,042 was raised, at least three quarters of it, if not more, I figure, from Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgenders and Gay men. That'll probably be the headline, and it should be.

But I think we should remember the more than 600 volunteers who worked dogged hours to pull off the Walk without a seeming hitch. They took a lot of guff from people (including me) and deserve a huge helping of credit for all they did. My hat's off to them.

We need—as always, I think—to thank the corporate honor sponsors: Miller Brewing (whose material assistance brought Bette Midler to Milwaukee for the Walk), and Today's TMJ4.

We need to thank the Major sponsors: the Rath Foundation, Aurora Health Care, and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Jerry and I were just getting ready to leave the park, when someone asked, "What're they gonna do for an encore next year?"

I looked at him and said, "Next year? Forget next year. I'm gonna go home and go to bed!"

It was a great and glorious day.

THANK YOU!

On behalf of Wisconsinites affected by HIV & AIDS, and the agencies that serve them, AIDS Walk Wisconsin thanks the Gay & Lesbian Community for your divine support and heartfelt commitment.

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AIDS Walk Wisconsin is produced by the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. (ARCW)



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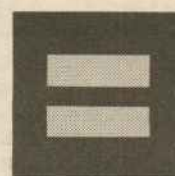
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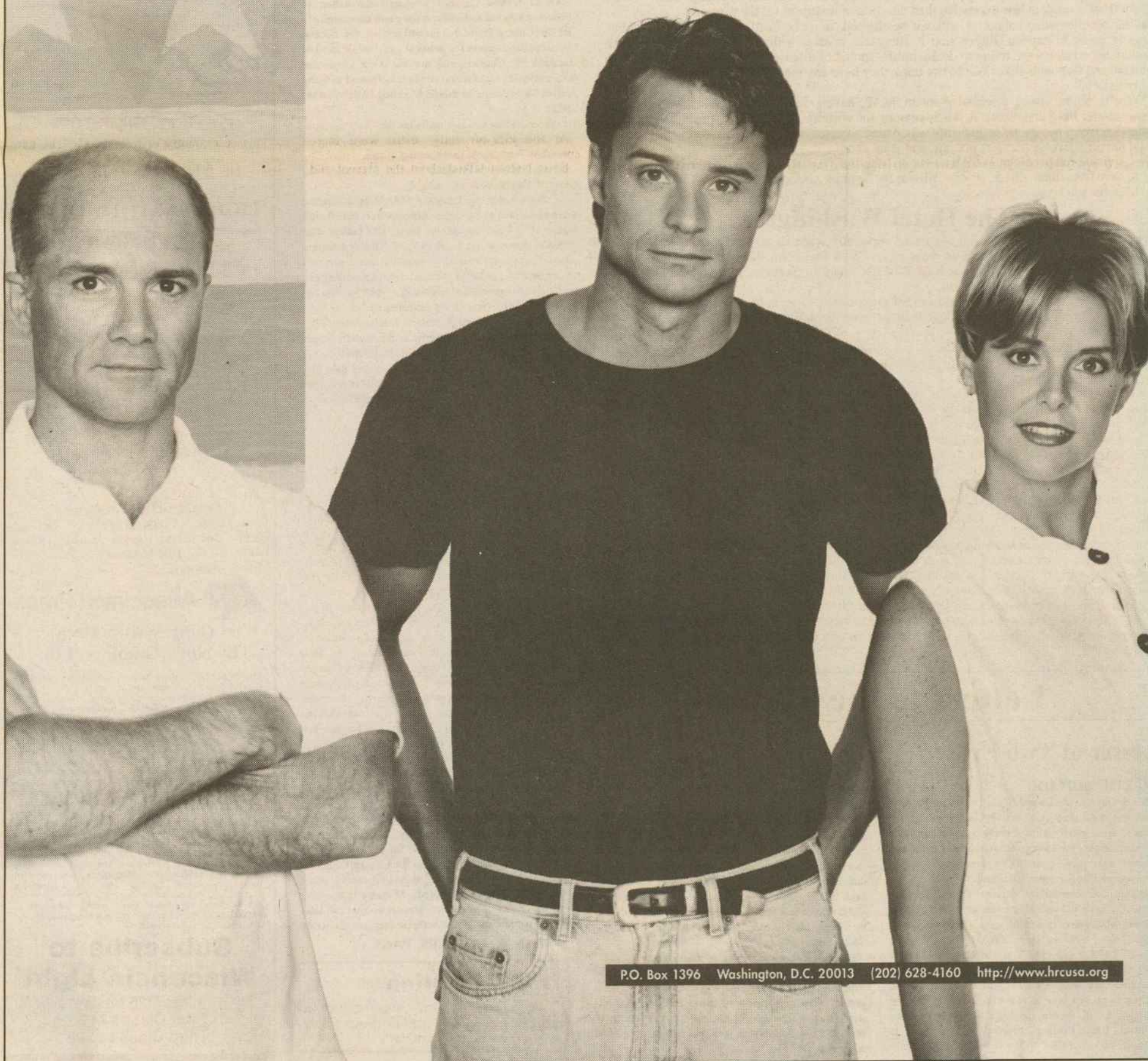
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Editorial

Handing Out Condoms in the Parks

The decision by the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) to distribute condoms in the public parks was a good one, an action in conformity to its mission to seek to save lives by preventing the spread of HIV. There were two problems, as we see it.

One problem was with the major media, both print and electronic. From those reporters—Joe Manning of the *Milwaukee Journal* is a prime example—one could easily infer that Gay people—all Gay people spend their time hunting sex in the parks. All this did was to add to the homophobic misconception that Lesbian or Gay is defined by an act, not a state of being. Therefore, sex is all that interests us, the only thing that interests us.

Charlie Sykes (WTMJ-radio) and Mark Belling (WISN-radio) were, predictably, not far behind. Those two who can be counted on to excoriate the *Journal*, on this issue treated it as holy writ.

Joined by Mark Siegrist's little Sunday discussion group on Channel 10 (with the sole, laudable exception of Kathleen Dunn) they made it a Gay problem—and only a Gay problem—and proceeded to wring their collective hands at the whole situation.

Sex in the public parks is wrong, it shouldn't be done, it's illegal, they wailed over and over again. Therefore, since it is wrong, and it shouldn't be done, condoms should not be distributed.

Reality check time. First of all, granted, sex in the public parks, before or after hours, shouldn't be done. A lot of things in this world shouldn't be done. But sex does happen in the public parks and, in all probability, is not going to stop.

Secondly, it is most certainly not the whole Gay male community, not by far, and not only Gay men who are involved with it. Nor is it the case that the only two people affected are the two men who have sex.

Many of the men who go to the parks for sex are men with wives and children. Let's bring this scenario into the picture. A man has sex in the park. He contracts HIV. He goes home. He has sex with his unknowing wife. She contracts HIV. Now there are two people infected with a disease for which there is no cure. What about the kids in all this, the ones already born to them? Suppose she becomes pregnant by him. What are the chances that the baby will be born HIV +?

Thirdly, the men who go to the parks to seek sex are there to have sex. We seriously doubt that someone comes to the park at two in the morning. He's taking a stroll and comes upon someone handing out condoms and information. "Gee," he says to himself, "I wasn't thinking about having sex, but now with this condom reminds me to do it. Anybody in the bushes there?"

Get real. Condoms are not going to encourage what these men already intend to do anyway. That is, we think, worth repeating. Condoms do not encourage this activity. What condoms do is to prevent the spread of disease, a terrible disease, a very expensive disease.

One question that must be asked, and hasn't been asked, is which is cheaper: a condom or a human life? Which is better, let the guy carry HIV home—or try and stop him from contracting it altogether?

The pundits in the major media (with the sole exception of Kathleen Dunn) raved on that the MAP volunteers in the parks handing out condoms were, by being there, breaking the law. Granted. They are. But they are breaking the law to save lives. Are not lives important? Should we not think a condom less expensive than the costs of treatment for the disease?

In our opinion, what cannot or will not be stopped, must be dealt with. Sex in the public parks is going to happen. Either stop it altogether or deal with it. The people from MAP handing out condoms are trying to deal with the spread of disease by handing out condoms, to non-Gay and Gay men alike. We do not think they have any other recourse and remain true to their mission.

There is, as we see it, a second problem. MAP, having decided to go ahead with the program, should have announced it. Their reasons for wishing to keep a low profile on this are understandable, but an issue like this was bound to come out. They, therefore, should have taken the offensive, given their reasons, and gone ahead.

We applaud the people at MAP who are distributing the condoms in the parks. They are trying to save lives, men's lives, women's lives, the lives of children yet unborn—not to mention the kids already here.

The Hotel Washington

How do you say good-bye to an old friend especially when it's a wonderful building that had been the hub of Gay social life in your city? With the news that the burned down Hotel Washington Rebuilding project is at least \$400,000 short on financing money, Madison Lesbians and Gays are faced with that question.

The Hotel Washington represented so much to so many people in Madison and beyond that it is difficult for many of us to express our feelings over the news. We are saddened, and we are grateful.

We are saddened that this wonderful place where so many came out, and socialized will apparently be no more. We can only say how sorry we are and how badly we feel. Somehow that doesn't seem like enough.

We are grateful for the 21 years, the Hotel served its community. Over two decades of good times, community support and wonderful memories can not be destroyed by any fire.

We are also grateful to the Scheel Family and their staff for doing everything they could to rebuild the dream. The Scheels waged a tenacious battle with a willingness to risk everything for the community they have for so long supported. They simply ran out of time.

This is a family that started the Rodney Scheel House and that supports numerous charities and causes. This is a family that without its major source of income, kept as many employees as it could on the payroll more than six months after the fire. The Scheels deserved better. They deserved to win this battle. Part of our disappointment is knowing how they must feel. Our hearts are broken along with theirs. To their credit, Greg and Sherry Scheel Nelson stand proudly, heads unbowed working towards relocating to an existing site.

Now Madison must examine and seek out ways to fill the hole that was ripped into the fabric of its community last February when the Hotel Washington burned. The dream of a united community working and socializing together must not be allowed to die.

We are sure that community can and will rise to the challenge. We are equally sure that the Scheels will play a major role in helping Madison to meet that challenge. We wish them well and we offer our support. Like the rest of our Wisconsin Gay and Lesbian community, we stand with them.

Letters to the Editor

Lesser of Two Evils?

TO THE EDITOR:

Many Gays, Lesbians and Bi's were pleased by their treatment at the democratic convention. Although it's great to see a major political party being inclusive of so many non-mainstream groups (people of color and women were also courted), a convention is not Congress and lip-service is not action.

Before our community decides to support Bill Clinton, I hope we will all remember recent history: Clinton abandoned his promise of universal health care; Clinton betrayed Gays in the military; Clinton passed NAFTA and GATT endangering workers in the US, Canada and Mexico; Clinton fired two strong, qualified black women, Lani Guinier and Dr. Joycelyn Elders — racism was a major motivation; Clinton supports a bill to ban marriage for Gays; Clinton bombed Iraq; Clinton awarded \$15 billion in "investment tax credits" to big business; Clinton gave

9 millionaires top positions in his administration (more than Reagan/Bush); Clinton eliminated over 200,000 federal jobs, most held by African Americans; Clinton passed a \$30 billion crime bill for more cops, prisons and death sentences; Clinton granted more billions to the Pentagon than they asked for while cutting Medicare; Clinton promised Haitians asylum, then blockaded them; Clinton signed the Torricelli bill, an escalation of the US brutal economic attack on Cuba unparalleled in the world to date; finally Clinton set back the country's low income and poor mothers and children, workers and immigrants more than 61 years by signing a bill to end welfare entitlement, gutting the Social Security Act of 1935.

Clinton did most of these barbaric acts while Congress was still controlled by the Democrats. What's more, no Republican president would have gotten away with many of these acts. Democrats would have fought against the return of this country to pre-1935 if a Republican president had proposed and supported it.

We cannot afford to support a man who is devastating so many US communities and even the world communities. To support Clinton because his administration has provided more funds for AIDS than the previous one or because his party's convention welcomed us (or because he used the G word!), would surely be a sell-out of immense proportions for some very minuscule returns — as well as a betrayal of so many other oppressed groups.

We do not have to support the lesser of two evils. We must begin to vote FOR a candidate, instead of against a worse one. That is one small way we can begin to change the dangerous direction of this country. A powerful Native American activist woman and mother, Winona LaDuke is running for vice president with well-known consumer activists Ralph Nader for President on the Greens Party. African American teacher/activist, Monica Moorehead and Gloria LaRiva, Chicana activist are running for president and vice president on the Workers World Party. We DO have other choices.

We are obviously living through the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire. The gap between the rich and the rest is greater than ever before. Soon moms and children will beg and sell in the streets. Government control of all underprivileged groups is becoming a daily reality. Let's not support and join up with Clinton and his friends who are openly destroying our country to satisfy corporate greed.

In Struggle,
Pat Gowens, Editor
Welfare Mothers Voice

Clinton and DOMA

TO THE EDITOR:

Showing that he has caved in to religious conservatives in order to be re-elected, President Clinton signed the misnamed "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA) early Saturday morning.

The bill, pushed through Congress by the Christian Coalition and Republicans, is little more than election year queer bashing. Although Clinton stated that his signing of DOMA should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence or intimidation against any person on the basis of sexual orientation, his signing of the bill sends a troubling message to the Nation that we as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender folks and our relationships are not equal and that we are expendable politically.

Queer Nation Chicago condemns the action of President Clinton and calls on the queer community to let Mr. Clinton know that he will not win the election by sacrificing queers for political gain. While most of us slept, Mr. Clinton snuck into the White House and committed an act of moral cowardice. Instead of being called Slick Willie, he should be called Moral Coward Bill.

Queer Nation Chicago calls on the queer community to express our outrage at Clinton's signing of DOMA. We encourage phoning, faxing, e-mailing and confronting the President to express our anger and disgust with his cowardly act.

Today's action by President Clinton is a stinging slap in the face to the queer community. It also should serve as a wake up call to those who believe that Clinton deserves our loyal support. This community should not put its trust into a so-called friend who will sacrifice us for political gain and then turn around and say that he opposes discrimination against us. The hypocrisy of Mr. Clinton is unbelievable.

Queer Nation Chicago vows to help organize a response by the queer community to the moral cowardice of Bill Clinton and to let him know that we are outraged. We refuse to be used for political gain in a Nation where heterosexism and homophobia are tools to win elections. The queer community says enough is enough!

John Pennycuff
Robert Castillo
Queer Nation, Chicago

Ignorance or Guts?

TO THE EDITOR:

Is it "maturity" or ignorance, apathy and lack of vision (not to mention guts) that is causing so many progressive people to fall in line behind Billy Boy Clinton while he bombs Iraq for oil — again — while he decimates mothers, workers, children, immigrants and other low-income families ending America-as-we-know-it; while he empowers rich corporations to slaughter workers and the environment in three countries...even while he votes so LesBiGay folks can't marry? Your latest issue looks like a propaganda sheet paid for by the Democratic party. Everyone loves a party, but must we gush over a party that has set back America at least 61 years — just because that party threw some nice parties for us not to mention mentioning the G word in some hypocritical oratory?

As Gay and Lesbian or Bisexual people I would hope that we care about the other communities that we belong to as well as the LesBiGay one: communities of color, workers, people with disabilities, children, mothers and the Earth. Maturity is facing the hard truth, not buying into/selling out for the easy fantasy. Maturity is recognizing that the Republican/Democrat parties are corporate controlled and sponsored — not people controlled or sponsored. Maturity is knowing that we can not continue to support corrupt twiddle-dees or twiddle-dums just because they are the likely

TURN TO LETTERS, PAGE 17

Caution

The fact that someone's name appears in this paper in no way implies sexual orientation.

Do-It-Yourself

TO THE EDITOR:

Crown your good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea..." (Well, maybe next time, eh?)

President Kennedy and President Johnson after him had the political gonads and the personal integrity and the security of personality to face the civil rights challenges of their day...

President Clinton on the other hand backtracked on nearly every civil rights issue of his day... Gays in the military, welfare reform, and same sex marriages — Clinton retreated or shrank from all of these...

Mr. President, you may have met President Kennedy, and you may have shook his hand, and you may wish to emulate his celebrity, but you Sir, are no Jack Kennedy...

Jack Kennedy would not have signed a bill he deemed to be divisive or unnecessary. He would have permitted it to become law without his signature or more likely he would have vetoed it on the merits.

Rand Knox
San Rafael, California

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October 10th Issue

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Ads - Oct. 8th

October 24th Issue

Articles—October 18th
Ads—October 22nd

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Editor's Note

National Coming Out Day is a Time to Be Honest About Yourself

By Terry Boughner

Friday, October 11th, is National Coming Out Day, and this is the story of three young men, "Rick" who I wrote about in the last issue, and "Todd" and "Mark."

Todd and Mark are young, 20-somethings, each has a sparkling smile and is gifted with campus good looks.

While Rick is closeted, but has the door open just a crack, Todd and Mark have faced that problem and are out.

In the meantime, Rick searches, apprehensive, struggling over what he knows, I think, he must eventually do—come to terms with himself, Todd and Mark have done that. It didn't come easy for them. It never does.

Todd came from a conservative family. Gays weren't high on their list of favorite people. He spent some time on the west coast and came home to give them the news. "Mom, Dad, I'm Gay."

And the response? "We knew."

Now, Todd and Mark are partnered to each other and are a pleasure to watch as they interact. A look, the tiniest gesture is all that it takes, and they communicate volumes with each other—exactly as my parents (non-Gay people both), once did.

I'm not saying that coming out will automatically lead to home and hearth with "the one," but I do say this.

There is a drive within most of us, regardless of our sexual orientation, that wants us to have a home, build a family, to unite ourselves with someone who loves and cherishes us as Mark and Todd do each other. I think it is well written that humans were not meant to live alone.

Sex, as great as it is, is no substitute for loving intimacy. I truly believe that for that to happen in a life, a person must be open, must be honest with themselves and with all others as well. Love, I think, has to rest on honesty and trust. If a person can't have those things with themselves, how can they have them with anyone else?

What I think many of us need to get across to ourselves is that sexual orientation is not a matter of choice. No one got up one morning and said to themselves, "By God, just to different, I think I'll be Gay—or Lesbian—or Bisexual—or Transgendered" As Molly would have said, "It just doesn't work that

way, McGee."

So too, we should understand that being Gay isn't only a matter of whom we want in our beds. Being Gay is a matter of wanting and needing emotional fulfillment from someone of our own gender.

There's nothing anyone can do to change any of that. Gays can't become non-Gay, non-Gays can't become Gay. The only thing that can be done in this case—and in every other case in one's life, as well—is to make peace with yourself and get on with life, getting the happiness (that along with hardship) is a part of any life.

On this National Coming Out Day, I would tell anyone who asks, don't be afraid. More people than you guess already "know." As one of my students told me, "Gee, Doc, we always knew. When did you find out?"

As to the "Gay lifestyle" that there's so much Right Wing and stupid prattle about, it's really not different from the non-Gay variety. What our "lifestyle" comes down to, actually, is who's going to do the dishes and who's going to take out the garbage.

We who are Gay (an all-inclusive word for this essay), fall in love—deeply in love, love so much it hurts. We date, we come together to build solid homes—and, in the process of growing together, we compromise a lot (anyone who thinks otherwise, is nuts).

There is not one of us who is not capable of having what Todd and Mark have, close, loving, building together, saying to each other in effect "You are the single most important human fact in my life. Above you there can be no one else."

Any of us can have that, but—and it's a big "but," it comes with openness and honesty. It can only happen in coming out. What is that Shakespeare wrote? To thine own self be true etc."

There are those who will probably deny it. "Oh, we live quite well together and don't tell anybody." Maybe. Still, I believe honesty is still a virtue and that we do ourselves as much good as we do the community, if we come out. It makes life so much simpler, really it does.

On this Coming Out Day, as on others, I urge you who are closeted to leave it. It's painful. Probably there's a price, but pay it. It's worth it, it really is.

Community Center to be Represented at HRL's Public Officials Reception

Milwaukee—The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center Project will be represented at this year's Public Officials Reception, a landmark occasion supporting National Coming Out Week, a function of the Human Rights League (HRL). The reception will take place Tuesday, October 15, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Village Church, 130 E. Juneau.


Members of the LGBT Community Center Project are excited to be on this year's agenda at the Public Officials Reception with plans of announcing an upcoming contest to help with the naming of the community center.

The Public Officials Reception is an annual event for elected and appointed officials from state, federal, and local government to meet their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender constituents and organizational leaders.

Free Flu Shots to be Offered Beginning October 17 and 22


Milwaukee -- The flu season is almost upon us. Once again, Flu Shots will be offered at The M & M Club (in the upper level Banquet Room) on Thursday, October 17, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 22, from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The vaccinations continue to be recommended for individuals who are immune compromised and their care takers. The community outreach is sponsored by The Gay & Lesbian Nurses' Association, The M & M Club, The Milwaukee Health Department, BESTD Clinic, St. Camillus HIV/AIDS Ministry, In Step, and Q-Voice magazines. The flu shots are free -- however, donations are accepted. For more information, please contact BESTD Clinic at 272-2144 or St. Camillus HIV/AIDS Ministry at (414) 259-4664.

COME OUT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COME OUT.



To kick off National Coming Out Week, we invite you to join us and PFLAG on Sunday, October 6th to a reception supporting the rights of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Family, friends and allies are invited to enjoy guest speakers, live music, refreshments and art projects for kids.

Join us at the Milwaukee Art Museum, East Entrance, 750 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr. 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Call 228-1921 for more information.



NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY:

A Local Project of Human Rights League

Each year, HRL hosts a series of events to address the wide variety of "coming out" joys, challenges and issues. Event focus on **October 11, National Coming Out Day.**

Families, Friends & Allies: Straight, Not Narrow

Sunday, Oct. 6, 1-4pm
Milwaukee Art Museum

Special event for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and transgendered (LGBT) people and our supports, friends and families to come out and have a good time together. Entertainment, refreshment, activities for kids, family pictures, tours and surprises.

OUT on the Job: Live Channel 14 Call-In-Show

Thursday, Oct. 10, 1-4pm
MATA, 1610 N. 2nd Street

Televised panel presentation and community discussion on being out at work, sharing personal information, laws and discrimination issues and other workplace challenges for the LGBT communities.

Public Officials Reception

Tuesday, Oct. 15, 5:30-7:30pm
Village Church, 130 East Juneau

Annual event for elected and appointed officials from state, federal and local government to meet their Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and transgendered constituents and organizational leaders; a relaxed atmosphere with snacks and brief program.



National Coming Out Day Awards

Presented at the Public Officials Reception each year, these awards recognize the efforts of those who are promoting and reflecting a positive Gay/Lesbian image through participation in the community.

Town Hall Meeting with Melinda Paras

Thursday, Oct. 17, 6-8pm
Int'l Building, 611 West National Avenue

Meet and address national and local issues with the executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the premier grassroots organizing group for LGBT concerns (secured parking available).

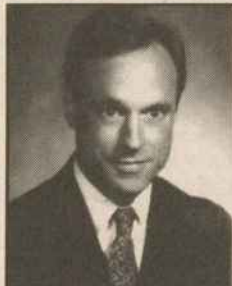
Workshop with Melinda Paras: Organizing in a Multi-Cultural LGBT Community

Saturday, Oct. 19, 9am-Noon
UW-Milwaukee Student Union, Wisconsin Room, 2200 East Kenwood Blvd.

Paras will share concepts and strategies for diversity and help participants maximize the benefits and address the challenges of multi-cultural organizational development. \$4 fee; free to students. Co-sponsored by LGB Community at UWM.

For more information on events, contact the Human Rights League for Lesbians & Gays at 414/228-1921. Special thanks to the Challenging Party. Major sponsorship by Cream City Foundation.

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LETTERS

Continued from Page 4

winners. Maturity is facing the fact that our two parties are working together to reinstate slavery, promote violence and increase the wealth of their affluent bosses (big business) — while throwing a few bones to the "mature" people now and then to keep them from acknowledging reality and leaving that perpetual, all-American, middle-class state of denial.

Please allow your readers to hear about the other candidates running for president and vice-president. For the first time in years, we have an opportunity to actually choose among several candidates who care about the people and the community — not just money.

Tell readers about Winona LaDuke running for vice president on the Greens Party with Ralph Nader. Let them learn about the power and passion of Winona LaDuke, Indian woman who fights for the people and the Earth — not money. Tell them about Monica Moorehead and Gloria LaRiva running for president on the Workers World party — two strong women who also believe in and fight for the people — not money.

There are those who will insist we must always vote for the money-madness parties because they will win. But mature people know that real change comes slowly and gradually. Mature people know that at this very moment, Nader and LaDuke, or Moorehead and LaRiva could and would be elected — IF THE PEOPLE KNEW THE TRUTH ABOUT THEM AND KNEW THAT THEY ARE RUNNING! The majority of those citizens who never vote, would vote in this election if they had access to the information that is so carefully hidden from them by our corporate media. Even some of your gung-ho demobots might vote for someone they believe in — IF THEY KNEW ABOUT THEM.

We will never change our system by "maturely" resigning ourselves to violent, greedy rulers while convincing ourselves it's the best we powerless people can do. We must change this corrupt system controlled by the very rich. One small start is to support candidates, work for candidates, write about candidates and vote for candidates who care about the people and the Earth — not just money.

P. Georgia Wells
Milwaukee

Sex in the Parks

TO THE EDITOR:

Over one hundred years ago, Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Iolanthe* acknowledged the Victorian British custom of having sex in public parks. The lines are:

"I heard the minx remark
She'd meet him after dark
Inside St. James's Park
And give him one."

In World War II, Milwaukee's Juneau Park gained notoriety as a trysting place where sailors from Great Lakes were taken by Milwaukee minxes who wanted to "give them one." The sex in Juneau Park hasn't stopped since. I've seen men and women having

sexual relations in the park bushes in broad daylight. I've heard tales of men who've taken their lady friends into the ladies' restroom for intercourse.

Juneau isn't the only park where people have sex. Estabrook Park has a famous parking lot where men have driven their women for sex for many decades. I remember trips in the family car in the 1950's through a Wauwatosa parkway, where we marveled at all the parked cars and heard the jokes our parents made. Later it was a standing joke that good entertainment was to go to certain parks and look for "rocking" cars, the occupants of which were then interrupted by pounding on the windows.

When sex in parks was confined largely to men and women, it didn't gain much attention. Now that men are having sex with men, the attitude has changed. In an age of environmentalism, the director of Milwaukee's park system admits to having denuded our parks of shrubbery to try to stop sexual activity. (And we thought it was to stop the muggers.) Parks that a county ordinance long established to close at midnight are suddenly being closed at 10:00 p.m. The park director has stated on television that Milwaukee's parks are "for families." In that case, why is she taking money from single taxpayers? The attitude she expressed reaches beyond the question of having sex in parks, and suggests that she considers people she doesn't like, i.e. "non-family" people, to be undesirable who are to be rousted out of the parks. Perhaps her attitude explains the harassment experienced by street people and other single men in our parks.

The new attitude of the post-Schulz park administration is paralleled by Milwaukee's post-Arreola Police Department, which is run not by elected officials, but by an atavism, the puritanical Breier establishment that's regained control since Mayor Norquist undercut Chief Arreola's authority several years ago. Laws that weren't much enforced before, even in Chief Breier's last days, are suddenly promoted as necessary to the preservation of civilization. Federal money that was supposed to pay for more police officers to arrest drug dealers and close crack houses is instead diverted to sending packs of police cars to chase people around Juneau Park, much as wolf packs chase their prey. No doubt late night "pogroms" in other parks are also absorbing police manpower that should be used for preventing drug dealers from shooting officers.

Who really cares if people are having sex in a park after 10:00 p.m.? There are no children or even heterosexual adults roaming around the bushes at that hour, unless perhaps some man and woman looking for a quiet place to have sex. I doubt if one person in a hundred cares about men and women having late night sex in our parks, so what motivates the concern over men having sex with men? If people aren't making noise and disturbing neighbors who are trying to sleep, I frankly can't see the importance of diverting tax money to keep people out of the parks late at night — and 10:00 p.m. isn't really "late" at night.

What should be of serious concern in this controversy is not who's in the park last at night, but the selective enforcement of the law by a corrupt police department to harass people it doesn't like. As of Friday, September 13, Juneau Park now sports a sign at its entrance stating that it closes at 10:00 p.m. The sign is affixed to a post which has, for several years, supported a "No Dogs" sign. The police never enforce the laws against dogs in the park, but they get hydrophobic if they encounter a single male in the park after 10:00 p.m. I doubt very seriously they'd give a ticket to a female in the park after that hour, or to anyone they thought to be a heterosexual. The way police selectively use the law against people they don't like is readily demonstrated by their enforcement of rules against drinking in parks. They harass street people they don't like, but never bother families who are drinking illegally. Former County Executive Dave Schulz specifically and publicly endorsed that particular bit of discrimination. Using selective enforcement of laws to harass people you don't like is the worst form of political corruption, and a society that claims to operate under the rule of law shouldn't tolerate it.

Further cause for suspicion of the motives of police and politicians is their attitude toward the program that gives clean needles to drug addicts, and which, like the currently controversial park condom distribution program, is designed to slow the spread of AIDS. Surely the distribution of syringes to drug addicts is illegal, or was when the needle exchange program started. Did local politicians and police interfere with needle exchanges? If not, why do they now declare war on condom distribution? There seems to be only one plausible reason for treating the two programs differently: homophobia. Drug addicts receiving clean needles are nearly all male heterosexuals who, if they get AIDS, are likely to spread it to their girlfriends and their children. Our local politicians and police are nearly all heterosexuals, so they can sympathize with the drug addicts.

It's hard to see in this park "pogrom" a genuine concern with law enforcement. If that were the case, other laws would be enforced which are simply ignored. Despite the "No Dogs" sign in Juneau park, a uniformed Milwaukee Police officer was once seen running his dog there, and it wasn't even on a leash. That's at least two violations by a police officer of ordinances he swore to enforce. When other laws aren't being enforced, and when police officers themselves flaunt the law, it's hard to believe that concern with late night sex in the parks arises from a genuine concern for enforcing the law; it's homophobia, pure and simple. Those who deny they're motivated by homophobia won't convince me until I see them begin to enforce all our laws, and until I see them enforce those laws equally for all people, without the discrimination that now prevails in City Hall, the County Courthouse, and our Police and Sheriff's Departments.

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A 16 Year-Old Gay Youth Talks About Women, Religion and Sex

By Allen

After living in the same house for eleven years, (all of my life), I wasn't all too enthusiastic about moving to an entirely new city. This was because I knew that in this new "culture", I would have to create new relationships, re-attain a reputation of honesty and intelligence, and enter the teen years in an unknown, therefore, uncomfortable environment.

In recollection, I wonder if I had any idea how hard being a Gay teen was really going to be. Let me tell you right now that I always knew I was Gay. I was never attracted to girls, but as early as the third grade, I found myself interested in experimentation with the guys.

The guys eventually outgrew this experimentation with the same sex, (which is what psychologists say it sexually normal), but I was perfectly content with touching and loving the male body. Nonetheless, I was only a pre-adolescent child, and although I had sexual urges, they are nothing like that which I experience now.

In the seventh grade, as I searched so hard to find my identity as a person, and my place in the world, my eyes fell upon David.

His innocent face, slender, yet masculine body, led to an instant attraction. His dark green eyes, long eye-lashes, jock-like buzz, and tanned skin led to an instant attraction. His smooth and casual walk, mid-deep voice, and fashion awareness led to an instant attraction. This attraction has followed me through the years, as I have followed the going-on's of David's life.

I've never talked to him, although I have talked to all of his friends. I have never seen him look at me. As far as his mind goes, we are complete and utter strangers. But I love him so much, I want him so badly.

On occasion, I lie in bed and sob about my situation. My mother has raised me to be like herself: intelligent, strong, and not the "woe-is-me" type. This is why I feel so foolish sobbing, but it hurts gravely. And on occasion, the pain wells up beyond my heart's iron curtain and unleashes itself.

I'd say that about ten people know I'm Gay. Maybe five to ten more have a glimmering, but they probably wouldn't say yes if it were in a test question. To emphasize this point, (please take this in the most non-egotistical way), let me explain that I am a relatively popular person. When people walk with me, they joke that I must be God, since everybody seems to know me. It isn't unusual for me to say hi to twenty or so people as I walk to class.

That is ten people, in my seven to eight hundred person spectrum, that know the truth. Nobody in my family knows. They haven't the slightest idea. I mean, I have had five girlfriends in my lifetime, and go on dates on the weekends, (ironically, most of the dates are with girls who know I'm Gay).

Of the ten, only two are guys. Most of the guys I know are repulsed when they hear that I am Gay. As a matter of fact, one of my best friends is dumping me because I finally cleared up the fuzzy question of whether or not I was Gay. (I suppose showing him a CD-ROM of Gay porno might not have been the best way to tell him, but he needed to get a firm impression of the truth.)

Girls, on the other hand, tend to be more accepting of my homosexuality. The exact cause of this phenomena I haven't determined. Perhaps it is the maternal and understanding side of women that is replaced by barbarianism and violence in men. Still, there are some girls who find my homosexuality just as disgusting as most of my male peers.

I recall a time when I was walking with a friend of mine who knows that I'm Gay. One of her friends came up and joined the conversation. Not thinking, I continued to discuss things that a "normal" guy wouldn't. Like what the cute guys were wearing, or who I really want to get in bed with, etc.

When the girl realized this, she started taunting me about my deformed attribute. Her entire demeanor changed, and I felt an instant humiliation for who I was. God, I wish I would have said something in defense to her. But, I didn't. I should never have to feel bad about who I am. Isn't that what all the overly-positive people say?

Well, I did. I felt really bad. It not only ruined my day, but this girl continues to act repulsed by me every time I see her. In present, I have made a few come-backs which have realigned my self-esteem, but that day can never be re-appropriated.

Sometimes, as I lie in bed and sob, I wonder why I continue the lies.

"Why not just come out of the closet?" I have asked myself. Life is so bleak for me, and my once optimistic outlook has shrunk to cynical pessimism. I've practically deleted any religious beliefs I once had, due to the cynicism, and I rarely see a purpose for human socialism. After all, when in public, I am the straight, normal, jock-resembling teen-age boy

One thing I don't regret about being Gay is that I can't imagine loving anything but the male body. It is so inexplicably gorgeous! From muscles, to dimples, to stubble, to body hair, to tattoos, to pierces, to the way clothes fall on the chest and butt, and yes, I can't leave out the crotch. Us Gay men get to utilize these wonderful tools with which we have been endowed in the most beautiful ways, (beautiful to me, that is).

Women, on the other hand, have what? Nothing. Perhaps breasts, but you can't very well have sex with a breast like you can with a penis.

And having two penises in a sexual relationship, seems so much more natural and exciting than the bland heterosexual use of only one. I guess that's why I'm homosexual and not heterosexual.

My biggest problem with being Gay is religion. I was a very serious religionist up until about my teens. Then, as my hormones raged, and little "Gay" cells pounded at every wall of my body and soul, things in my church stopped making sense. I wanted to know why being Gay, a justifiable orientation, was so evil. There was no answer.

I prayed about it, there was no answer. During my religious studies, instead of growing closer to my religion, I was pushed away by its beliefs. Bit by bit, I laid the groundwork for the values that felt right to me, not evil or sin-like, and as I turned around to see where I had gone, my religion and myself had gone in radically different directions. Today, I don't want to be an atheist, but an on-edge type with my own religion. It has answered enough questions about where I'm from, why I'm here, and where I'm going, that I don't feel like dropping it altogether. Nonetheless, I have a hard time taking any scriptural or authoritatively-given lessons with more than a pinch of salt.

Sometimes I want to be Gay. Other times, I just wish I could be part of the crowd that has unknowingly hated, abused, and neglected me all of my sexual life. My parents, who if they knew would be in denial, would say I still haven't found my sexual identity. And that I was just ending the experimentation stage at a later age.

Experimentation normally ends around seven—I'm sixteen. Maybe psychologists would validate their assumptions with wordy scientific studies, but I know who I am.

I am Gay. Wow, it feels so weird to say that in any situation other than murmurs or in my mind! I am really Gay. I love men! I want to have sex with gorgeous, sweaty, god-like men! And that's all right.



SUSAN GUERRO AND DAN FONS

Time to Pause and Say a Fond Farewell to Those Who Are Moving On

By Terry Boughner

I believe in Heaven. I have a few "minor" questions about how one gets there, but I believe in it.

For reasons buried in my personality, I believe that Heaven is a place where there will be no change, a place where we will never have to stand in a doorway and wave good by to old and valued friends.

But this isn't Heaven, is it? So they tell me, anyway, and I must do what I dislike most. I must wave and say good by.

Susan Guerrero, Doug Nelson's secretary at the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) is leaving to take up a new and wonderful job in St. Paul. It is good for her, but I will miss her and many, many others will as well.

I know the people, young and old, who would find their way to her desk. They had troubles, they were down, but Susan would set and listen with all the compassion in her large heart.

Afterward, she would cry sometimes. I know. She told me.

Susan is one of those incredibly decent people who go out of their way to help others—above and beyond, as they say. You need some last minute touches before opening up the house to a tour, Susan came in the early a.m. to push a sweeper about.

Has it been a rough day? She has a lot better things to do than to listen, but listen she always did, patiently, and with a kind and

Rep. Baldwin Briefs LAMM On Same Sex Marriage Bills

Milwaukee—Lesbians, Gay men, and their supporters were briefed on Lesbian/Gay marriage, and other pro-active queer initiatives, by openly Lesbian State Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-Madison) at a September 24 forum sponsored by the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee (LAMM).

Nationwide, Lesbians and Gay men had recently seen passage by an overwhelming majority of a federal bill restricting marriage to those of the opposite sex, commonly referred to as the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). They had also seen the defeat of a federal non-discrimination act (ENDA) that would have prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation.

Wisconsin passed a bill prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations, in 1982.

"I am angry," Baldwin said, "at the cowardice in many of the Washington votes."

Efforts to introduce a Wisconsin bill to restrict marriage to those of the opposite sex have up to this point been limited. One, initiated by a moderate Republican, was withdrawn, Baldwin said, when opposition poured in from throughout the state. Another, supported by the Wisconsin Christian Coalition (WCU) and others of the extremist right, did not get to a vote in the last session. But, Baldwin said, she expects the bill to be introduced again at the next session, in January.

Baldwin has her own pro-active Lesbian/Gay marriage legislation, to be introduced in the January session as an accompanying counter-measure. Noting that we have come out as individuals but not as families, Baldwin urged that we be ready to come out as Lesbian and Gay families. "This will be the time," she says, "when we will need our activism."

Making use of various photo-ops, and a queer poster family campaign, could be effective strategies, Baldwin noted in responding to a question on appropriate publicity. "We need to be confident of our timing, though," she added, asking that media build-up of the campaign not be out of sync with the legislative agenda.

In speaking to the future of Lesbian and Gay marriage activism in Wisconsin, Baldwin said, "There is no deferring on this issue."

cheery word at the end.

I know that in St. Paul, a wonderful new opportunity awaits her, but very selfishly, I wish she weren't going. I will miss her.

Ross and Robert

On Wednesday, September 4th, many of Ross Draegert's and Dr. Robert Starshak's friends gathered for a farewell dinner in the banquet room of the M&M Club. The food was delectable, the speeches were warm and full of heart-felt emotion, but underlying it all was the regret that Ross and Robert are leaving Milwaukee.

They're going to live out east, in Washington Irving country, along the fabled, ghost-ridden hills that is Hudson River country. Splendid new opportunities await them, but it is hard to see them go.

So many, many times, Ross and Robert have opened their beautiful home as a setting for fundraisers and receptions for the Cream City Foundation and others.

Further, they have been generous in other ways as well, far, far beyond what is or ever will be generally known.

One steamy early evening in August, some of their friends gathered at their home, unbeknownst to them. They were out east. We were there to have a group photo taken, a gift that was given to them at the dinner.

After the picture was taken, I went out into the broad lawn. There was an rope swing there, the kind I remember as a kid. I could not resist giving myself a ride.

The air was hazy. All was still. Mother Michigan beneath the cliff seemed to be asleep.

I thought about all that Ross and Robert have done for our community—and I'm grateful, don't get me wrong. But I thought then that what I'll remember most about them is Ross's impish humor and Robert's wry way of looking at things in a manner as gracious as the 18th Century furnishings that adorn his and Ross's home.

I will remember, too, that after over 25 years of partnered life together, it is still obvious that they are so very much in love. It's the kind that says, "You are the single most important human fact in my life. Above you there can be no other." Perhaps that's why they can be so giving of themselves. Only love, true love, can allow their kind of unselfishness to happen, I think.

Dan Fons

Dan Fons is leaving Milwaukee to live in San Francisco. Like the others, new opportunities await, but like the others, he will be sorely missed.

Always charming, and seemingly shy, Dan has long been an activist in our community. The cable TV show that he co-hosted and co-produced has been one of the main vehicles in educating the broader community about us. But more than that, it reaches out to Lesbians, Bisexuals and Gay men, saying to them, in effect, "We're here for you. You're okay." I only wish there'd been something like that when I was young.

Dan's work with ACT UP has been constant over the years. He, along with others in the group stood year after year, handing out condoms on the school house steps. That took courage, but it also took a desire to save human lives. Dan will never know, no one will ever know, how many lives he saved by his courage, but quantity doesn't matter. We all have reason to be grateful to him for caring when a lot of big wigs did not.

Some activists are strident. Dan is not. He is graced by a shy, self-effacing humor that is gentle to behold. That is what I will remember most about him—and what I will miss.

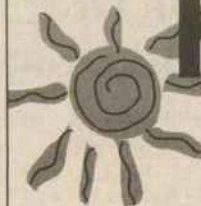
Susan, Ross and Robert, and Dan are leaving Milwaukee to expand their lives. For that reason, we wish them all the best. But in going, they should all know that they have friends here who will be thinking about them as we thank them for all they've done.

Yes, I am happy for them, but no, I do not like change.

Frontiers October Events

- Oct. 11—7:30 p.m.—Dining out at "The Flamingo," 636 State St.
 - Oct. 12—8:00 p.m.—The process of "Coming Out."
 - Oct. 16—7:30 p.m.—Film circle, **Boys in the Band**.
 - Oct. 19—7:00 p.m.—Bridge for everyone.
 - Oct. 26—6:00 p.m.—Annual Hal-lowe'en dinner.
 - Oct. 29—7:30 p.m.—Man to Man Rap.
- For locations of functions and membership information, please call David @ (608) 274-5959.

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Walktoberfest

For Gays and Lesbians, It's Nothing More Than the Trickle-Down Equality

WAITING OUR TURN
AT THE DEMOCRATIC FOUNTAIN

Commentary by John Kusch

Imagine that you are tied to a chair with twine, gagged with nylons, and blindfolded. You can't move, you can't talk, and everything is dark. There is a gunman on either side of you, and each has a loaded revolver pressed to your head. The gunman on your right says he'll shoot you no matter what, but if you behave, if you're very quiet and don't make a fuss, he might grant you a few more moments of life.

The gunman on your left, however, says that he will spare your life and set you free, but there's one catch: first you give all your money.

You have one decision to make: will you deal with the gunman on the right or with the gunman on the left? Die a certain death now or later, or keep your life but lose your money?

If you chose the gunman on the left, as most people would, in those extreme circumstances that would seem like a victory. Sure, he took your money, but you're alive, aren't you?

This is the sorry political situation we find ourselves in as Gay and Lesbian Americans. In our struggle to build lives, careers and families, we are constantly on the defensive against a public whose treatment of our sexuality ranges from uncomfortable silence to violent rejection to self-righteous condemnation; and where acceptance, much less tolerance, contains more lip service than substance.

We find ourselves having to constantly justify our own existence, battling the stigmas of promiscuity, disease, pedophilia and amorality that are heaped upon us, often by ignorant people who can't distinguish stigma from fact. In this movement that is barely a movement, in this fight for our dignity and, essentially, our lives, it is no surprise that we think we're making progress.

Look at the headlines in the Gay press, and how they scramble for any indication that our movement is politically viable. Read them there, because you won't find them in the straight press.

Clinton addresses the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) OutVote '96, by videotape, and HRC hails this supposedly front-page event as a Presidential first. Then again, George Stephanopolous did actually show up in the flesh. Was Clinton sending us a message, sending us someone who is allegedly one of our own?

Log Cabin Republicans are allowed to exist, without the GOP's sanction and outside of the Republican Convention; but despite the GOP's obvious snub against Log Cabin, their mere existence seem to be reason for optimism.

Maybe they're inspired by Steve Gunderson. Maybe his reluctance to come out mirrors the overall sluggishness of the Republican party.

Air Force Major Debra Meeks was acquitted on charges of sodomy, thereby avoiding a messy court martial and the possibility of substantial time in the brig. Is this really a victory for the Gay/Lesbian community? If she is actually straight, her case merely ducks the issue of Gays in the military. However, if she is a Lesbian, it is a travesty, since it's not the accusations per se that should be challenged, but the military policy on Gays and Lesbians itself.

This military policy shouldn't be sidestepped through contorted legal channels. It should be fought, tooth and nail. It's amazing how excited we get over the tiniest apparent gain. It's even more amazing how we find gains where they might not even exist.

Remember the trickle-down theory of economics? Supposedly, if the people who had the most money got to keep more of it, they would invest in commerce that would invigorate the economy, create jobs, and bring plenty to all.

Well, it didn't really work out that way. Not only did the rich stay that way, but when they did invest, it was in companies that stripped its workers of wages, job security, health insurance, and union protection. Whatever came down truly was a trickle.

Now think about our Gay and Lesbian

political leaders. They pander, on each side of the imaginary political fence, to Representatives and Senators, to secretaries and aides, to power brokers and judges, cutting deals, making compromises, whispering and nudging — all to see if they can't just make it a little easier for us Queer folk.

The people in power are, by and large, straight, white, older men — the people who created our problems in the first place. And we're kissing their old, straight, white asses, begging them to fix the problem they made. Our political maneuvering is based on the idea that government has the power to hand down justice and prevent discrimination. I call it the trickle-down theory of equality.

We, as Gay and Lesbian Americans, are so desperate to find any indication of our own existence, that a nod in passing from the President is headline news.

A Gay/Lesbian political convention without a police raid is liberty. A Congressman or White House staff member who comes out of the closet is manna from heaven. There most remote possibility that Jack Kemp is a homosexual is a morsel we lunge for with our tails wagging and our tongues dragging behind.

Now, before the spears start flying, let me say this: things are better. It's easier for me to be Gay in 1996 than it was in 1986. Maybe that's because in 1986, I was out of the closet in a conservative High School with an unsympathetic faculty. Maybe it's because our political leaders have made some progress. Maybe it's because Harvey Feisterstein kept getting cast in movies. Maybe it's just because of Stonewall (that's what a lot of people would like us to believe).

But don't allow yourself to be fooled by the political forces in our country. We can't say, across the board, that the Republicans are our enemies while the Democrats are our friends.

The Republicans would prefer that we shut up, quit trying to shove our "immorality" down their throats, and keep paying the taxes they use against us.

The Democrats want our campaign donations and our votes, but to say that they've truly bought into Gay and Lesbian liberation is ludicrous. They parrot our pro-Gay rhetoric, but their pro-Gay stance isn't nearly sturdy enough.

Just think about how distorted our perception of victory and defeat has become. We talk about being tolerated and legitimized instead of about being accepted and included. We mostly shut up about "don't ask, don't tell," while thousands of military personnel continue to live with it. We cringe at same-sex marriage, not even being able to imagine domestic partnership in most parts of the country. I'm not even bringing up AIDS.

Politics might be a part of our movement toward liberation, but political power is 90% brute force, 10% ideology. Politicians tend, over the long run, to accommodate the views of the majority. They won't protect us from a hostile majority for long, ENDA or no.

We need to shed ourselves of shame, to end the protection racket we've set up with the Democrats, and to reach out to the actual American people.

We need to be out at home, at work, on the street, with our families and friends, out to God and everybody. No exceptions. If, at any time, a Gay or Lesbian American is uncomfortable being honest about their sexuality, then our freedom is incomplete.

Until we can earn the same privileges as straight people, and until we enjoy the same rights they take for granted, no victory is truly a victory. Either we keep our eyes on the prize and become free, or we keep our sights on Capitol Hill and become nothing but an unpopular, protected class.

When your life is threatened, just to keep breathing seems like a victory. Certainly, without life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are moot. However, imagine what would happen if, instead of defending our lives and liberties, we attacked those who want to take them away. Imagine if, instead of bargaining with robbers and pleading for our lives, we managed to take their ammunition away. V

Students to Join Greg Louganis in GLSTN's 2nd Annual "Back-to-School" Campaign

Plans Made to Send Thousands of Letters on Homophobia to Schools

New York City (August 28, 1996) — The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) released its official Campaign materials for its 2nd Annual Back-to-School Campaign. Leading the Campaign in 1996 will be student heroes Kelli Peterson and Jamie Nabozny, who will join GLSTN Honorary Board member Greg Louganis as spokespeople for the effort.

The Back-to-School Campaign, in which Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual adults and their allies write back to their former schools and to

educational leaders demanding action to end homophobia in schools, is an annual event staged each September by GLSTN, the only national organization specifically working to end homophobia in K-12 schools.

"We're planning to dramatically increase the scope and impact of the Back-to-School Campaign this year," said Kevin Jennings, GLSTN's Executive Director. "We've set a goal of sending a minimum of 5,000 letters, and we are mapping out an aggressive strategy to reach that goal."

Jennings points out that all 42 local GLSTN chapters are staging events to involve the

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



community in the Campaign, and that over 50,000 households will be contacted via direct mail to generate grass-roots involvement.

"In addition, we've garnered significant support from both the mainstream education establishment as well as from the Lesbian/Gay community for the Campaign," said Jennings, citing Campaign endorsements by groups as varied as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Pupil Services Administrators, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG).

Jennings also noted a public education effort, featuring an advertising campaign developed by the New York-based Rabid Design Group that targets Gay/Lesbian publications and will also be distributed as posters for use in schools and the community. "We're getting the word out in every way we can," said Jennings, "that bigotry in our schools is wrong and needs to be ended today."

"If everyone who cared about Gay youth would write one letter," said Jamie Nabozny, "it would save many Gay youth from going through what I went through in high school." Nabozny attended public high school in Ashland, Wisconsin, where he faced four years of anti-Gay abuse.

About the experience, Nabozny said, "I suffered through over four years of anti-Gay violence. In 9th grade, for example, two boys knocked me to the floor and urinated on me. After that, whenever I walked around a corner, I never knew who would be there and what they would do to me."

Having received no support from school administrators, Nabozny has filed the first-ever federal suit on anti-Gay violence in schools. Nabozny won an important victory in his case in early August when the U.S. 7th Circuit Court remanded the case to a lower court which had found against Nabozny, with instruction to reconsider the case as a violation of Jamie's right to equal protection.

Kelli Peterson, a 1996 graduate of East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, grabbed national attention last winter when she founded a Gay-Straight Student Alliance club in her school.

Kelli was prompted by her own experience of harassment as a Lesbian student. "Freshman year, a group of girls in my gym class started teasing me, saying things like, 'You're such a Queer. You even look like a

boy!" said Peterson. "As I was pulling my backpack on one day in the locker room, I was pushed to the ground by someone who was behind me. When I hit the ground, they began kicking me and screaming at me, 'Dyke!' and 'Faggot!'"

Kelli's club, based on the popular model developed by GLSTN, sought to address this kind of harassment. When Utah's elected officials found that they could not ban the club from meeting under the Federal Equal Access Law, the state legislature met in special session and voted to ban all student clubs to prevent the GSA from having the right to meet.

"All students must be cared for in this place where we are forced to be," said Peterson, "and GLSTN's work is helping make that happen."

"What happened to Kelli and Jamie is more the norm than the exception," said Kevin Jennings, citing statistics that show that 80% of Gay/Lesbian youth feel severely isolated at school.

"It's time we did something to make equal opportunity a reality for our students," Jennings, a former high school history teacher, went on to add "Every day we make them pledge allegiance to 'liberty and justice for all.' Isn't it time we kept our end of that bargain for Lesbian and Gay students?"

For more information about GLSTN and the Back-to-School Campaign, call (212) 727-0135 or visit their website at <http://www.glstn.org/respect/>. V

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THE SPOTLIGHT

Free Miller Lite, The Badgers and More!

The Badger Red Party At Manoeuvres

Attention all Badger fans! Are you ready for a great game and a great party? If so **The Wisconsin Light** invites you to join your friends at our next SpotLight Party to be held at Madison's Manoeuvres Bar. Watch with us as our Badgers invade Ohio State at on Saturday October 12th.

This party will be a red hot affair. It's a Red Party, a Badger Red Party to be exact.

This party marks the Madison debut of our popular SpotLight Parties. And we can't think of a better place to hold a Badger Red party than Manoeuvres which is located at 150 S. Blair St.

There will be free Miller Lite (the official beer of our SpotLight Parties) for everyone who comes wearing Badger Red.

The nationally televised game starts

at 2:30, but the party will begin at 2:00. Wisconsin - Ohio State games are usually great contests with no quarter being offered on either side. This year should be no exception. A tough game is expected for this key Big Ten match up.

We want all red blooded Badger fans to be on hand to watch Wisconsin's favorite College team as it beats the tar out of the hated Ohio State Buckeyes that afternoon.

By the way we know that Ohio State wears red (with that dreadful dingy gray) too. So we are issuing fair warning to any Buckeye fans to stay away.

Manoeuvres General Manager, Charlie Wells, a former Mr. Wisconsin Leather promises that he will personally deal with any Ohio State fans "in a most suitable manner." Hey that could be even more exciting to watch than

the game.

In addition to the game and free Miller Lite, there will be some special surprises for those on hand to cheer our Badgers to victory.

At half time we will have a "Best Badger Fan" contest. Contestants will be judged on their dress and a brief statement on why they are Les/Bi/Gay Wisconsin's biggest fan of our beloved Badgers.

So put on your reddest clothes, bring your thirst and get revved up to enjoy an afternoon of great football, Badger football.

Join us and all your friends and together we'll make enough noise to be heard at in Columbus, Ohio as we cheer Bucky Badger onto victory.

Broom Street Needs Actors for "NAZI BOY"

Madison--The Broom Street Theater Company is seeking actors for its production of **NAZI BOY, The Story of the First Skin Head**.

The play takes place in Germany in the 1920's. Men and women may audition from 7 PM to 8 PM, Monday and Tuesday September 30 and October 1 at Broom Street Theater, 1119 Williamson Street.

Call (608) 244-8338 for more information.

And don't forget Broom Street's current production, **Irish Lesbian Vampire**. Its the story of the smartest and most dangerous monster who ever lived (for four centuries).

The play is performed at the Theater on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings at 8:00 through Sunday October 27. Tickets are \$6.00 at the door.

A Room of One's Own Marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October

Madison--To commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, filmmaker Judith Perkins will present her video "Partners in Survival" at A Room of One's Own feminist bookstore on Thursday, October 3, at 6:30 p.m.

"Partners in Survival" chronicles the stories of eight women who are survivors of breast cancer. The film seeks to instill courage and hope in those women diagnosed with breast cancer.

On Friday, October 11, at 6:30 p.m., investigative journalist and community activist Liane Clorfene-Casten will read from her book **Breast Cancer: Poisons, Profits and Prevention**.

In her book, Clorfene-Casten illustrates how breast cancer is a multi-billion dollar business with big benefits for large corporations like Monsanto, Dupont and Westinghouse that make the chemicals that create cancer and the drugs to treat it. She includes a chapter on the political program needed to regulate cancer-causing pollution.

Other Events

On Friday, October 4, at 6:30 p.m., author Melanie Braverman will be on hand to read from her first novel, **East Justice**.

East Justice is the story of loss and recovery in the American Midwest, the tale of an Iowa adolescence and of one girl's search for her mother, a woman undergoing an adolescence of her own.

A Massachusetts resident, Braverman

is a former bodywork therapist who has published fiction and poetry in many journals, including **American Poetry Review** and **American Voice**.

Margaret Erhart

On Thursday, October 10, at 6:30 p.m., author Margaret Erhart will read from her latest novel, **Old Love**, a saga of sexual self-exploration, intimacy and the remaking of the modern American family.

Watkins and Rothchild

On Thursday, October 17, at 6:30 p.m., authors Bonnie Watkins and Nina Rothchild will read from their book, **In the Company of Women: Voices from the Women's Movement**.

With a forward by Gloria Steinem, **In the Company of Women** is a collection of compelling and funny personal accounts told by a rich diversity of 83 women. They describe how they became feminists and how the women's movement changed forever the way they see themselves and the world.

Roseann Lloyd

On Friday, October 25, at 6:30 p.m., Minnesota author Roseann Lloyd will read from her new book of poems, **War Baby Express** published by Holy Cow Press.

War Baby Express is the story of family violence, incest and survival.

The author of seven books, Lloyd also writes drama and non-fiction. Other books include: **JourneyNotes: Writing for Recovery and Spiritual Growth** and **The House With Blind Glass Windows**.

All events are free and open to the public. A Room of One's Own is located at 317 W. Johnson Street in Madison. Call (608) 257-7888 for more information.

Night At the Races Benefits SEWAP

The Southeast Wisconsin AIDS Project (SEWAP) invites everyone to "Party With The Puppies" on Thursday October 16 at Dairyland Grey Hound Park in Kenosha.

A donation of \$25.00 per person or \$150 for a table of six allows you to join in the excitement. Your donation includes parking, clubhouse admission, a buffet dinner, a racing program and a raffle ticket to win one of 10 great prizes. Dinner is served from 6 to 7:30. The races begin at 7:15.

All proceeds go to SEWAP, which provides AIDS prevention and education services to Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties. SEWAP is a service agency of the Aids Resource Center of Wisconsin Inc. (ARCW). ARCW.



It's so lovely! The Fests City Singers entertained recently at Milwaukee's Mama Roux's Bar. A comic sketch and a group ensemble are shown above.

Broom Street Theater Presents "Irish Lesbian Vampire"

Madison--She was the smartest and most dangerous monster who ever lived. She was the demon of all demons. Broom Street Theater presents its latest production, **Irish Lesbian Vampire**, a new play written and directed by Joel Gersmann. **Irish Lesbian Vampire**, the ultimate vampire story for all time, opens 8:00 p.m., Friday, September 20 at the Broom Street Theater.

All shows of **Irish Lesbian Vampire** are at 8:00 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday from September 20 through October 27 (six week run) at the Broom Street Theater Building, 1119 Williamson Street, Madison. Tickets are \$6.00 at the door only (sorry, no reservations). Call (608) 244-8338 for more information.

Wisconsin Cream City Chorus Begins Fund Raising Drive

Milwaukee -- The Wisconsin Cream City Chorus kicked off a fundraising drive this month, asking local companies, organizations and individuals to support its goal of spreading the message of diversity through song.

There are several avenues of financial support open to interested persons. These include sponsoring a chorus member, underwriting concerts, community appearances or recordings, or donating to the chorus' general operating fund. Other financial needs include the New Music Fund to purchase or commission new music, and the Keyboard Fund to purchase a quality electronic keyboard for the chorus. Each of these fulfills a vital role in the chorus' quest to promote Gays and Lesbians throughout the community.

The chorus expects to attract a number

of interested patrons, and is especially hopeful because there are levels of need suited to every budget. For example, while our 10th Anniversary concert in July will run about \$2500, the customary fee for a single outreach performance at a LesBiGay or other event is only \$200. Those interested in sponsoring a financially disadvantaged chorus member can pay as little as \$15 per operating month; \$150 supports a single member for a whole year!

The chorus urges anyone interested in making a sound investment in the community to contact Matthew Pamperin, chorus president, at (414) 344-9222. Donations can also be sent, along with a letter specifying the preferred use of funds, to the Cream City Chorus, PO Box 1488, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

Comedy Central to Celebrate Coming Out Day with 'Out There' Repeat

By Ed Karvoski, Jr.

New York--This National Coming Out Day, October 11, will be celebrated on cable's Comedy Central with an encore presentation of *Out There*, the first-ever Gay and Lesbian comedy special. With Lea DeLaria as host, the one-hour show — produced by Trevor Hopkins and Juliet Blake of the English Channel — was taped in 1993 before a live audience at the historic Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. Staged on National Coming Out Day, an annual event that supports Gay men and Lesbians who wish to take the next step in their coming-out process, the airing of *Out There* to a national television audience was a long overdue step in the right direction for the entertainment industry.

But was Middle America ready to accept Gays and Lesbians on television — this time *telling* the jokes rather than being the butt of them? "Middle America is having a hard time accepting *short division!*" roared DeLaria in an interview prior to the taping. "I think that if we had waited for Middle America to be ready for civil rights and for feminism, we'd still be waiting," she continued. "I think that in some ways, that argument is homophobic, and it's time to get past that."

Since the initial airing, most of the *Out There* alumni have gone on to do other television appearances. During the 1994-1995 season, millions of viewers across the country were introduced to DeLaria via her guest spots on *Matlock*, *The John Larroquette Show*, and *Saved By The Bell*. Additionally, the self-described "bad girl of Lesbian comedy" guested this past season on the much-talked-about same-sex wedding episode of *Friends*.

Months after their appearances on *Out There*, comics Bob Smith and Suzanne Westenhoefer each starred in their own HBO comedy special. Westenhoefer was nominated for a Cable Ace Award in the "Best Comedy Special" category. Furthermore, Smith landed perhaps the most coveted gig for any stand up — a spot on *The Tonight Show*.

"They asked me if I wanted to be announced as a Gay comedian, and I didn't," Smith noted in an interview following his *Tonight Show* stint. "The term 'Gay comic' doesn't bother me, but in an intro I'd rather not. You don't hear other comics introduced as a 'black comic' or a 'Jewish comic.'" Furthermore he notes, "Part of the fun of my act is for me to tell people I'm Gay."

Funny Outing

Watching *Out There*, it's evident that all of the performers are elated as they come out to a national TV audience. Donning a conservative man's suit with a peek of a lacy bra underneath, Lea DeLaria masterfully handles the MC duties with her inimitable in-your-face delivery. "It's not that I don't like penises," she asserts. "I just don't like

them on *men!*"

A funny thing happened to DeLaria on the way to San Francisco for the taping. "I just flew over from London," she says, "and Miss Flight Attendant — of course, it was a man — comes up to me with his little cart, and he looks me right in the face and says, 'Whadda ya have, young man?'" Indignantly, DeLaria shrieks her response: "A *vagina!* I have a *vagina!*"

Tall, dark and hilarious, Bob Smith shares his coming-out experiences. "I came out to my family after college," he says. "I made my carefully worded announcement at Thanksgiving. I said, 'Mom, would you please pass the gravy to a homosexual?' She passed it to my father. A terrible scene followed."

Suzanne Westenhoefer comes out swinging humorous jabs at a particular comedy club manager. "There was this one club in New York that didn't want to have anything to do with me," she relates. "I auditioned there three times and I did really well. But don't you know that little worm of a manager came up to me and said, 'You were really good, but I don't think we can use you, because we groom our people for TV, and I don't think there'll ever be Lesbians on TV.' I'm like, 'No Lesbians on TV? What about Wimbledon?'"

The show's line-up also includes Mark Davis, Marga Gomez, sketch trio Pompo Afro Homo, drag diva Joan Jett Blakk, singer Phranc, and openly HIV-positive comic Steve Moore.

Moore enjoyed a flood of attention immediately following his *Out There* appearance. Featured on *Entertainment Tonight*, he joked, "Imagine my parents when I had to explain to them that we're Haitian!" On A&E's *An Evening at The Improv*, he quipped, "People are always saying, 'I can't believe you've been exposed to the AIDS virus. You've never looked better.' I figure, hell, pretty soon I'll be drop-dead gorgeous!" And he managed to deliver his schtick on Rolonda after the hostess introduced him as "death defying."

A good number of television viewers were game for the '93 airing of the Gay and Lesbian laugh fest — and, as we all know, numbers is the name of the game in the television industry. According to Comedy Central, *Out There* attracted double the usual number of viewers for that time slot.

Finally, it has been proven that there is, indeed, a sizeable TV audience for Gay and Lesbian entertainment. Remarks DeLaria: "And if you ask me, it's about time!"

Out There will air on Comedy Central on October 11, 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Eastern and Pacific; 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., Central; and 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Mountain.

Ed Karvoski, Jr., is the author of the forthcoming book *A Funny Time to Be Gay*.

Latina Lesbian Author Achy Obejas to Read at AfterWords

Milwaukee--AfterWords is pleased to bring to Milwaukee Latina Lesbian writer Achy Obejas who will read from her new novel, *Memory Mambo* (Cleis Press Pb \$12.95) on Saturday, October 19th at 7:00pm.

Ms. Obejas is a widely published fiction writer, journalist and poet. Her first collection of short stories, *We Came All the Way From Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?* was published by Cleis Press in 1994 and the book has been a Lambda Rising and AfterWords Bookstore best-seller.

Memory Mambo features heroine Juani Casas, a woman obsessed with memory. Having escaped from Cuba with her irresistibly imperfect family,

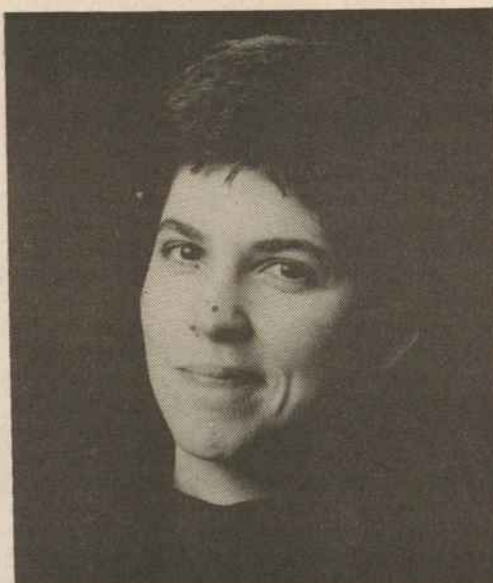
Auditions to be Held for Movie, 'Dark of The Night'

Milwaukee--Brandon Marsh Entertainment announces auditions for a new venture, "Dark of the Night." Auditions will be held for both lead roles and secondary roles on October 12th, between 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. at 316 N. Milwaukee Street, suite 520, in Milwaukee. "Dark of the Night" follows a group of vampires through 600 years to a small town in Wisconsin, in the present and future.

The cast will consist of seven lead roles, four secondary roles and numerous extras in various time periods. We are presently looking for four males, ages 18 to 30; one male, age 40 to 60; one female, age 20 to 30; and one female, age 25 to 35.

The shooting of this project will take place between November, 1996 and April, 1997 and is to premiere in May, 1997. There will be three calls for extras through the year about three weeks prior to each shoot.

If you would like to be considered for the extra call list or wish more information, call Brandon Marsh Entertainment at (414) 298-9598.



ACHY OBEJAS

Juani is determined to extracting the truth of her life and her family history from the nostalgic mythology of their exile. Juani is a twenty-four-year-old Lesbian faced with and struggling against the violence, desire and meaning of love.

Achy Obejas was born in Havana, Cuba and has ended up in Chicago, a familiar figure in the city's Gay and Lesbian community. Currently, Ms. Obejas is the cultural affairs writer for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Ms. Obejas' appearance is free and open to the public. For further information, please call (414) 963-9089.

New Books at AfterWords:

Non-Fiction

Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest by Will Fellows; University of Wisconsin Press HC \$27.50

The Intimacy Dance: A Guide to Long-term Success in Gay and Lesbian Relationships by Betty Berzon; Dutton HC \$24.95

Lesbian Fiction

Liberty Square: A Kate Delafield Mystery by Katherine Forrest; Berkeley HC \$21.95

The Death of Friends by Michael Nava; Putnam HC \$22.95

Two October Events of Gay Interest at Borders Book Shop

J.S. Marcus reads from *The Captain's Fire: A Novel* Thursday, October 3 at 7:30 p.m.

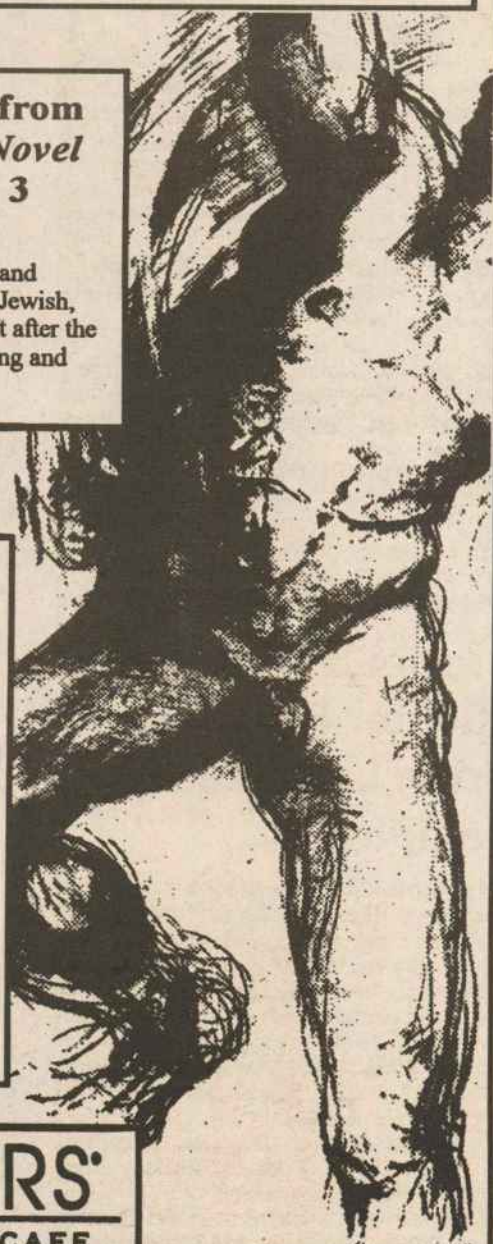
The Captain's Fire is an unsettling and innovative novel about a young man — Jewish, American, bisexual — living in Berlin just after the Wall has come down. This is a haunting and thought-provoking novel.

George Mosse discusses *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* Thursday, October 17 at 7:30 p.m.

This most recent book from esteemed University of Wisconsin-Madison professor George Mosse examines historical cults of masculinity — what was exalted and what was denigrated. This should prove to be a quite interesting talk: Professor Mosse is a very highly regarded scholar.

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drawing by Rick Oehling, after a drawing by Michelangelo

AUDITIONS: "Dark of the Night"

TIME: Saturday, October 12, 1996 • 1-6pm

PLACE: Brandon Marsh Entertainment

316 N. Milwaukee Street • Suite 520 • Milw, WI 53202

For More Information, Call (414) 298-9598

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Is Madison Avenue Ready For an Openly Lesbian Character on Prime Time TV?

New York—Madison Avenue is staying tuned to "Ellen" these days as the ABC sitcom begins dropping hints its title character may be a Lesbian.

Advertising buyers say some sponsors may avoid the show if Ellen comes out of the closet, but they suspect ABC could find others to step in. The reaction, they say, depends on how the issue is handled.

If Ellen gets a girlfriend and "the two of them are going to the zoo together, it's not a problem," said Paul Schulman, who specializes in buying network advertising time. "If they are in bed together, it's a problem."

The series has become the television season's hottest topic of conversation since TV Guide reported in the third week in September that the lead character, played by Ellen DeGeneres, might come out as a Lesbian this season.

While Gay characters have been turning up more frequently in supporting roles on TV, no network show has ever had a Lesbian or Gay male central character.

The Walt Disney Co., which produces the series and owns ABC, has refused to comment on the report. But the season's opening episode on Wednesday night, September 18, heightened speculation that the series may be headed in that direction.

In the episode's opening scene, Ellen Morgan, having just woken up and looking frowsy in her robe, serenades herself in the bathroom mirror: "I feel pretty, I feel pretty, I feel pretty and witty and..." whereupon she dips her toothbrush under the faucet, only to discover there's no water. Instead of completing the lyric as written "Gay" she says, "Hey!"

Later in the show, a real estate agent showing Ellen and a friend slides of new homes holds a girl doll against the screen and says, "Just think, Ellen, this could be you, walking up to your new home." Then the agent produces a boy doll, and says: "And here's your husband coming home from work."

"Oh, I think that puppet's in the wrong show," Ellen replies.

The show finished second in its 8 p.m. time slot in the national ratings with an 8.9 rating compared with 10.9 for "The Nanny" on CBS and 7.8 for "Wings" on

NBC. Overnight ratings from big markets released earlier had "Ellen" narrowly ahead. A national ratings point is equal to 970,000 TV homes.

ABC said there have been no defections among advertisers since the TV Guide report.

Among the show's advertisers in the New York area are Microsoft, Intel, Sears, J.C. Penney, Toyota, Nabisco and General Mills.

J.C. Penney and Toyota said they would await developments before deciding if they should change their plans. Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola each scheduled to advertise on the show later in the year released similar statements.

Spokesmen for both Microsoft and Intel said they would continue their advertising regardless of the plot developments.

The Rev. Donald Wildmon, an extremist Christian and a frequent critic of sex and violence on television and head of the Far Right American Family Association, said it would be a "troubling moment in network programming" if the lead character were revealed to be homosexual.

Wildmon threatened to organize a boycott of the show's advertisers if it happens. He said those advertisers that stay with "Ellen" will "reveal their true allegiances to themes which gnaw at traditional family values."

But Gene DeWitt, who heads his own media buying service, said companies are more aware of the economic muscle

of the Gay community and pursue that audience.

"I wonder if, except for a few overly sensitive advertisers, whether it really is an issue," he said.

John Lazarus, who heads network ad buying at Bozell's BJK&E Media Group, said the discussion about "Ellen" reminds him of the controversy that surrounded "NYPD Blue," which debuted a few years ago promising to stretch television's boundaries with nudity and rough talk.

Lazarus said that the program had a hard time attracting advertisers but that the controversy has quieted, and "most advertisers have no problem with that show now."

Jon Mandel, who heads network broadcast buying for Grey Advertising, said an openly Gay lead character may drive "one or two" advertisers away.

If being a Lesbian becomes the primary focus of the show, he said, that could turn off advertisers. But if the character "happens to be Gay just like she happens to have blonde hair, that would not be a problem."

Writing Workshop to Be Held at Booked For Murder in Madison

Madison—Novelists Ellen Hart and R.D. Zimmerman will present a writing workshop at Booked For Murder, Ltd., on Saturday afternoon, September 28th, at

2:00 p.m. They will discuss writing, marketing and the publishing scene today. Their books are published by Dell, Ballantine, Morrow, Zebra, and Seal Press. Lively, interesting and informative, their presentation will be of interest to many local writers.

Hart is the author of two mystery series, the first featuring Lesbian sleuth Jane Lawless and her friend Cordelia Thorn, and a second series starring food critic and amateur detective Sophie Greenway.

Hart is the author of eight novels. In her latest, **Robber's Wine**, Jane and Cordelia are vacationing in a lakeshore community where they had planned to escape summer in the city and also to visit with an old friend. A mysterious death in the town's most prominent family puts and end to their hopes of a peaceful getaway.

Edgar-nominee R.D. Zimmerman, author of ten novels, including a series based on forensic hypnosis, has written two books featuring television journalist Todd Mills.

In **Closet**, Mills is forced to confront the publicity surrounding the murder of his Gay lover and the revelation of the double life he had spent twenty years concealing.

In **Tribe**, Zimmerman's latest book, Mills, in attempting to help an old friend, is drawn into a nightmare surrounding a dangerous cult.

Prominent authors of Gay and Lesbian fiction, Hart's and Zimmerman's excellent mystery novels are enjoyed by the entire mystery reading public.

For more information, please call (608) 238-2701.

Booked For Murder, Ltd., is located At 2701 University Avenue in Madison.



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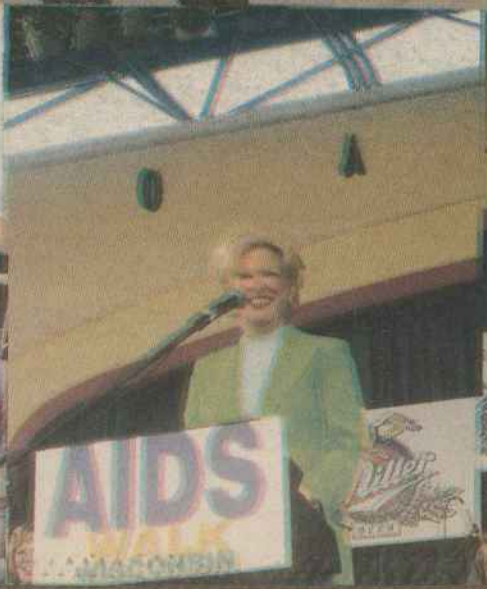
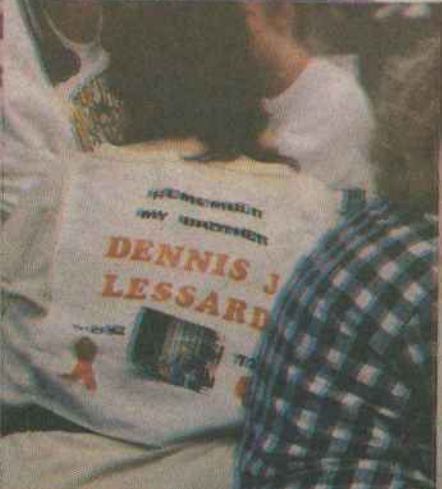
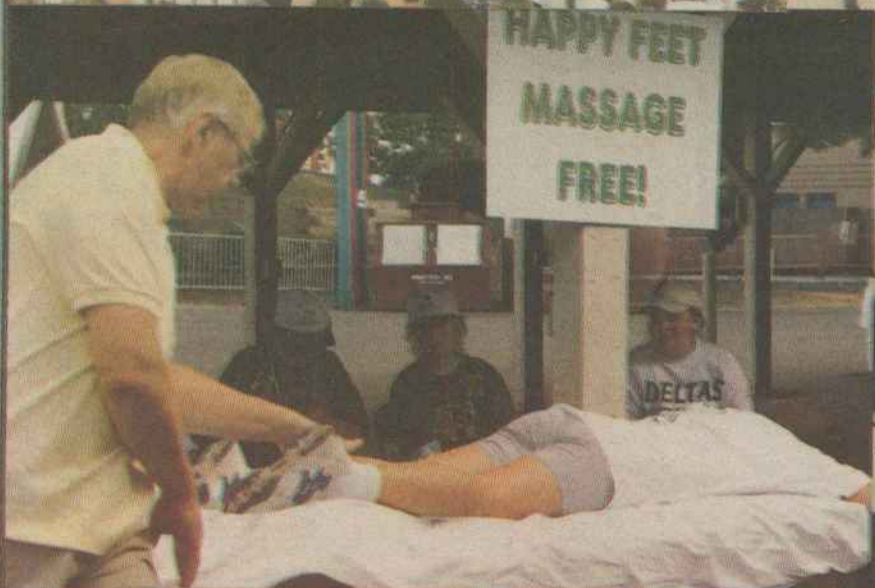


The Harbor Lights Ballroom is VERY PRIVATE, has a breathtaking view of the lake and is very elegant.

How To Find It: The Transit Center Building is on the southwest corner of Lake Drive and Michigan Street. Take the escalator up one level to the Harbor Lights Ballroom. Follow the orange and black balloons!

AIDS Walk
Wisconsin
September 22
Milwaukee's
Lakefront

Photos by Gary Hawkins and J. Michael Bach





OUT on Film



Hey we were framed! Robin, Jim and Joe ham it up for our photographer at the Mama Roux AIDS Walk Rummage Sale held at the bar on Saturday September 21. The sale brought together many of Mama Roux's customers who donated and volunteered their time to help. The proceeds of nearly \$500 were added to Mama Roux's AIDS Walk Wisconsin Total.

New Film to Bring Education About Gay and Lesbian people into the Classroom

Madison--Should teachers talk with their elementary and middle school students about Gay people? "As one of the principals in our film says, 'It should be mandatory,'" says Academy Award-winning film make Debra Chasnoff, whose documentary, *It's Elementary*, shows what happens when teachers address Gay issues in the classroom.

It's Elementary makes a compelling case that children should be taught to respect all people, including Lesbians and Gay men, as part of their early education. At its heart is incredibly inspiring footage of elementary and middle school classrooms where teachers are finding appropriate, creative ways to confront anti-Gay prejudice and counter Gay invisibility.

"What we found is that by third grade almost all children have already been exposed to information about Gay people," said Chasnoff. "Unfortunately most of it is misinformation. The teachers, adminis-trators, and parents involved in *It's Elementary* all have come to believe that if schools are serious about preparing students for the diversity in our communities, preventing violence, and fostering equality between girls and boys, then they have to address Gay issues."

The world premiere of *It's Elementary* took place in San Francisco on June 5, 1996. The film went on to win "Best Documentary" at the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. There will be a national journalists' preview at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association conference in Miami on

September 5. Regional premieres will take place in New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and more than 30 other cities in the fall.

Press for the film has been flooding in. The San Francisco Examiner says, "[*It's Elementary*] could become one of the most important films ever devoted to Gay and Lesbian issues" and the L.A. Reader described it as "funny, touching, and fascinating!"

Gays, Lesbians, and Allies for Diversity in Education (GLADE) and Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) will present the premiere of *It's Elementary* in Madison on Tuesday, October 22, 1996 at the Barrymore Theater, 2090 Atwood Avenue, starting at 7:00 p.m. A short program will precede the 80-minute film, which features teachers and students from Madison's Hawthorne Elementary School.

A reception in the lobby of the Barrymore will follow the film.

Tickets (\$10, \$5 for students) will go on sale at the Barrymore outlets (The Exclusive Company on State Street, The Exclusive Company in the High Point Centre, Magic Mill on University Avenue, Star Liquor on Williamson Street, and Green Earth next door to the Barrymore) and at A Room of One's Own Bookstore on September 19, 1996.

Proceeds from the premiere will help fund distribution of the film and the GLSTN scholarship fund for high school students. For more information call (608) 233-1846. ▽

If You Like TV Sitcoms, 'First Wives Club' is the Movie For You

Reviewed by Glenn Bishop

Glenn is known to simply adore television sit-coms. Glenn has been known to spend hours happily re-living his happy childhood (all repressed memories happily still repressed, thank you very much) watching Nick at Nite (we are sure that Nick at Nite is trademarked but unfortunately Glenn's typewriter doesn't have that cute little symbol).

Glenn is so enraptured with sit-coms in fact that he has been known to react to friends, family members and bill collectors as June Cleaver might have or perhaps even as Timmy's Mom on the old Lassie show. Only June's delightful outfits are way too expensive for the meager budget of an erst-while critic and journalist such as Glenn.

Why this digression into the wonderful world of sit-com, you ask. Well, Glenn knows a sitcom when he sees one and Glenn is as sure as shooting positive that *First Wives Club* is, despite such high-profile stars as Goldie, Bette and Diane, a sitcom.

What's it all about? Let Glenn dish the *First Wives Club*.

Back in 1969 Cynthia (Stockard Channing), Brenda (Bette Midler), Elise (Goldie Hawn) and Annie (Diane Keaton) were bestest of buddies graduating from quaint little Middlebury College, pledging to stay forever close. Apparently very little time passed before husbands, careers, families, greed, fame, and alcohol all combined to cause this dynamic quartet to drift apart. Very far apart. Soooooooo far apart! Miles apart, actually.

Jump twenty-five years and poor little Cynthia Swann Griffin, suffering the devastation of hubby dumping her for a younger woman, does an ever so chic swan-dive.

The always watchable Stockard Channing shines in this stylish, if all too brief cameo.

After her funeral the three remaining friends do lunch, drink, remember, drink, laugh, drink, drink, drink before finally becoming slobbering drunks determined never to grow apart again. Becoming re-acquainted, each confesses to hubby problems: each are being dumped in favor of some young, pretty little thing. Each are bitter. Each desires revenge.

And revenge is what these women spend the rest of the movie plotting, planning, executing, and as one might expect from Hollywood, ultimately achieving.

The men, pigs that they are, are beaten. The new and improved dynamic trio ride off into the sunset harmonizing to Leslie Gore's classic "You Don't Own Me." Well, at least they saved the best for last.

Comedy, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Not that *First Wives Club* doesn't have a fair helping of giggles, snickers and assorted chuckles. Glenn certainly chuckled a bit. Glenn giggled once or twice. Embarrassingly enough, Glenn was even heard to snicker. But shouldn't the abundant talents of these three fabulous actresses produce something more than mere giggles, snickers and a chuckle or two? Glenn couldn't agree more.

Despite high profile female stars at the forefront, *First Wives Club* rocks no feminist boats. Presumably each of the four protagonists were satisfied both with their status and the status quo as long as each were able to boast such a successful marriage. Only the actress Elise has actually managed any success separate or distinct from that of her husband but as age requires Elise to have increasingly



Bette Midler in her new film "The First Wives Club"

extensive and comprehensive cosmetic surgery, even that success proves to be dependent upon her desirability to men.

As hip-hop and happening as is *First Wives Club*, it came to no surprise to Glenn that Gay and Lesbian characters do appear on the periphery of the action.

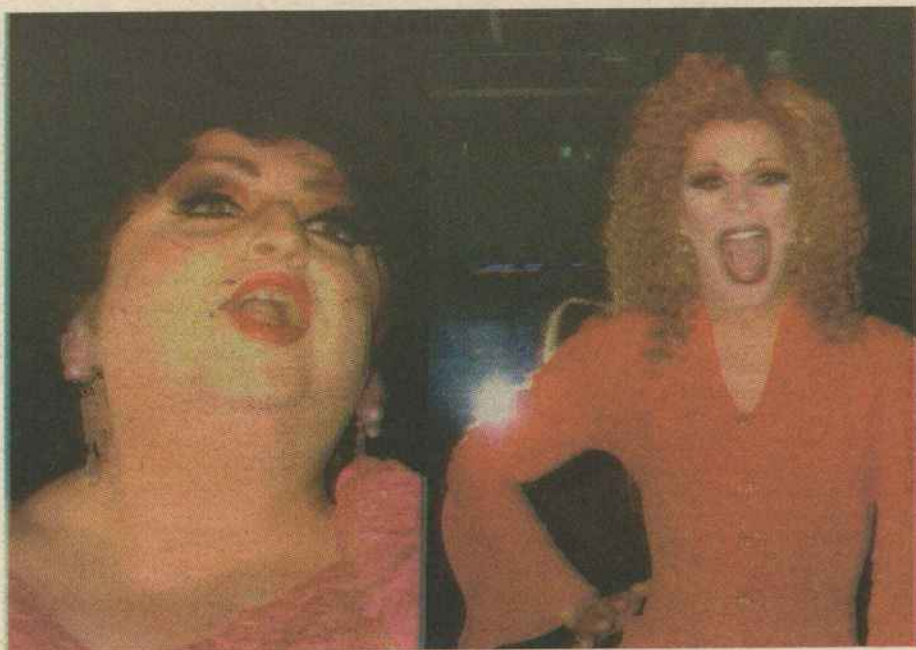
The ever reliable Bronson Pinchot is on hand as the Gay confidant to Midler's Brenda, Duarte Feliz, interior designer. It also turns out that Annie's daughter is an upright, upstanding and proud dyke.

Cut to Hollywood exploring that ever so taboo and forbidden of locales, the Lesbian bar. Every type of Lesbian under the sun is present, as per usual in a Hollywood depiction of the sexual underworld.

Hey, isn't that stereotypical butch dyke hitting on poor Elise Lea Deloria? It is? Actually Glenn has had the opportunity to see Ms. Deloria in her native habitat and found her performance to be surprisingly restrained.

But, Yes, isn't there always a but. But as poor old dad (Stephen Collins) is getting the screws put to him by Annie, there's his bitter daughter there to make things even worse by telling him that she's a lesbian. Is being Gay or Lesbian something bad, something to throw in the face of one's parents to get back at them? Guess that *First Wives Club* just ain't as hip and happening as it would like us to believe.

Rating \$\$\$ (scale \$ to \$\$\$\$\$\$)
First Wives Club is playing at theatres everywhere.



Baby Jane Hudson (left) and Sasha Mitchell performed during Jane's 10th annual 29th Birthday party held at La Cage on Sunday September 15. As usual Jane had her mouth open for most of the event.

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Stanley Tucci and Tony Shalhoub co-star in *The Big Night*, a wonderful film about two Italian immigrant brothers attempting to save their failing restaurant and attain the American dream. The film is currently playing at Milwaukee's Oriental Theater.



Frederic Longbois and Arandna Gil star in *Celestial Clockwork*. Currently playing at Milwaukee's Downer Theater.

'Big Night' is One of Those Delightful Little Films that is a Must-See

Reviewed by Glenn Bishop

Big Night is a bittersweet little movie with a heart as big as a pizza. Brothers Primo and Secondo Pilaggi seeking to cook and simmer their way to the top of proverbial American dream, one fabulous plate of risotto at a time if necessary.

Time: The 1950's. The place: a small Italian restaurant teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Primo (Tony Shalhoub) is an absolutely fabulous chef decidedly from the old world school. Abhorring the "spaghetti and meatballs" mentality that was currently masquerading in America as Italian cuisine, Primo refused to skim on the old family recipe (appropriate apologies to Mama Celeste).

Younger brother Secundo (Stanley Tucci) desires all things American. He has an American girlfriend, Phyllis (Minnie Driver). He salivates over that which in the 1950's did seem to represent things American: the big luxury sedan auto. But most of all, Secundo drools over the very American success of Pascal's, the crass, commercial (not to mention wildly popular) "spaghetti and meatballs" Italian restaurant down the block.

With foreclosure imminent, Secundo swallows his pride and turns to the wily owner of Pascal's. Pascal (Ian Holm) is a sawed-off runt of a man, colorful and cartoonish, who thinks that saying "fuck" in every other sentence will show him to be American just like everybody else.

A self-proclaimed bigshot, Pascal boasts and brags and promises Secundo that he will get the legendary Luigi Prima to pay their little restaurant a visit. Such a visit by an immensely popular 'celebrity' will absolutely make their place, Pascal guarantees.

Luigi Prima's visit to the ironically named "Paradise" is to be the "big night" of the title. Secundo fusses and obsesses, leaving no deal over-looked, no expense spared. This then is the final

Café Melange Celebrates 9 Years!

Milwaukee--Those wonderful folks at Café Melange are celebrating their Ninth Anniversary with a gala party on Saturday October 5.

According to a press release issued by the popular downtown Milwaukee night spot, The anniversary bash features "free food, inexpensive drinks, cheap dates, acoustic jazz and blues by "Clamnation" and NO cover.

Other special evenings at the Club during October include:

Amy Rohan - a stunningly talented vocalist/guitarist on Friday October 4 at 9

Acoustic Warriors - A Native American group that mixes Native American music with jazz and standards.

John Schneider, tap dance and music of the 20's, 30's and 40's at 8:30 on Saturday October 12 and on October 26.

Mrs Fun appears on Friday October 18 and on Friday October 25 for 9:30 shows.

Jerry Grillo and Jack Grassel playing and crooning all your favorite standards at 9:00 on Saturday October 19.

The fabulous **Hotel Milwaukee** a radio variety show taped for WHAD 90.7 FM on Sunday October 27 at 5 and 7 PM.

Every Monday is Poet's Night at Café Melange.

Café Melange is located 720 N. Old World Third Street (Inside the Hotel Wisconsin), Milwaukee.

For more information call the club at 291-9889.

gamble, the last toss of the dice where failure will prove disastrous. Ah, but success will be sweet.

This is a delightful movie, one well worth seeing.

Rating: \$\$\$\$ of \$\$\$\$\$

Big Night is currently playing at Milwaukee's Oriental Theatre.

'Celestial Clockwork' is a Far, Far Too Brief Whirling Kaleidoscope

By John A. Jahn

Celestial Clockwork, a film which is a French, Venezuelan, Belgian, and Spanish co-production; written, directed, and produced by Fina Torres, was described positively by another movie critic (Rene Rodriguez, *Miami Herald*) as a "whirling kaleidoscope of a movie." In a way, I

have to agree with Rene, but in a negative sense. *Celestial Clockwork* is a whirling kaleidoscope in that many colors can be seen, but all too fleetingly, so that we have almost no time to appreciate the dazzling sights.

At base, *Celestial Clockwork* is a
TURN TO CLOCKWORK, PAGE 23

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**MR./MISS GAY WISCONSIN
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1996**

Fill out this "Official Contestant Entry Form" and mail to: Pageant Productions, P.O. Box 75075, Milwaukee, WI 53215

Name _____

Stage Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Contestant: Mr. Miss Gay Wisconsin

Sponsor(s) (if any) _____

Type of Talent _____

A \$50 entry fee, check or money order payable to Pageant Productions must accompany this entry form. You will receive an entry pass at the rehearsal on Sunday afternoon, November 3. Official Pageant rules will be mailed to all contestants. All entry forms must be mailed, postmarked and received on or before October 27, 1995. You must be a Wisconsin resident as of May 1, 1996. You must be at least 18 years of age. Maximum 10 Mr. contestants/maximum 10 Miss contestants allowed.

PENALTIES: You will lose 10 judging points for any deviation from the above instructions or the official rules: Non-mailed entry-10 points; Late for rehearsal-10 points; No tape at rehearsal (unless performing live)-10 points.



The Dazzling Divas of C'est La Vie put on a dazzling 70's extravaganza at the bar on September 13. A packed house was on hand and rewarded the divas with much applause.

Milwaukee's WMVS Channel 10 Moves "In The Life" to Better Air Time

Milwaukee— After several years of encouragement and prodding by Milwaukee's Gay community, the local media, and the *In The Life* offices in New York, Milwaukee's public television station, WMVS (Channel 10) has made the decision to air the series at an airtime hailed by an *In The Life* spokesperson as near-perfect — the 5th season premiere episode will be Thursday, October 24 at 11:00 p.m.

"We always hope to fall into the 11:00 p.m. 'fringe hour' spot because we find we attract the most viewers at that hour — after popular network programs but before the witching hour," says Katherine Linton, *In The Life*'s host and senior producer, who also acts as a liaison to the nearly 100 public television stations across the country that air the series. "Milwaukee is an important market to us and we are very glad that our audience there will be able to catch the show at a reasonable hour."

Last season the *In The Life* series was aired in Milwaukee during the midnight time slot. Wisconsin Public TV, with stations across Wisconsin, has traditionally aired *In The Life* at 11:00 p.m.

As of this fall, *In The Life* will be presented by WNET channel 13 in New York, the largest public television station in the country. *In The Life* had been presented by a smaller New York station which has since been sold by the city of New York. This watershed development for *In The Life* — the WNET presentation — may have influenced the WMVS decision. Many other television stations across the country, including Oregon Public Broadcasting and Nebraska's Education Network, are moving *In The Life* to earlier times, possibly because of WNET backing.

Also new as of this fall, *In The Life* will be carried by the American Program Service (APS), a major distributor of

programming for public television stations across the country. The APS backing may also be influencing the decisions of America's public television stations that are placing *In The Life* at better airtimes. *In The Life* sought distribution by APS several years ago but was turned down. The recent APS decision to distribute the series is a testament to *In The Life*'s improved show quality.

Local reaction to the WMVS decision remains to be seen. Public television stations across the country often receive stacks of mail, for and against, when any move seen as positive is made for the sometimes controversial Gay and Lesbian series.

A write-in campaign in Phoenix by the conservative right contributed to driving *In The Life* off the air several years ago in that city — the series has since been picked up again by the Phoenix station.

When the San Diego public station KPBS picked up *In The Life* last season, local Gay community members requested that *In The Life* not play up the decision to mainstream papers so the Gay community could get a running start against the expected tide of negative public reaction in the conservative city. Station KPBS in San Diego airs *In The*

Life at 1:00 a.m., the latest in the country.

The six episodes of the 5th anniversary season *In The Life* will be aired in October, December, February, April, June and August of 1996/97. ▽



OCTOBER 11

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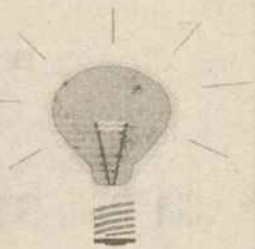
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
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Jerry Johnson

Our photographer captured a few members of the Just Us AIDS Walk Wisconsin team as they partied out on the popular bars patio. They had reason to smile. They just helped raise over \$1,000,000 to fight AIDS in Wisconsin.

The Night Light



Are you as worn out by all the comings and goings of the last couple of weeks as I am? I hope not.

Before I go into my schedule for the next two weeks, I do have three things to say.

First, I am really proud of everyone who participated in AIDS Walk Wisconsin. Who would have thought that together we could raise over \$1,000,000.

I hope that you made some of the post walk parties. Mama Roux's was especially fun. The place was packed all weekend long. And rightfully so, they had over 250 people on their team.

Second, the news about the Hotel Washington is really a shame. The Scheels are one class act my heart goes out to them. I know that Madison will pull together and fill the void but that doesn't make it any easier to take.

Third, the pictures we took of our Spotlight Party at Just Us earlier this month were lost by the photo lab. Its too bad, but take my word for it, this was one great party, with great food, entertainment and a large crowd. Our thanks to Steve, Deb, Rick and their staff and to the Shoreline Dancers for a wonderful evening.

Now on to things to come. And there are plenty of those.

Friday September 27 is our big Spotlight Show at La Cage. So of course I will be there. It's called "An Evening With the Stars" and it features great entertainers from a number of clubs. The \$5.00 admission all goes to the BESTD Clinic. Showtime is at 10:00.

Before the party I'll be stopping at Just Us. They start their Second Anniversary Weekend that night and a good Just Us Fish Fry is a great way to begin a Friday evening.

After the Party it will be off to This Is It. I love this bar. First of all, I don't care when you stop by, there are always people to talk with. Second they have a great juke box. Third, Joe and his staff go out of their way to make you feel at home. Fourth, This Is It, has a real good mix of people, students, business men, blue collar workers, and everything in between. And unlike what you may have read somewhere else, this bar is NOT a "wrinkle room." The clientele comes in all sizes, races and age groups. In fact the people under 30 often outnumber those over 30.

Saturday September 28 I'll be stopping in at Survival Revival for their big "Street Beat" fashion show. God knows I could use all the help I can get. Then its off to Just Us for their big anniversary show. The free show starts at 10:00. It should be a real hoot.

Of course if I was in Appleton, I would go to the Pivot Club for the Miss Gay WI, US of A preliminaries. There seems to be a bumper crop of well qualified contestants this year and the competition should be fierce. (No hair pulling now girls)

On Sunday September 29, I will be back at Just Us for the conclusion of their big Anniversary Weekend. They are throwing a huge Packer Party and Pig Roast (no I am not getting on that spit no matter what you say). Believe it or don't but the Pig Roast is FREE and will be served at half time of the game. Now there's a place that knows how to throw a party.

ean't. It will be sad to see Loretta give up her crown, that girl has been all of the place performing her duties. (Not only that but she also appears in shows too!)

Wednesday October 3 I will join with my Lesbian friends at the Melissa Ethridge Concert Party at Just Us. They have free food during their happy hour and a party after the concert as well.

Friday October 4, Fannies is the place to be as they begin their Fourteenth Anniversary Celebration. (Gee Sherry you look pretty good after 14 years in business). They have free live entertainment.

Saturday October 5 you can find me at Fannies with my Lesbian friends for their ribbon hunt. This is sort of like an Easter Egg hunt only they use ribbons and you win cash and prizes.

Then its off to Café Melange for their Ninth Anniversary Bash. (hmmm three Anniversary Parties in two weeks)

There will be great music, food and drink specials. Plus Café Melange is located in the Hotel Wisconsin, talk about how convenient. (Can my new friend and I have a room?)

Unfortunately that means I will miss the big debut show at Green Bay's Club Cheeks. Its a benefit for Celeste Olds to help her get to San Antonio for the National Miss Gay US of A At Large pageant. I hear this place is really nice. I can't wait to see it next time I'm up in Title Town.

Sunday October 6 you can find me at In Between's Packer Party. This is a great place to watch a game. The crowd really gets into it, cheering every good play, moaning over the bad ones and of

course cussing out the refs. Even if you don't like football you'll have a great time here.

The Packer Party will get me warmed up for our next Spotlight Party, the Badger Red Party on Saturday October 12 at Madison's Manoeuvres. There will be free Miller Lite, a Badger Fan Contest and of course the Badger -Ohio State game on the tube.

Charlie, Manoeuvres Manager promises a good time to every Badger Fan who enters. We won't talk about what he will do to the Buckeye fans. (Can you say OUCH!)

Course as long as I am in Madtown, I might as well check out the doings at R Place. Rich and his studly staff are always a good time not only that they run a great bar too!

Last but by no means least is the Mama Roux's 70's party on Sunday October 13. Their last 70's party was such a hit that they had a lot of requests to repeat it.

There is something about this place that just reeks of party. May be it's the clientele or the wicked imagination of Managers Joe and Pat.

They are offering a buffet, drink specials, a Mr. And Ms. 70's Dress Contest and of course plenty of that great 70's music. (Hey who needs K-Tel?)

The last 70's bash was one of the best bar parties I have ever been to. Don't miss the sequel.

Well that wraps it up and not a minute too soon. I hope to see YOU out and about soon. Mean time play safe and be proud!

After stuffing myself, I'll be racing up to the Pivot Club in Appleton to catch the finals of the Miss Gay WI, US of A pag-

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954-9262

The Pivot Club
4815 W. Prospect
Appleton, WI 54915
730-0440

DOOR COUNTY

Black Smith Inn
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Baileys Harbor, WI
839-9222

Chanticleer Guest House
4072 Cherry Rd
Sturgeon Bay 54234
746-0334

EAU CLAIRE

Trading Company
304 Eau Claire St.
Eau Claire, WI 54701
838-9494

The Wolfe's Den
302 E Madison
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-832-9237

GREEN BAY

Brandy's II
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Green Bay, WI 54301
437-3917

Laona Hostel
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(HWY8)
Laona, WI, 54541
(715)674-2615

Napalese Lounge
515 S. Broadway
Green Bay, WI 54303
432-9646

Sass
840 S. Broadway
Green Bay, WI 54304
437-7277

Za's/Java's
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Green Bay, WI 54301
435-5476

KENOSHA

Club 94
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Kenosha, WI 53140
857-9958

What About Me?
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Racine, WI 53403
632-0171

LA CROSSE

Cavalier Lounge
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La Crosse, WI 54601
782-9061

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Cross Roads Bar
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Lake Mills, WI 53551
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258-9918

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257-5455

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Milwaukee WI 53204
273-7474

Boot Camp Saloon
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Milwaukee WI 53204
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Cafe Melange
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Milwaukee WI 53203
291-9889

Cest La Vie
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Milwaukee WI 53204
276-8890

Club 219
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Milwaukee, WI 53204
271-3732

1100 Club
1100 S. 1st St.
Milwaukee WI 53204
647-9950

Gargoyles
354 E. National
Milwaukee WI 53204
225-9676

Fannies
200 E. Washington
Milwaukee WI 53204
643-9633

In Between
625 S. 2nd St
Milwaukee WI 53204
273-2693

Just Us
807 S. 5th St.
Milwaukee WI 53204
383-2233

Kathy's Nut Hut
1500 W. Scott
Milwaukee WI 53204
647-2673

La Cage
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Milwaukee WI 53204
383-8300

La Perla Mexican Restaurant
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Milwaukee WI 53204
645-9888

Mama Roux
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Milwaukee WI 53212
347-0344

M & M Club
124 N. Water
Milwaukee WI 53202
347-1962

Nomad
1401 E. Brady St.
Milwaukee WI 53202
273-3866

Rene's Cozy Corner
3500 W Park Hill
Milwaukee WI 53208
933-RENE

Station 2
1534 W. Grant
Milwaukee WI 53204
383-5755

10% Club
4223 W. Fon Du Lac
Milwaukee WI 53216
447-0910

Popular News
225 N. Water
Milwaukee WI 53202
278-0636

This Is It
418 E. Wells
Milwaukee WI 53202
278-9192

Triangle
135 E. National
Milwaukee WI 53204
383-9412

Walkers Point Cafe
1106 S. First St.
Milwaukee WI 53204
384-7999

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Milwaukee WI 53204
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Superior WI 54880
394-2580

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Superior, WI 54880
392-1756

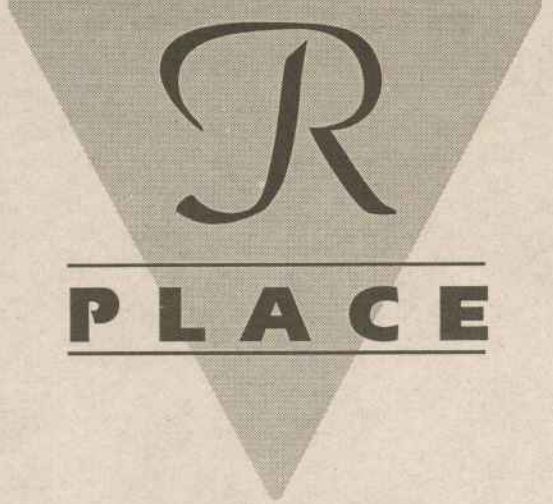
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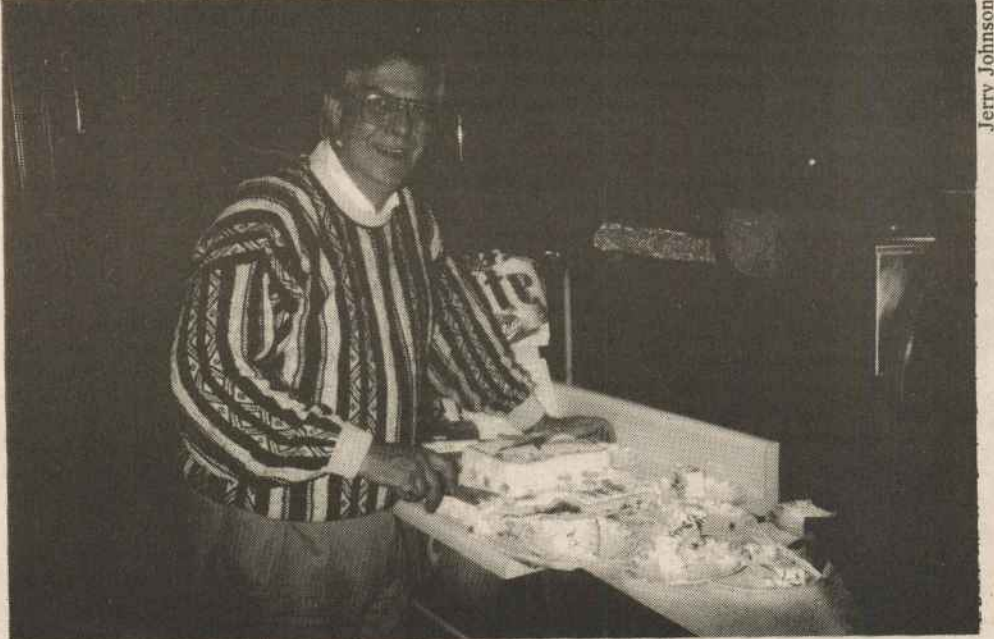


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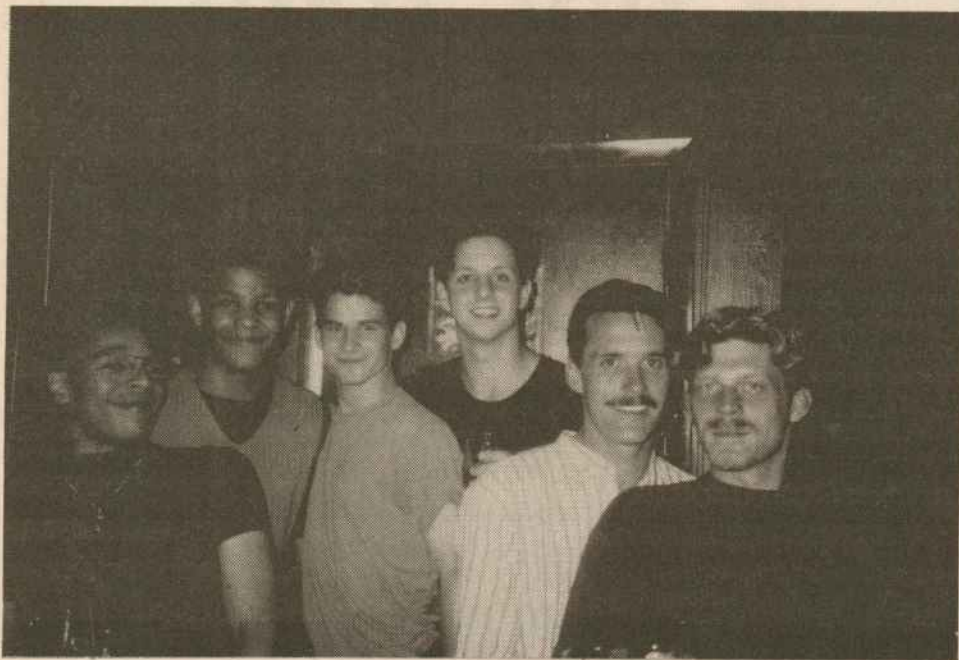


Jerry Johnson

Joe Brehm, the ever popular owner of Gay Milwaukee's favorite Downtown Cocktail lounge, cuts the birthday cake given to him as a surprise on his birthday, September 22. We won't tell you how long it took for him to remove all those candles.



Jerry Johnson



Bill Meunier

Mama Roux was really busy this month. At the top are just a few members of the bar's Championship AIDS Walk Team who attended the bar's Post Walk Appreciation Party. The popular East Side bar signed up over 250 walkers. The guys pictured below were on hand for the Fest City Singers show on Wednesday September 11.

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Interview: Jorjet Harper, Author and Humorist

Jorjet Harper is author of two books, *Lesbomania* and *Tales from the Dyke Side*. She recently spoke with *Light* about her writing, her humor and her politics before a reading at the Milwaukee Bookstore, *After Words*.

Light: After your book tours, one of the up and coming household words in the lesbian community will no doubt be *lesbomaniac*, a term you coined to describe yourself and certain other lesbians of joy. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you mean by *Lesbomaniac*?

Harper: Well, it's a phenomenon, it seems to me. It's like some women avoid coming out because they think it's going to be a horrible experience. Society keeps telling us that to be a lesbian is this *ucch*, so much so that the most you can do is make the best of it.

But when I came out I was so happy, I was so thrilled, that I went almost totally in the other direction. There was a real euphoria. No lesbian could do wrong, lesbians were just goddesses on earth. For years after that, I did all kinds of work in the women's community, worked for a lesbian/gay paper run by lesbians, and the women's community became my life. If there was a festival, I wanted to go to it; if there was any kind of women's event, I wanted to go to it.

And so *lesbomania* to me is a yearning to do anything that has to do with lesbians. It's an overarching enthusiasm, a love of everything lesbian.

Light: Do you write to induce *lesbomania* in your audience? Or does your *Lesbomania* just bubble irrepressibly out?

Harper: Well, the concept of what was going on came with the name. I wrote for years for the gay paper in Chicago, I was the Arts and Entertainment editor at *Outlines*, and these funny things kept happening that just weren't being recorded anywhere. There's so much humor, you know, in being invisible in the world, and I wasn't reading about it.

So I was moving away from writing strictly news reporting and interviews, to writing about these anecdotal experiences, and these what-if kinds of experiences, and these "where-are-the-lesbians-when-you-really-look-for-them" kind of thing, that turned into a lot of lesbian humor that I started doing as a regular column. And I was thinking, what kind of a name can I give this column?

The best name I could think of was *Lesbomania*, and that name seemed to embody what this whole thing was about.

It was a wanting to share the joy and the fun of being a lesbian. And how being a dyke could be a kind of quirky, interesting way to look at the world.

Light: Yes, I can clearly see this in your writing, your sense of fun, your spoofs, your irony. Are you perhaps trying to suggest in your writing that you have moved beyond anguish? I think of the wonderful pieces on your mother, which could have been written in anguish, but which you've done with a fine humor, a great sense of fun, and a good deal of irony.

Harper: I don't think that I'd like to say I'm moving beyond anguish, because you never know when some more is going to hit you, you know. But when I started doing the column there were a lot of lesbian writers who were writing very movingly about being a lesbian, and about how it wasn't the happiest thing that ever happened to them.

At the same time, there were a lot of stand-up comics— Kate Clinton had been around for a long time, and Robin Tyler, and lots of other women who were doing stand-up comedy. But I wasn't reading any really funny stories about the lesbian experience. So I felt I had a niche there. The humor was what interested me.

But I'm not quite as euphoric as I used to be. You can see that in the second book [*Tales from the Dyke Side*].

Light: What do you see as the difference between your first book *Lesbomania* and your second, *Tales from the Dyke Side*?

Harper: In the first book, I was worried about offending someone. I was careful to try to please everyone. By the second book, I'd decided that I was gonna say what I have to say in the way I want to say it. I had more confidence, wasn't worried if others thought my writing was funny.

The second book is also, I think, better written. It's more organized, there's more structure to it. *Tales* is worked into sections where there's a subject matter arrangement. That gives more dimension to the writing.

Light: It also seems to me that *Tales* might have a little more of the dark side of the dyke side. Did you, for example, feel flippant in writing *Lesbomania*— a wonderful book, but a little more on the surface? I perceive a deepening in *Tales from the Dyke Side*, even while you stay with your humor.

Harper: Yes. But I think that a lot of that was because I was able to write in the form I wanted to. The pieces in *Lesbomania* are by and large a lot shorter than the ones in *Tales* because they had to fit the 500-word format of the newspaper. It's hard to develop any kind of ongoing humor, or shape a humorous piece with any kind of depth to it, in that short a space.

Light: So it was the medium, more than you— perhaps some changes in you as well— that made the difference?

Harper: Well, there is that. Yes, there is that. I am just as happy now as I was then about being a lesbian, but I don't think I have quite the same stars in my eyes.

Light: You mean we're not all as wonderful as you thought?

Harper: [Laughter] We-ee-ll... you know. We do tend to get embroiled with each other. I do think this is characteristic of every oppressed group. We tend to get very contentious with each other, because there we are, and we have a lot of frustrations.

And rather than do the difficult thing of aiming that anger back out at the people who gave it to us, where it belongs, we tend to get involved in these subcultural disputes, sometimes justified, sometimes not.

Light: You're using slides in connection with your readings tonight. Do you think of your work as visual?

Harper: Hm, I don't know, do you?

Light: I didn't, until I was waiting for the interview, and then I began to think that two pieces in particular— the one about ancient lesbonaughts who visited earth from outer space, and the one on lesbians in ancient Egypt— might effectively be enhanced by slides. But I also thought, of course, that multimedia is the cool thing now, and maybe you were just doing the cool thing. Are you?

Harper: A couple of the pieces in *Lesbomania* happened the other way 'round. The pictures came first, and then I had to condense them down into columns. I'd been doing presentations at Moving Mountain Coffee House for a long time, and it just sort of came out of that.

I have one other one now, a visual one, that I can't figure out how to make into a story. That's one where I show how all the ancient goddess statuary looks like modern household appliances.

Light: In *Tales from the Dyke Side*, you write that you "tend to avoid the cutting edge, because that's where [you're] most likely to get cut." Comments?

Harper: That's in a piece about sex toys, and I just thought it sounded funny. I've also got to say that my personal limit is, uh, tissue damage. I'm not on the cutting edge, certainly sexually, and I don't want to be there. You thought that was particularly quotable?

Light: Well, it is funny, and I wondered what your response would be to a question about it.

Harper: The sexual avant garde is a little too edgy for me. I find it interesting, but it's not my thing.

Light: Yes, but your way of acknowledging it seems to be through your sense of humor, and through irony. You're not a brimstone preacher, you're not out to berate people. You seem okay with a lot of things, it seems to me, even though something may not be in the direction of your own development.

Harper: Well, in a way. I thought I went pretty far in *Tales*, you know, in criticizing dildos. I will set myself up as a target for criticism there, but, oh well.

Light: What about the part in *Tales* where you say you're going to put out your shingle as an anti-marriage counselor? How do you feel about lesbian marriage?

Harper: Okay, how I feel is that lesbians and gay men should be able to get married to each other because lesbians and gay men have the right to make the same stupid mistakes as straight people.

I think that marriage is—well, it's not a doomed institution because everybody is so gung ho about it— but look at how it's working.

Marriage at this point should be an option among a number of choices about how people live their lives. I talk about this a little bit in "Coupledom and Dummer." I think that we need

TURN TO HARPER, PAGE 27

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FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27
SPOTLIGHT SHOW BENEFITS BESTD AT LA CAGE

Our SpotLight Party for September is a spectacular show at La Cage featuring many of your favorite performers.

Entitled "An Evening With the Stars", the 10 PM extravaganza is sure to be a big hit.

Among the many performers who have volunteered their time to raise money for the BESTD Clinic and its HIV prevention programs are: Lena Chavez, Miss Gay Continental Wisconsin, and a star performer at Club 219, In Between Owner, Curt Peck will be joined by the bar's Lana St. James, Karen Valentine, star of the M & M Club stage will be joined by members of the fabulous Singsational including Garret James and Teri Wedner, Brittany Morgan from 3 B's and Walker's Point Cafe will be on hand as will members of the hilarious Drag-o-rama. Robert Nugent Jones will bring his vocal stylings to the stage and so will Mama Roux's Lu Shanti, who will be joined by Mama's favorite impersonator, Jasmine.

Even BJ Daniels will making a special guest appearance.

All of this fabulous entertainment plus many surprise guests can be yours for just \$5.00.

Show time is at 10:00, don't miss it!

MURDER & MAYHEM AT AFTERWORDS

It will be a night of murder and mayhem at Afterword's Books, 2710 N. Murray, Milwaukee.

Gay mystery writer R.D. Zimmerman will be joined by Lesbian mystery writer Ellen Hart for a book reading and signing.

Be on hand and see if you can figure out "Who Dun It? This is a perfect way to get in the spirit for the Halloween season.

The fun begins at 7:00.

ANNIVERSARY PARTY AT JUST US

Just Us, 807 S. Fifth streets begins its Second Anniversary celebration with a free party at the bar starting at 10:00.

Entertainment, surprises and door prizes will be on hand throughout the evening.

NINE INCH MALES AT ZA'S

The Nine Inch Males are continuing their tour of the Badger State. Determined to show off their um er physical attributes, the troupe will be at ZA's (1106 Main St, Green Bay) for another fine show.

RICK BEECH AT THE PIVOT

The fabulous Rich Beech, a powerful singer from Chicago, opens Pageant Weekend at Appleton's Pivot Club.

Beech known for his techno style Gay disco songs will be appearing at 10:30 PM.

The Pivot is located at 4815 W. Prospect.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28
NINE INCH MALES AT CLUB '94

Kenosha's Club 94 will be the hot spot tonight as the Nine Inch Males make an appearance at the popular night spot.

Showtime is 11:00, but get there early for a good spot to view this troupe's un, er physical attributes.

Club 94 is located just off of I-94. Exit at Hwy C.

MISS GAY WISCONSIN US OF A AT THE PIVOT CLUB

Appleton's Pivot Club will be the site of the Eighth Annual Miss Gay Wisconsin US of A pageant. The club is located at 4815 W. Prospect.

Winners and runners up for pageants held throughout Wisconsin will be competing for Wisconsin's most prestigious title.

Admission is \$5.00, Table seats are \$10.00. For more information call the Pivot at 1-800-401-2748.

FASHION EXTRAVAGANZA AT SURVIVAL/REVIVAL

Even if you aren't one of the fashion impaired you should still attend "Street Beat!" at the Survival/Revival Resale Shop.

The Fashion Show includes commentary by Sister Cash Box, music by the Spangelmakers and comedy by the Dead Alewives. The whole thing will be emceed by the always delightful BJ Daniels.

Admission is just \$8.00 or \$6.00 for students. Survival/Revival is located at 246 E. Chicago, which is off Water Street and a couple of blocks North of the Milwaukee river.

JUST US ANNIVERSARY SHOW

All of your favorites will be on hand for a grand Just Us Diva show to help the popular South Side bar celebrate its Second Anniversary.

Just Us is known as the place where Gay Men and Lesbians mix freely together. The Anniversary show will reflect the bar's philosophy in helping build bridges, with a variety of entertainment sure to please everyone's taste.

Drink specials, and surprises will be on hand for everyone!

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 29
FREE PIG ROAST/PACKER PARTY WINDS UP JUST US ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND!

Just Us will be the place for Packer and Pig Roast Fans, as the bar located at 807 S Fifth Street winds up its Anniversary Weekend with a huge FREE Packer Party and Pig Roast.

A succulent porker will be served at Half Time of the game. To make sure you have plenty of beverages to wash down, the Just Us Sparfankle, Deb, Steve, Rick and crew will have plenty of drink specials throughout the day.

The fun gets underway at 2:30, game time is at 3:00.

MISS GAY WISCONSIN FINALS

Tonight we find out which Queen will reign over us for the next year as Lorretta La Mohr gives up her crown to the new Miss Gay Wisconsin US of A. at Appleton's Pivot Club.

As much as we love Miss Lamohr who has been an outstanding, Miss Gay Wisconsin, we can't wait to see what new face will emerge from a very crowded, very talented field.

Admission is \$5.00, table seats are \$15.00. For reservations contact the Pivot 1-800-401-2748.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2
JUST US HOSTS CONCERT PARTY

Milwaukee's Just Us, 807 S. Fifth St. will be holding a Melissa Ethridge Concert Night Party.

There will be pre-concert Happy Hour with 2 for 1 drinks and a post concert Party where you can get half off a Sandwich or beverage with your ticket stub.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 3
J.S. MARCUS AT MADISON'S BORDERS BOOK SHOP

J.S. Marcus will read from *Captain's Fire*, his haunting novel about a Jewish Bisexual man living in Berlin just after the Wall came down.

The reading will begin at 7:30 PM. Borders Book Shop is located at 3416 University Ave., Madison.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 4

FANNIES ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND
Fannies, Milwaukee's hot Lesbian bar located at 200 E. Washington, brings its fabulous 14th Anniversary Celebration.

There will be special entertainment, but no cover.

MELANAIE BRAVERMAN AT ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Melanie Braverman, writer of *East Jus-*

Final Arguments Heard in Hawaiian Same-Sex Marriage Case

Honolulu-- Hawaii's landmark case on same-sex marriages went to Circuit Judge Kevin Chang on Friday, September 20, following final arguments in which the state insisted that a ban on licensing Gay and Lesbian marriages protects children.

"The state's position is the child is best off with its mother or father or a married man and woman," said Deputy Attorney General Rick Eichor in defending the state against a lawsuit brought by three same-sex couples who were denied marriage licenses in 1990.

The state's position also applies to "second best" situations such as children resulting from donor insemination for infertile couples and cases of divorce in which the courts prefer joint custody, Eichor said.

"It is an elastic concept in the sense of what is best for the child. There are many second bests if the first best doesn't work. Same-sex marriage is not one of them," he said.

She will be appearing at Room Of One's Own, 317, W. Johnson St., Madison.

Her novel about loss and recovery in the American Midwest is the tale of an Iowa adolescence. The reading begins at 6:30.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5
FANNIES ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Fannies winds up its 14th Anniversary Celebration with a big party. Inside there will be drink specials and raffles all night. Outside is the "Ribbon Hunt." Find a Ribbon and win cash and prizes.

Fannies is located at 200 E. Washington.

CAFÉ MELANGE ANNIVERSARY

Café Melange, 720 N. Old World Third Street celebrates its Ninth Anniversary with a bash befitting the occasion.

The free party includes free food, music by Clamnation and drink specials. The celebration begins at 9 PM.

CLUB CHEEKS' FIRST SHOW

Club Cheeks, the newest addition to Wisconsin's Les/Bi/Gay bars will be holding its first ever show.

The popular club is located at 232 S. Broadway in Green Bay.

The show will be a benefit for Celeste Olds, winner of the Miss Gay Great Lakes US of A At Large Pageant. Proceeds will be used to help Celeste get to the National Finals in San Antonio Texas.

There is \$5.00 cover.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 10
MARGARET ERHART READING AT ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Margaret Erhart will be reading from her latest novel, *Old Love* at Madison's Room of One's Own, 317 W. Johnson.

Old Love is a story of sexual self-exploration, intimacy and the remaking of the American family. The reading begins at 6:30.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 12
SPOTLIGHT PARTY AT MANOEUVRES

Mark your calendars for our SpotLight party debut in the Mad City as we throw a red hot event, Badger Red that is.

Watch our favorite College team as they invade Columbus Ohio and beat the pants off the hated Ohio State Buckeyes.

There will be free Miller Lite for those dressed in Badger Red and a Badger Fan contest too!

So be on hand for a great afternoon and watch our Badgers stomp the enemy with all of your friends at Manoeuvres, 150 S. Wilson St. Madison.

The party gets underway at 2:00, game time is 2:30.

OBERONS RAISE MONEY FOR KIDS WITH AIDS AT B'S

The Oberons Leather Club will be holding the first of three Guest Club Nights to raise money to provide a great Christmas for Kids With AIDS.

This is an annual project put on by the Oberons. Guest club nights include beer busts, raffles and donations. The event begins at 10:00 and goes until 1:00 AM. B's is located on S Second and Lapham, Milwaukee.

Hawaii's Supreme Court in 1993 ruled that denying the three couples marriage licenses amounted to gender discrimination and violated the state Constitution's equal protection clause, unless the state could show a compelling state interest in doing so.

Chang is expected to rule before the end of the year, sending the case back to the state Supreme Court where a final ruling isn't expected for at least one year.

"We think the state after the first week failed to meet their burden, so certainly they didn't meet their burden through our witnesses," Dan Foley, the attorney for the three

TURN TO HAWAII, PAGE 24

SUNDAY OCTOBER 13
MAMA ROUX DOES THE 70'S!

We don't what it is, but we have seldom seen a bar that likes to party as much as this one does. The 70's party the bar threw in August was a big hit, the popular East Side Neighborhood Bar is holding another 70's bash so that all of those who have come in and asked them to do it again can be satisfied.

There will be a Mr and Ms. 70's dress contest, a buffet and lots of surprises. Whether you want to dress up for the occasion or not, don't miss this party which our Dusty Sass gave 4 1/2 rips on his party scale of 1 to 5.

Mama Roux's is located at 1875 N. Humboldt, Milwaukee. The fun gets underway at 4:00.

CLOCKWORK

Continued from Page 17

modern-day Cinderella story. A young girl from Caracas, Venezuela has high aspirations—becoming a great opera singer, and none other than Maria Callas is her idol.

She settles in Paris in pursuit of her dream, and here the film takes on echoes of Cinderella: our would-be opera heroine Ana (Ariadna Gil) lives with three ambitious girl friends, one of whom, Celeste (Arielle Dombasle) is the evil "stepsister." The "fairy godmother" is a Puerto Rican shaman (Hidegar Garcia Madriz) with a plethora of exotic panaceas.

Ana is pursued by two "princes," one is the local opera impresario, Italo Medici (Luis Homar), and the other is Alcanie (Evelyn Didi), an eccentric psychoanalyst who offers Ana a room as an escape from her overcrowded apartment and later, the police.

Cinderella's "glass slipper" even makes it appearance in a different sense. Finally, the music of Rossini's "La Cenerentola" is *Celestial Clockwork's* leitmotif.

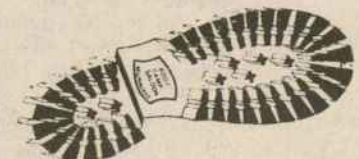
Truly, this movie had some promise as a riotous comedy, as it was no doubt intended to be. The soundtrack is a rich combination of classical opera, Schubert lieder, and salsa. It's filled with quirky characters (did I mention Ana's Gay astrologer/waiter pal?), but somehow Torres failed to complete the picture and round it off nicely. There are several humorous moments, but no real belly laughs or guffaws.

Where *Celestial Clockwork* is a real letdown is in the last act. There's just no coherent, enjoyable payoff. With Ana's ambition to sing opera professionally, and considering the many tribulations endured along the way, you'd think we'd finally get to see her dream come true before our eyes, right? Wrong.

Torres wanted this multi-layered story to whirl past us at a spry pace (it clocks in at only 85 minutes), but only succeeded in overwinding the clock and the main spring broke. *Celestial Clockwork* is clearly a case of time poorly spent.

On a 1-10 scale, this film rates a 3.

Celestial Clockwork's exclusive engagement starts on September 27th at Milwaukee's Downer Theatre.


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HOTEL

Continued from Page 1

Financing Package Complicated

The Scheels with the help of others tried to put together a complicated financing package that included government loans and grants as well as private loans. Scheel says that even with government help, the project was short on cash. "Right now we would be about \$400,000 short but as time goes on that amount increases because the cost of construction increases."

Openly Gay Madison Alderman, Mike Verveer helped with that financing effort. He had received staff approval for a recommendation to the Madison City Council for a \$590,000 package to aid the Hotel Washington.

This assistance would have consisted of a grant for \$190,000 and a guarantee for a second mortgage. The guarantee was valued at \$400,000.

"It wasn't enough," said Verveer. "The City did everything it could, but we can't put out money that we don't have. I'm devastated by this." Verveer said he was confident that the package would have been approved by the City Council if it had come up for a vote.

Time A Factor

The financing problems were compounded by the amount of time it was taking to get started on the project. Part of the problem was a delay in getting HUD to waive a deed restriction.

No one was aware of the restriction until the Scheels tried to repay the City of Madison for a low interest loan they had received to fund the conversation of part of the Hotel into low income apartments. In May, the Scheels, with the approval of the Madison City Council asked for the waiver, but it wasn't granted until July.

Sources say that financing package couldn't be completed until after the waiver was given because the Hotel needed to generate more income than the low income apartments would have provided.

"The longer it took, the more expensive it got and the bigger the shortfall became," said Scheel. "We wanted to get started well before the cold weather hits to minimize the time it would take to rebuild."

An early start was considered to be very important. The building could not start until the financing was in place. However, once the financing had gone through, repayments would have to be made. That made a shorter rebuilding time essential because the Scheels needed the revenue from the Hotel to keep up their payments.

A late start also meant a winter construction schedule which would have added a considerable amount of time to what would have been needed for the summer, fall construction that was originally envisioned. "It increased construction costs" said Scheel. "For example, we would have had to heat the site before it was weatherproofed."

Hub of the Community

The Hotel, was home to two of the most popular Gay bars in Wisconsin, Rod's and, the New Bar. It also housed the Micro Bar, the Cafe Palms, Club De Wash and The Barber's Closet. It had been the hub of Madison's Les/Bi/Gay community life for 21 years. The Hotel and its business had a national reputation.

After the fire, the Scheels were flooded with calls and letters from throughout the country, all of them urged an effort to rebuild.

The Rebuilding Effort Moved Forward

They needed little urging. They immediately launched a rebuilding project, taking time out only to help raise money for those thrown out of their jobs and their homes.

At The United's Annual Award dinner in August, where the Scheels and their staff received a special award, a Wisconsin Light staff member commented to Sherry Scheel Nelson that he admired the dedication she and her brother, Greg, had exhibited risking everything to rebuild the Hotel.

Her reply summed up the community spirit that epitomized the Hotel, "We had no choice. What else could we do? It was our life. We have so many friends who were part of it as employees and as customers. We provided jobs, and a safe place to go to and the community needs it."

With the help of Alderman Verveer, and Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, the Scheels won quick approval for the City building permits and licenses needed to begin construction. They also won a quick approval for City request to HUD to waive the deed restriction on the property.

Last Employees Laid Off

The Scheels had kept several employees on their payroll for more than six months after the fire. They were finally laid them off earlier this month.

"We simply ran out of operating money. We couldn't afford to keep paying people without any sources of income. Laying off the remaining staff was one of the hardest things we have ever had to do," said Scheel.

New Site Sought By The Scheels

Greg and Sherry Scheel, are determined to find a new home for the two major bars in the Hotel, Rod's and the New Bar and as many of the Hotel's businesses as they can.

Greg says "We've are now actively trying to find an alternative location. So far we haven't

had much luck. We have looked at half a dozen places, because we want to put our people back to work. Up to this point though, every place we have looked at has a problem. Either the City won't let you in or it's too expensive, or it was a bad location. But it's a big city, I am sure we will find a suitable site somewhere."

It may be difficult for the Scheels to find a site that would accommodate all of the businesses that were in the Hotel, but many observers have expressed concern that Madison needs more Gay and Lesbian Clubs than currently exist. They say that the community would welcome the reopening of Rod's and the New Bar.

Scheels To Stay Involved

Scheel emphasizes that he and his sister, remain committed to the various projects they have worked on and initiated no matter what happens. "The MAGIC Picnic will go on. We will continue our involvement with the Rodney Scheel House and all of the other groups we have worked with. Community involvement has been a tradition for our family and we will not abandoned that tradition."

Building Fund Reimbursements

Scheel says that anyone who donated to the Building fund and wants their money back should send him a letter before October 31st. After that date any remaining funds will be donated to a Gay related charity.

Even so, Greg Scheel can't resist making one last pitch telling *The Light* "If there is anyone out there with \$400,000 they want to invest in a wonderful project, there is no time like the present to speak up."

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HAWAII

Continued from Page 23

couples, said his final witness appeared Thursday, ending testimony in the trial that began September 10.

All the witnesses, including those for the state, agreed that Gay and Lesbian parents are good parents, that their children develop just fine, that they should be able to adopt and that "if anything, the children of Gay and Lesbian parents need more support, not less from the state," Foley said.

"So as far as the undisputed record of the case, the state failed to meet its burden," he said.

Eichor disagreed. "If the policy of the state is to legalize same-sex marriages, we will be endorsing those marriages for all purposes," he said. "Therefore we'll be endorsing a policy that separates children from their mother and father. Therein lies the conundrum."

Foley said that reasoning is "bogus." "This case has nothing to do with a state policy of requiring children to be removed from their biological parents," Foley said. "This case has to do with childless couples who want to marry, couples with children who want to marry so their children have rights to benefits."

Foley's final witness was Dr. Robert J. Bidwell, head of the pediatrics department at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children and an associate professor in pediatrics at the University of Hawaii's medical school.

Legalizing same-sex marriages would give such families a legal status and help end the social stigma the children often face during adolescence, said Bidwell, who estimated counseling up to 100 children of Gay and Lesbian parents in his 15 years of practice.

Marriage provides stability to the family and the couple and validates the status of the family in the community," so any child "can talk about mom and dad, mom and mom or dad and dad and be accepted in the community," Bidwell said.

His testimony was consistent with all the expert witnesses both for the plaintiffs and the state that above all, a loving, caring and nurturing family environment is the most important aspect of good child development.

The state's expert witnesses last week focused on the added importance of the natural instinct biological parents have toward their own children and having both male and female role models within the family.

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608 SF 31. Interested in hearing from other females to share my adventures in exploring new things & fantasies. I'm sincere, very good-looking & interested in hearing from women only. Call Ext. 33851

414 SF 20, brown hair, medium-built, green eyes. I like having fun. I enjoy sports & softball. Looking for someone who wants to go out & have a good time. He should be between the ages 19-25. Call Ext. 34525

608 SBF 32. Looking for a White female. I have 3 kids. Leave me a message if you are interested. Call Ext. 33312

414 SM 5'7", 165 lbs., muscular. Looking for someone, 18-25, who enjoys all types of music. Must be similar size & muscle bound. Race is open. Seeking someone open & outgoing who will appreciate me for me. Call Ext. 34533

608 SM 6', 165 lbs., brown hair, blue eyes. I enjoy hiking, swimming, watching TV, dining out & movies. I would like to meet someone 18-30, to talk to & develop a relationship with. Leave a message if you are interested. Call Ext. 32929

Men
Seeking Men

414 SBM 27, 5'7", 190 lbs., work out daily. Looking for someone who is 18-31 for friendship. Must be available during the daytime, be a non-smoker, discreet & safe. Call Ext. 34461

414 SM 6', 160 lbs., lonely, nice-looking, clean-shaven, calm & collected 23-year-old. Enjoy movies, video games & exercising. I'm a high school graduate with career goals. Looking for a very attractive, gay White bottom, 18-22, with the same initiatives. No games. Call Ext. 34472

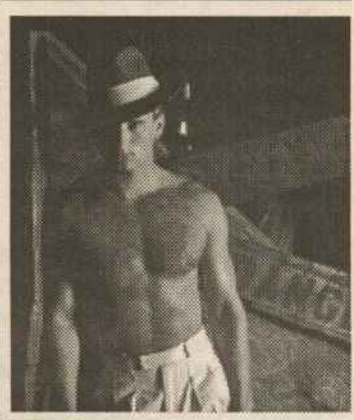
414 SM 6', brown hair, blue eyes, clean-shaven, mustache. I'm looking for someone similar, 30-40. Must be clean, safe & discreet. Call Ext. 33339

715 SWM Looking for other White males 20-40 who would like to have a fun time getting to know each other. I'm a smoker & a social drinker. I like quiet evenings at home, movies & to be spoiled. Call Ext. 33098

715 SM 30, new to the area. Looking for other males, 25-45, who are confident in their lifestyle. I love quiet evenings at home & spoiling that special someone. I like to fix a home-cooked meal & treating a man like he should be treated. Call Ext. 33714

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IBM and Lincoln National Insurance Offer Health Benefits to Same-Sex Couples

New York—IBM on Thursday, September 19, became the nation's largest company to extend health benefits to the partners of its Gay and Lesbian employees.

Gay activists welcomed the decision and said they hoped it would encourage other companies to do the same. Because it is so large and diverse, IBM is regarded as a bellwether of American business practices.

Its new policy covers dental, vision and general health benefits, starting on January 1. IBM did not extend benefits to unmarried heterosexual couples. The company, like others, reasoned that such couples can obtain benefits by getting married, an option not open to gays.

IBM employs about 225,000 people worldwide and 110,000 in the United States.

It joins nearly 470 other large corporations, governments and universities in the United States to provide the same benefits to same-sex couples that it does to married couples. That's up from 250 a year ago, according to Common Ground, a Natick, Massachusetts research firm.

High-tech companies generally have led in the extension of benefits to same-sex couples. Lotus Development Corp., which IBM acquired last year, took the step in 1990 and was among the first to do so.

In recent months, several other household names, including Walt Disney Co. and American Express Co., have also extended health benefits to partners of Gay employees.

"Having a company like IBM on board is going to shake a lot more of them out of the trees," said Liz Winfield, co-founder of Common Ground.

"What we really focused on in our discussion was our commitment to nondiscrimina-

tion," said Jill Kanin-Lovers, vice president of human resources for IBM's U.S. divisions. "We have a long standing policy of treating employees equitably and fairly. That was how we shaped our decision-making."

IBM in 1974 was the first large company to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination hiring policy.

To qualify for the new benefits, IBM employees will be required to sign affidavits saying that they are financially and emotionally attached to their partners. Other companies have a similar requirement, and such documents have become common in same-sex partnerships.

Lincoln National

Lincoln National Corp., headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana, will begin offering health-care benefits to partners of Gay male and Lesbian employees at the beginning of next year.

Lincoln announced the new employee benefits Friday, September 20.

Lincoln spokesman Bob Jones said an employee and partner would have to sign an affidavit saying they have been financially and emotionally interdependent with each other for at least 12 months, are at least 18 years of age and not blood relatives.

Packets of information on the coverage, which will include medical, dental, vision, hearing and life insurance benefits, will be available on November 1.

"It has been under consideration for some time," Jones said. "The broadening of the definition of 'eligible dependents' is in keeping with Lincoln National's shared values, strongly influenced by questions of fairness and responsibility."

Because health-care benefits are available to the legal spouses of Lincoln National employees, the company felt it should extend benefits to gays and lesbians who are not allowed to marry legally, he said.

Lincoln National will not offer health-care benefits to heterosexual couples who are living together.

"They have the right to take advantage of the marriage laws," Jones said. "Couples of the same sex do not."

All of Lincoln National's affiliates will be covered by the policy. The corporation and affiliates have 10,250 employees, including 3,500 in Fort Wayne.

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MIXNER
Continued from Page 1

memos don't work. That life in the closet doesn't work. That we understand the very tough practical game of politics, and now what you have to understand is that we are capable of playing it.

So, supporting Clinton doesn't mean silence. Just the opposite, elections are supposed to be the time of dialogue, and ideas and new directions and visions. I still believe that.

Supporting Clinton doesn't mean he is perfect. We have voted often for some very imperfect characters. Supporting Clinton doesn't mean we stop pushing for justice. Nor should we be the ones to rationalize when he takes the side of injustice.

I will not be the first to step to the line to defend him for signing the Defense of Mar-

riage Act. Nor would I urge anyone of this community to do so.

Let me tell you what happened today, if I may. This Defense of Marriage Act takes away our immigration rights, it takes away our Medicare and some Social Security rights, it takes away certain Medicaid and Medicare rights, it takes away bereavement rights, it takes away some of our family leave rights, it takes some of our employee union rights away.

I don't know a person in this room who is willing to surrender one of those rights, let alone all of them in one piece of legislation. And I am not about to rationalize that he had no choice, that the political opportunity wasn't right, it was wrong what he did today. Very wrong what he did today!

He did it for political reasons, and I'm going to say so. It doesn't stop me from walking into a voting booth and pulling the lever. And if anyone thinks this community can't chew gum and walk at the same time, and make some powerful decisions and be powerful in our advocacy for our rights, and be practical politically, they are wrong. We're not stupid.

We more than anyone, as I just read, a man

crawled up the driveway to cast his vote, because he knew what was at stake. We more than anyone know what it means to be part of the process.

We're not taking ourselves out of it. More than anything we're not budging. We're here to stay. We're going to fight until we win. Sometimes that means we're nice people, sometimes that means we're tough. We have the capacity to be both.

But what we most of all have the capacity to do, is to not to be deterred in the fight for our freedom by any individual, friend or foe.

What is your feeling about closeted politicians?

Basically what your asking me about is "outing." Now, one of the things I've learned is that sometimes makes me unpopular with straight people when I get arrested in front of the White House, and sometimes I become unpopular with gay and lesbian people when I don't take stands that please them. But I'm a tough old ogre and I've always spoken my mind. I am against outing!

And I'll tell you why I'm against outing. I think its a form of blackmail. I think its a form that says unless you think like I do, unless you vote what I believe in, I will punish you for what you are. We are fighting for the

freedom to be who we are, whatever that might be.

A union member, a -- shudder-- Republican, or in the closet. I don't think any of us have the right to play God. How are you going to feel if you out someone and they kill themselves.

In 1969 I almost killed myself when the federal government blackmailed me. Its in the book. They said if I didn't get out of the anti-war movement and turn over [information], basically spy on the anti-war movement, they were going to send photographs of the man I was dating and myself to my parents.

I almost killed myself. I don't want that on my conscience. That's not what we're about as a community. We're not mean and mean spirited like Pat Robertson and Phyllis Schafley.

We're about the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Ghandi. We're about bringing something different to this country out of our suffering and out of our struggle.

And if we can't bring anything different out of the path that we travel, then we've done something wrong. That is where I come down, whether it is popular or not in the community, I feel very strongly!

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HARPER

Continued from Page 22

to accept the fact that it's a perfectly healthy way to live, to have a relationship that last three years or ten years-- or two weeks. You get what you can from that relationship, and you can't get any more. People grow. I think it's unrealistic at this point to say, "I'm gonna stay with this person for the rest of my life, no matter what happens." It's a lovely idea, but I don't think it's necessarily a healthy one anymore.

I feel about it the same way I felt when I was a teenager who was told "you should not have sex before you get married." You would have to be crazy not to have sex before you get married if you're going to pledge your life to this other person. How can you say, "I'm going to lock myself into this relationship" when you don't even know what it means, don't even know if you're sexually compatible with this person you're pledging to give your life to?

I think that people-- straight people, too-- feel guilty because they feel like they should have stayed together for the sake of the kids, or whatever. Really, what people should be doing is feeling like they've accomplished something if they've come through it and are still friends.

Light: You mentioned in one of your tales that we should have celebrations for parting.

Harper: Well, that is pretty idealistic.

Light: More practically, then, for those who want to write. Can you give some sense of your journey into publication? When did you first begin to think of yourself as a writer? What were your first tries like?

Harper: I started to think of myself as a writer on December 1, 1977 [at age 30]. I had been writing for a long time, and I had this idea of wanting to become a novelist, bla-bla-bla, you know, whatever. But that was the day that I actually sat down and said, "I'm going to write three pages today, no matter what it is."

I have thousand of pages from that initial regimen. Very quickly it evolved into prose about what I was doing, stuff that I still refer back to sometimes. It was essentially a journal, but a journal that I had to keep. It wasn't just an occasional thing.

Then when I moved to Chicago in 1979, I started writing for the gay press, and I did a lot of writing. That was when I first got published.

Light: Do you read a lot? Who influenced your writing, who primes your pump?

Harper: I read a lot, all sorts of things. I especially liked *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, and *Cat's Cradle* by KurtVonnegut. I liked the humor and their far-out ideas.

It's talking, too, to all sorts of people. It's not only what you read. It's what you talk about that's important.

I've also been influenced by a New York kind of humor, something I grew up with.

Light: You spoke before of your earlier writing, which included "these where-are-the-lesbians-when-you-really-look-for-them" sketches. You also say that you've been accused of seeing lesbians in places where there aren't any, but that you "simply find lesbians in places that other people never thought to look." What is your latest sighting?

Harper: On TV. The Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman thing where they've made her into a kind of modern woman. Can you imagine? What are the chances that she wasn't lesbian? She had to be. And Vena the Warrior Princess?

Did you know that the Ellen DeGeneres is maybe going to come out? We would have the central character of a sitcom who's lesbian. Right now they're feeling it out-- the right wing of course is protesting-- but we may see Ellen Morgan [the central character of the sit-com] come out.

Up to now, they've tried to have the feminism without the lesbianism.

Light: What do you see as the future of lesbian writing?

Harper: You have to tell me first what you mean by "lesbian writing."

Light: I'm thinking in terms of the present emphasis in lesbian writing on humor and detective fiction. I'm not asking for a generic definition of what makes something lesbian-- perhaps at this time impossible.

Harper: Well humor and detective fiction are popular across the board. What is true for lesbians writing is that we've barely scraped the surface. It's only been in the last twenty years that you can read about lesbians in main culture-- not only in books, but with music, and film.

What will happen is dependent upon maintaining and expanding social justice.

Light: So art and politics are not two unconnected realities?

Harper: No. We need luxury beyond mere struggle that we will get only through struggle. But we can't only struggle. We need the luxury and time to explore what it means to be a lesbian, to ask who we are in the universe.

We are not just heterosexual. Lesbianism is a profoundly different thing from being heterosexual. We need to tally things differently. Categories [like lesbian, heterosexual] are not quite accurate, but they are real. There are real issues of identity.

Light: What are you doing right now?

Harper: I'm in grad school at Eastern Illinois University, in Rhetoric and Comp. I'd wanted to teach, but once you're back in academia, you meet academia again. I don't like grading, I love teaching.

I have an abiding interest in writing. My thesis will be on gay/lesbian rhetoric.

Light: What is in your immediate future?

Harper: I'll be doing a book tour throughout Europe. My illustrator is from Germany so there will lots of stops in Germany; I'll also be reading in Amsterdam, Paris, London. I'll also be looking at lesbian culture, and it relates/does not relate to what's going on here.

When I was in Berlin before, I was surprised to see that although the perspectives are different, the humor translates.

I'll be seeing people in Paris from ILGA [the International Lesbian and Gay Association]. You know, they are amazed at our freedoms. They envy our parades. We take for granted what are tremendous acts of courage for them, in order to have the right to love each other.

Light: What do you see in the future?

Harper: I see three things:

- 1) Human beings must get through this time without killing each other off;
- 2) We must conquer racism;
- 3) There will be a profound change in ways of thinking about self in terms of sex, monogamy, gender roles, and all those related areas we are just beginning to explore. Lesbians will be playing a profound part in all of this. And it will come out in the lesbian writing of the future.

AIDS Walk Wisconsin September 22, 1996 Milwaukee's Lakefront

Wisconsin Light Photos by Jerry

