

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



The Wisconsin Light

City Hall May Nix Funds For Pride Committee

By Jamakaya

[Milwaukee]- Still reeling from the effects of the fundamentalist backlash at November's School Board meetings, Milwaukee's Lesbian and Gay community braced once again for battle when it was reported that Alderman Michael Murphy plans to oppose a \$5,000 grant of city festival funds to the Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee.

The Pride Committee is one of 39 groups which applied for 1992 funds from the Milwaukee Festival Fund Board. The Festival Board, comprised of five citizen volunteers appointed by the Mayor, serves the purely advisory function of reviewing applications from non-profit community groups and, according to its guidelines, recommending funds for "the broadest array of neighborhood and holiday celebrations, environmental projects and civic observances." Its budget for 1992 is \$200,000. Most of the recommended grants range between \$2,000 and \$6,000.

In addition to the Pride Celebration, events recommended for funding next year include: the Riverwest Art Walk, the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Puerto Rican Festival, Downer Days, Farm Fest, EcoCircus Traveling Theatre, a Kwanzaa Celebration, the Veteran's Day Parade, YWCA's Racial Justice Convocation, the Coffee House's Mid-Winter Folk Festival and the Mexican Independence Day Parade.

Committee Vote

The Common Council's Committee on Economic Development is scheduled to vote on a resolution which contains all 39 grants on December 18. The full Council will then consider the resolution December 20. Scuttlebutt out of City Hall is that the vote may be delayed until January, but that could not be confirmed by the Wisconsin Light.

Alderman Marvin Pratt chairs the Economic Development Committee. Murphy is vice-chair. Aldermen John Kalwitz, Chris Krajniak and Steve Cullen are also members. The Light called each committee member to inquire about their views. Murphy was the only one to answer his own phone and talk with us. None of the others returned our calls.

Alderman Murphy has been a past sponsor of the city's annual Gay Pride Week proclamations. He told the Light he supported the proclamations because they were simple statements about non-discrimination and treating Gays and Lesbians with respect, but he opposed the use of taxpayers' money to support what he called a "lifestyle" event.

When told that the Pride Celebration was a large cultural event similar to the city's other ethnic and neighborhood festivals, Murphy again said that he objected to promoting "Gay culture and lifestyle." He said he would also oppose a similar request by a heterosexual group wanting to promote its "lifestyle."

Murphy said: "Some of my best friends are Gays and Lesbians. A lot of them who I've talked to about it say they don't really care anyway. They don't see it as a big major issue and I hope it isn't made into one."

'Manipulation' by Whom?

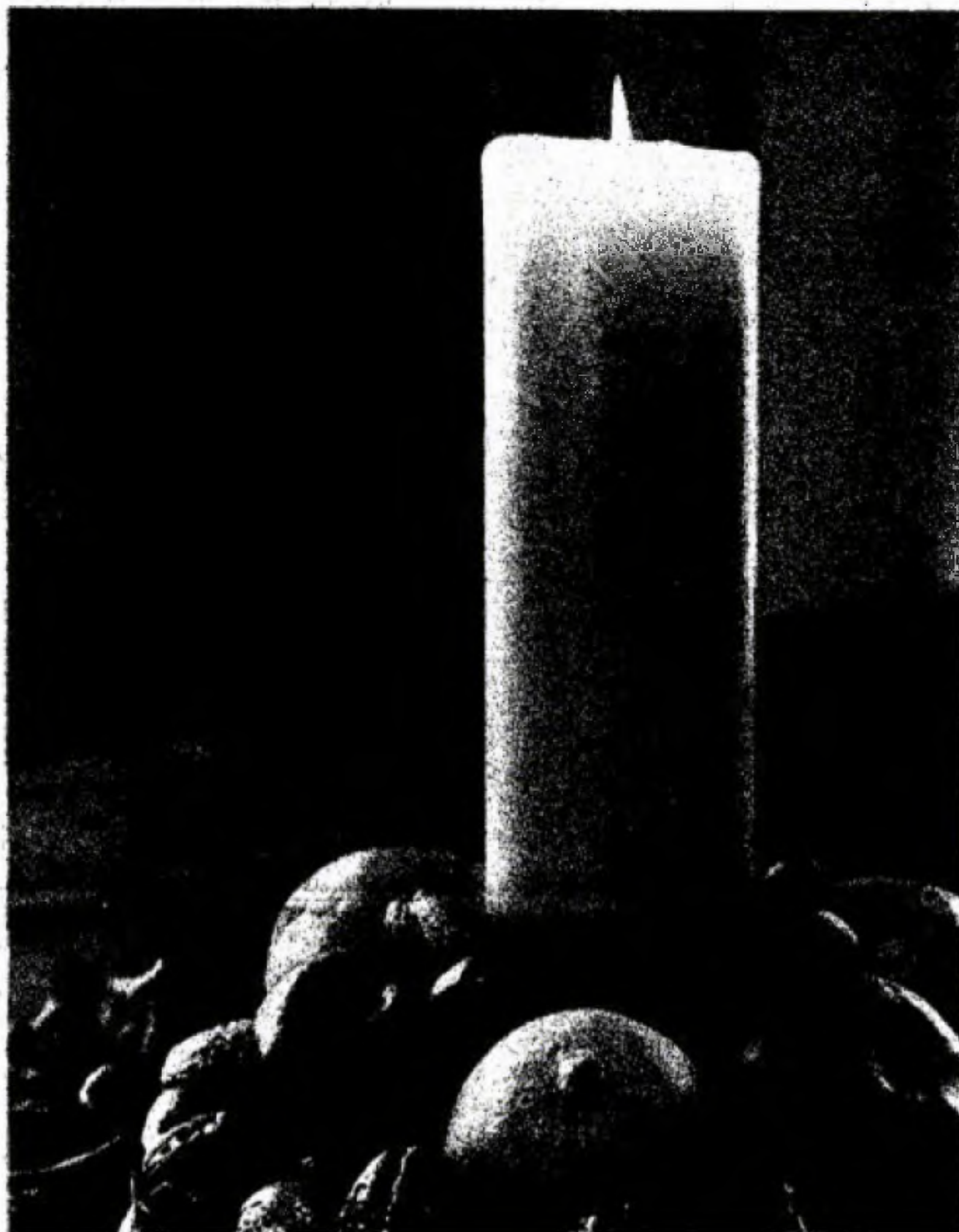
When he expressed concern that the Light might try to make an issue of it, this reporter suggested that it was Mark Belling of WISN Radio and the fundamentalists who were already making an issue of it, just as they had the School Board vote in November.

Murphy said it was wrong for people to "manipulate" the issue. He said he had even called the Milwaukee Sentinel to complain about their coverage of the story. Both the Sentinel and Journal in their headlines and stories juxtaposed the Pride Committee's proposed grant of \$5,000 with the fact that veteran's groups, which organize the Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades were only offered \$1,000.

Murphy called the coverage
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Holiday Season Marred By Violent Attacks Against Gays

By Terry Boughner and Jamakaya



[Milwaukee]- One Gay man was shot, Lesbian activist Miriam Ben-Shalom received a death threat and at least one other elderly man was brutally mugged in a series of anti-Gay incidents which marred the early holiday season in Milwaukee. Several of the attacks were linked to recent media reports about Gays and to the homophobic outcry by fundamentalists at last month's School Board meetings.

Jim Beck of Racine County, whose partner, Bill Meunier, is a Wisconsin Light columnist, was robbed and then shot in an incident of anti-Gay violence late Friday night, December 6. The robbery/shooting took place in the Menomonee Street parking lot across from the Wreck Room bar at 266 East Erie.

According to Beck, he was getting out of his car when he was assaulted by two men he described as approximately in their middle twenties and Black. At least one of the assailants was armed. The assault took place just before midnight.

Beck said that one of the men pointed a gun at him, saying, "Give me your money, fag!" Beck complied, giving them his wallet containing \$15, his payroll check and the extra set of keys to his car. Then for no apparent reason he was shot, with the bullet hitting him in the upper right shoulder. The two assailants fled down an adjacent alley.

No Help From Bar

Beck, who did not realize he had been wounded, was forced to beg money from a passer-by to call his lover from a pay phone in the Wreck Room bar, whose personnel offered him no assistance. Afterward, he spotted a squad car sitting on Erie Street and went to report the crime.

It was only when he was sitting in the squad car with police, recounting the incident, that Beck realized he was dripping blood and had, indeed, been shot.

Police summoned paramedics and Beck was taken to the Milwaukee County Medical Complex for treatment. He was released Saturday morning. Doctors have informed Beck that he is likely to lose some of the mobility in his arm.

Police were on the scene that night, responding to a call of another robbery. They said took place in the same area approximately 20 minutes before Beck was shot. In that incident, a man who identified himself as Gay but who would not give his name, had been forced at gunpoint to hand over his wallet. The officers indicated they believed the two robberies were committed by the same men. As of press time, no suspects had been apprehended.

Beck, his partner Meunier and other staff members of the Light who arrived at the scene reported that the officers
TURN TO HATE CRIMES, PAGE 13

Homophobic Backlash Envelopes Students at UW-Whitewater

By Jamakaya

[Whitewater]- Polly Robinson, Photographic Editor of the Royal Purple, the student newspaper at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, was assaulted twice in November by assailants motivated by anti-Gay hatred. Both attacks occurred off campus in the parking lot outside her apartment. No suspects are in custody.

On November 18, Robinson suffered a minor concussion after being hit in the face by someone who yelled: "You fucking dyke!"

Several days later, Robinson discovered a copy of the Royal Purple on the windshield of her car. A message scrawled on it said: "Dike, you deserved what you got [sic]."

On November 25, Robinson was again assaulted, this time with a blunt object which put a two inch gash in her head. The attacks were preceded by harassing phone calls.

Shelby Mallonen, President of the Gay and Lesbian Student Union (GLSU) at UW-Whitewater, also received threatening and obscene phone calls during November. Mallonen attributed these attacks to an "atmosphere of hostility on the Whitewater campus" that, she said, had intensified this Fall.

Campus debates over funding for the GLSU and a homophobic editorial that ran in the Royal Purple [RP] seem to have fueled the violence.

In October, Bill Drebenstedt of the RP wrote an opinion piece criticizing government and university funding of what he called "fringe groups." He cited the GLSU along with ACT UP and Queer Nation (neither of which receive government funding), calling members of such groups "mutants." The GLSU was

in the process of applying for student funds available to all student groups through the proper university channels.

Then, on October 30, Managing Editor Jeffrey Slagter wrote an editorial called "Gay Movement Way Off Base," which ignited a campus-wide controversy.

In response to the placement of a copy of the Wisconsin Light on the Student Association bulletin board (later admitted to by Drebenstedt), Slagter wrote an inflammatory diatribe, calling Gays and Lesbians "closet fiends" who lack the courage to come out of the closet. He complained sarcastically about having to be "sensitive" to "poor homosexuals." Slagter claimed Gays were forcing "their extreme views on the masses" and that
TURN TO WHITEWATER, PAGE 15

Federal Judge Okays Pentagon Ban; Joe Steffan to Appeal Decision

[Washington, D.C.]- On December 9, 1991, Federal District Court Judge Oliver Gasch upheld current Defense Department policy banning openly Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people from military service.

In a case brought by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (LLDEF) — the national Gay and Lesbian legal organization — Gasch ruled that the anti-Gay policy "rationally furthered state purposes," and then denied relief to former Naval Midshipman Joseph Steffan.

Gasch's opinion was unprecedented because it upheld the Department of Defense (DOD) policy on the grounds that it is a legitimate tool to prevent the spread of AIDS within the armed forces, the first

time such a rationale has ever been expressed.

Paula Eitelbrick of LLDEF said: "The health rationale is absolutely outrageous because it bans an entire class of people without any justification."

Steffan was forced to resign from the U.S. Naval Academy in May, 1987, a few weeks shy of graduation, after he disclosed his homosexuality to an academy chaplain. Up to that point, Steffan had an impeccable record both academically and in terms of military service. He was scheduled to graduate near the top of his class and be commissioned as an officer.

In December, 1988, Steffan and Lambda filed suit challenging his
TURN TO NAVY, PAGE 15