

NETWORKING

45° NORTH

VOLUME 10 / ISSUE 1 / January / February / 1996

THE NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS NORTH, INC., an association of lesbians, gay men, bi-sexuals and their friends.

JIM CARRUTHERS ACCEPTS 1995 SARA HARDY MEMORIAL AWARD

The Traverse City Human Rights Commission chose Jim Carruthers to receive the 1995 Sara Hardy Memorial Award. This award was established in memory of Sara Hardy a local resident who started the Human Rights Commission in Traverse City. The award is given each year to a person in the Greater Grand Traverse Area that best personifies the goals, philosophies and aspirations of the Traverse City Human Rights Commission.

The award was presented at the City Commission meeting on December 4, 1995 in the city commission chamber room. A reception in Jim's honor was held immediately following the presentation. Dozens of Jim's friends and family attended packing the chamber room and overflowing into the hallway. Following is Jim's acceptance speech:

I would like to thank the Traverse City Human Rights Commission for presenting me with this most prestigious Sara Hardy award. I would also like to thank Friends North, the local gay and lesbian organization for nominating me. Friends North has given me the opportunity to meet some of the most wonderful people this

Jim continued page 5



The Carruthers family (left to right) Jim's partner Scott Southwell, Jim's mother, Jim (center holding plaque) Jim's grandmother and Jim's father.

OREGON ACTIVISTS MURDERED

by M'Lynn Hartwell

The bodies of two missing women have been found in the back of a pickup truck, and police said Friday they were investigating whether the women were killed because they were lesbian activists.

Tentative identification of Roxanna Ellis, 54, and Michelle Abdill, 42, was made by police late Thursday after Ellis' covered pickup was found in a Medford, Oregon, apartment complex by a cable television service technician, said Medford Police Sgt. Mike Moran. He declined to reveal how the women had been killed.

The women, who were domestic partners, had been missing since Monday when Ellis, who owned a real estate company, went to show a duplex to Robert James Acremant a second time on the day of the murders. Relatives of Abdill said she had not been seen since going to check on Ellis at the duplex after she failed to return after several hours.

The bodies of Michelle and Roxanna were found in the back of their covered Toyota pick up truck the evening of December the eighth, in Medford (Oregon). Michelle Abdill, and her partner of twelve years, Roxanna Ellis were last seen alive Monday, December fourth around 5:00 p.m. in northeast Medford. These women were bound with duct tape and each was shot twice in the back of the head. Both women were former residents of Colorado Springs (Colorado), and were actively concerned about anti-gay initiatives in that state. Both women were highly visible lesbian anti-hate activists and have been involved in combating the current anti-gay ballot measures in Oregon. Police reported that the two had received threats in the past and are investigating the murders as "hate crimes."

Robert James Acremant, 27, who is accused of killing the two Oregon women said he knew Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill, were lesbians before he killed them. "That's someone's grandma, for God sake," he said. "Could you imagine my grandma a lesbian with another woman?" Acremant also says he shot a friend to death in October. Acremant described murder as "maybe a little relieving. It's interesting. It's no different than shooting your chicken that just lost in a cockfight or putting your sick dog to sleep or shooting at tin cans."

Murder continued page 17

Friends North, Inc., P.O. Box 562, Traverse City, MI 49685-0562
(616) 946-1804 (This is a general information line to receive F/N
information.)

FRIENDS NORTH is an organization of lesbians, gay men, bi-sexuals
and their friends from northwestern lower Michigan. Located in Traverse
City, we provide social activities, a newsletter, phone line, workshops,
and a community needs fund for financial assistance.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of FRIENDS NORTH is composed of nine
women and men elected each December. Regular board meetings are
held at Northwestern Michigan College, West Hall, Room 2 in the
cafeteria the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is
welcome to attend.

Greg Baird
Jim Ingelson—president
Julie Parker

Victor Dinsmore—secretary
Tom Kincaid
Jim Poole

M'Lynn Hartwell
Carol Lambertson—VP
Scott Southwell—treasurer

Networking 45° North, P.O. Box 562, Traverse City, MI 49685-0562

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CREATING CHANGE: FROM THE EDITOR



Richard Tuxbury

The Creating Change conference, sponsored by NGLTF in Detroit last November was a highlight of my year. Well-organized, thorough, and focused, it was an opportunity to learn from the best leaders in our country about the status of the issues. It was exciting to be around 2,000 others and to meet and hear those people I had only read about for years: Melinda Paras, Evan Wolfson, Elizabeth Birch, Tim McFeeley, Lorrie Jean, Urvashi Vaid.

It was eye-opening. These leaders were normal, very hard-working people who just had an incredible commitment. I realized that weekend how small the power structure of the gay/lesbian community was. I felt that I had peeked behind the curtain and seen how small the Wizard of Oz really was. I saw how desperately underfunded these organizations were and how they struggled to make budgets. How the staff paid personally for business expenses while camping out on floors to save motel room charges. I saw the lines on the faces from the hard work and time commitments. There was no privilege for being the Director of NGLTF or LLDEF or any of the other organizations. The rewards were all inside.

About 12 people from the Grand Traverse area attended Creating Change. We came back re-charged, full of ideas, and educated in the issues. (Okay, some came back full of stories and flaming cheese in Greektown too).

When I returned home the inevitable letdown came. It was hard to see the direction to go—there were just too many issues and so much work to be done. But, after a few weeks, the frustration waned and I was left with a surprising feeling of great optimism.

Despite the lack of funds, the overworked people, and the general 'underdog' status of the g/l movement, there is a pervasive feeling that we are, well, moving from the back of the bus to the front. Some major successes (the Hawaii marriage progress, defeats of anti-gay referendums, far-reaching lawsuits, the Clinton endorsement of ENDA to include gays/lesbians, and the awarding of benefits to partners of gays/lesbians by many national organizations) seem to be looked on as indicators of a change in climate. And, success is often contagious.

Locally, there seems to be more optimism and commitment from people. It is exciting to see new faces on the Friends North Board. Also, PFLAG has emerged as a recognized leader of the local gay/lesbian community through numerous articles, interviews, and media attention. Their activism on a local and state level has attracted others to their monthly gatherings.

Other local people have started a GLSTN chapter. (Gay/Lesbian/Straight Teachers Network). They are getting together monthly, and there are committed, dynamic and enthusiastic individuals who are participating.

Planned Parenthood has organized Troupe Teen Theater, an energetic and talented group of local teens who perform for schools and other organizations. They focus on situations of conflict and concern to other teens, and are working particularly on the issues of homophobia and coming out.

From the Editor continued next page

The proof that we are progressing is the formation of these new groups and all the new people participating. It is no longer the core group of Friends North, as the enthusiasm has spread to others.

The Creating Change seminars spent a lot of time giving us strategies for success. Their first advice? Build coalitions. They told us that we must spread out from our cocoons of 'gay only' groups and bring in others who share the same values of fairness and equality. Reach out to PTAs, librarians, teachers, people of color, churches, civic organizations, NOW, etc. This is something our friend Sally Neal has been encouraging us to do for years when she was educating downtown Traverse City on homophobia, political ethics, and the environment.

With these small steps over the last few years, we have gained ground. One of the key people has been Patty O'Donnell, and I would like to personally thank her for all of her efforts as President. Her constant pushing and commitment, her attention to detail, and her spirit have inspired me and others to keep moving forward. She held together the organization at a critical time and provided the leadership that was needed. I am pleased that she is staying with Friends North to work on next year's Gay/Lesbian History and Education Conference.

Richard Turbury

FRIENDS NORTH WINTER EVENT:

Sunday, Feb. 11, 2 pm-6 pm; Lunch at 4 pm.

*Friends North invites
you to an afternoon of
cross-country skiing
and sliding
on Sunday, Feb. 11
- or just come to socialize.*

The setting is cozy and quiet, tucked high away in the hills above Suttons Bay. Join us for a meal of chili and drinks (hot chocolate, coffee, juice and soda).

Directions: Go to Suttons Bay, and turn left on Broadway just as you get into town. Go two blocks and take a right on West St. Follow West St. thru the village until the road ends at Bahle Park. We are gathering in the Bahle Warming House.

Bring sleds and skis.

(No charge for current members. \$3.00 for non-members, or renew your membership when you show up).
RSVP TO JIM at 271-4510 (By February 7th, please)



Jim Ingleson

On December 5, 1995, Friends North held its annual meeting, bringing to an end yet another great year for the organization, and also the kickoff for the coming year. Many thanks go out to all those who were involved in our community and with the many activities that were held throughout the year. The success of 1995 could not have been done without a single one of you, so please be proud!

Coming into 1996, we welcome back three remaining board members and welcome six new members. Continuing their terms this year are Scott Southwell (board treasurer), Greg Baird and Jim Poole. New members include Carol Lambertson (vice president), Victor Dinsmore (secretary), M'Lynn Hartwell, Tom Kincaid, Julie Parker and myself as president.

Our short "after the meeting" meeting was full of energy and enthusiasm, which are promising signs that we will have a very busy and productive year. I would like to mention, however, that the only way we can achieve the success we need in order to continue to be a voice in Northern Michigan and beyond is if everyone gets involved! We need to keep our organization going and to keep it growing!~ Entering an election year, we need to reach as many people as we can who support our community, whether in spirit, volunteering time and effort, or any other types of involvement with respect to the community and organization.

Throughout the year, we will be planning and organizing many events, and we welcome everyone's suggestions. We will continue to hold many of the "yearly" events and hope to start some new ones as well. The aim, of course, is to continue the good work accomplished by the previous board members, and also to try to improve and add on to our organization whenever possible.

I would like to remind everyone that the Friends North board meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm on the campus of Northwestern Michigan College, West Hall. It is my hope to see as many of you there as possible, as we will be able to serve the needs of our community best if we have ideas and input.

Thanks again to the previous board and to everyone else for the great job in 1995. I hope that in 1996 we, as a community and as individuals, will work together to reach our goals of equal rights and social acceptance that we all need... and deserve!

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OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MEETING PRESENTATION

Patty O'Donnell

I would like to thank everyone I worked with the past two years and three months for the wonderful experience and fun I had as President of Friends North. With my paying job becoming extremely busy and demanding more travel these past three months, I decided to take a breather. I will give my time to special projects, like coordinating the Gay and Lesbian History and Education Conference next fall.

Friends North had a very busy two years with a variety of projects, and I am very proud and appreciative of Friends North—what a great space to be in—a beautiful area of the state and having a tremendous organization to be part of!! Everyone here has created an organization that is looked upon as an example of a thriving and stable community organization. We also receive many compliments on our newsletter, from around the state and also out of state, I have heard statements of amazement—up north!?! How many members? You do what? You have done *that!*?!?

I have met many wonderful and beautiful people as a member of Friends North who I call my FRIENDS, good friends—from the day of the Den Dances; attending a couple Board meetings at Munson Medical Center when I lived in Harbor Springs; reuniting with everyone at the March on Washington in 1993, when I was in the process of moving back to northern Michigan from Madison, Wisconsin; and just being active since moving back in June of 1993.

We are a diverse group of individuals that have come together to create an encompassing organization that serves primarily the eastern Upper Peninsula and the tip of the mitten. Friends North has also spurred "satellite" groups that are an hour or more away from the Traverse City base that hold social meetings weekly, like the great group in Petoskey, which have had over forty people at one time!

Also, there is a group getting started in the Alpena area. We, who live in the Traverse City area think that we are "rural," but there are many of us that are isolated in the smaller towns and villages in our service area. We continue to try and reach these people to make them feel welcome and that they are not alone. I encourage everyone to reach out to someone they do not know and welcome them—we have to work together, volunteer, and help in any way we feel comfortable for the continuation of this amazing organization. Support each other and celebrate who we are!

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Out 'n About A Lesbian Coffeehouse

Unity Church - 3600 Five Mile Road - Traverse City
Call 946-2708 for more information

OUT 'N ABOUT BEGINS THIRD YEAR

The Out 'n About Lesbian Coffeehouse begins its third year on January 20, 1996 with the 2nd annual "Open Mic Dyke Night", this year coordinated by Patty O'Donnell and Joanne Papenfus (?sp - thanks Joanne or whoever proofreads now). Our local talents take the stage to entertain the winter blahs away with poetry, song, comedy and any combination thereof. This is a fun evening of casual performance and high frivolity, so don't miss out. Anyone wishing to perform or otherwise contribute to the evening should contact Patty or Joanne at 616-941-1702.

February 18 is the date of our third annual auction, featuring our Valentine's Day Dessert-Only "potluck" and silent auction. Bring your favorite dessert and prepare to power-shop. Deb Medlin is coordinating, so if you have items to donate for auction, please contact her at 275-5924. The auction is our major fundraiser and we appreciate your support.

As our success continues, the steering committee of Out 'n About is committed to bringing the best entertainment possible to our local community. We have plans to bring Jamie Anderson back again in May, and we are currently working on a contract with Alex Dobkin (?sp) for April. There are some other exciting things in the works as well.

The steering committee meets on the third Monday of each month to plan ahead, and we invite anyone to participate. If you are interested, please call for details (946-2708).

Out 'n About is a lesbian coffeehouse, held on the third Saturday of each month except August and December. The Coffeehouse comes alive between 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. at the Unity Church, 3600 Five Mile Road, Traverse City. Smoke Free - Chem Free—Cover donation is \$3 (\$5 if we have entertainment). Snacks and coffee are free - soft drinks are available.

For more information, or to have your name placed on the Out 'n About mailing list, call Brenda at 946-2708 - leave message. (Please note this is for Coffeehouse info only; if you have other questions or needs, please call Friends North at 946-1804.)



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A VISIT TO P-FLAG TERRITORY

by Richard Tuxbury

I had heard only a few things about P-FLAG through the local grapevine. Like most everyone in Traverse City, I got real exposure to the group through the *Record-Eagle* article and interview by Diane Conners that was done in November. Also, Kathy Gibbens did a similar piece in *Active Years*, a supplement to the *Record-Eagle* which featured interviews with many parents and their gay and lesbian offspring. The features were refreshing and positive, and seemed to go a step further than expected.

It was here in the mainstream press, and not through our community, that I learned PFLAG was becoming a success. I decided to attend in mid-November, and at this time in my life, the thought of another dull 'meeting' wasn't exactly something I willingly volunteer for. However, the gathering that evening at Grace Episcopal turned out to be much more than I'd expected.

Thanks to some dedicated and interesting people, PFLAG seems to be providing something that no one else is. The evening began with a warm introduction and welcome by Jeff Erno. Then, the group usually has one hour dedicated to a program.

This particular evening we were visited by Jim Carruthers of Wellness Networks, as well as Ken and Roxane Miner and Patrice Stewart, who had lost sons to AIDS. They spoke about their feelings for their sons and the transitions their boys had gone through—from high school to coming out to having lovers and coming out HIV positive. These folks were remarkably warm and personal, and they shared intimate details of their lives with the group. Their stories were moving, sad, and even happy at times. Having known Andy Miner, I was reminded of the beauty and innocence of this gentle person.

After their presentation, and a short social period, the group got together in a circle. We were asked to introduce ourselves and to tell why we'd come to the meeting. The group was facilitated by Cindy Robb and Penny Smith, who as mothers of gay sons, have the natural ability and warmth to bring the diverse members of the group together.

That evening there was another mother who came with her daughter and son-in-law. They had a problem in their family and were looking for advice. They shared their story with the group. People responded with stories of their own - about coming out, parents, siblings, and coping with religions that don't accept.

There was no magic answer to their problem, but through the stories and much discussion, the answer and path to take became clear. The mother would only be able to bring her family back together by telling her husband about their son being gay, and to simply show her love and acceptance of each one of her children.

Cindy Robb, as the local President of P-FLAG, has been getting great media exposure for the group. Besides the articles in the paper, Cindy appeared on the morning show on WTCM. Also, the evening I visited P-FLAG, a reporter from Interlochen Public Radio was doing a story. Her 10 minute audio report aired at least 4 times during *All Things Considered*, later in November.

Cindy and Jeff encourage all people to attend. The environment they provide is warm, interesting, educational and gives people a place to express themselves. They can be contacted through the numbers on our Resource Page.

**Patty—
Thanks for all you did over
the last two years
—Your Friends**

Jim continued from page 1

community has to offer. It has been my pleasure to serve this community to help promote tolerance, protect its scenic beauty, develop alternative energy sources and help people live easier.

Our Constitution has established that humans have rights of privacy and equal protection under the law, giving individual freedoms to all Americans. Homosexual rights are an issue of individual liberty protected by the Constitution. Stereotypes of religious right organizations and conservative governments put individual rights at jeopardy. Equal protection is not determined by majority vote. It exists to prevent majorities from imposing their will on the liberties of others and until this breeding of hate is stopped, I will continue to work for protecting the rights of all humans.

As a gay man living and working in this community, I have found, for the most part, Traverse City a very accepting place to live. But for some people this is not true. Hate and discrimination continues to prevent them from living in peace. It is my hope that discrimination due to sexual preference be eliminated and that my state and community will help protect the rights of everyone by passing laws which prohibit discrimination toward Gay and Lesbian individuals, allowing all of us equal opportunities under the law.

Diversity has become a reality in our world today and with the help of many kind hearted people in this room tonight, we will continue to educate and strive to overcome the underlying tones of discrimination found in certain areas of our country.

In closing, I would like to again thank this community for their support and I would like to thank everyone here tonight for coming to share with me this special occasion, especially my partner Scott, my grandmother, my mother and my father for accepting me as a human being and giving me the love and compassion everyone on this earth deserves. I love you all and am thankful to have you as family and friends. May peace be with us all.
Jim Carruthers.

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FROM THE COMMUNITY

LITTLE TRAVERSE DIARY

by Zalmon Sherwood

Forty years ago, if you were gay in Petoskey, you consulted the savvy bartender at the Noggin Room Bar at the Perry Hotel. He was a veritable *Who's Who* of queerdom. He wasn't the least gossipy or vicious. In fact, he was one of us, and as a gay person, he realized the importance of making the connections within our community. If you approached him, he would discretely drop a name or two, slip you a phone number, or point out eligible men or women seated alone in the bar.

This bartender died last winter. He was in his seventies, and I was dismayed to learn that he died alone. A man who had brought so many people together had died alone and destitute. His old bar patrons, gay and straight, contributed to provide him with a proper burial.

What a tremendous responsibility and risk this bartender had assumed. Lesbians and gay men felt cared for, safe, protected under his watchful eye. It was something I longed to experience, as so often when I enter a local restaurant with my gay friends, I am aware of hostile stares, mocking whispers and shoddy service.

Just over two years ago, two gay men, one from Petoskey, and the other from Harbor Springs, decided to form a Thursday night social group at the Noggin Room. Gay people from Charlevoix, Gaylord, Indian River, and as far away as Sault Ste. Marie began gathering at 7 pm. We met through the winter months that first year, but when the busy summer season began, the Noggin Room management informed us that tables would no longer be reserved for our group.

We were furious. We had been good customers throughout the slow winter season, and suddenly we were being told that our patronage was no longer needed. From my heated conversations with top executives at Stafford's Hospitality (the current owners of the Noggin Room), I learned that our growing presence was perceived as a threat to uptight wait staff and straight patrons. It wasn't that our dollars were no longer needed during the flush summer months—it was that we were not wanted.

Our group began to drift, meeting at various restaurants throughout the summer, always searching for that gay-friendly place as elusive as Oz in the north country. And, miracle of

miracles, through the sheer persistence and determination of a courageous few, we discovered the perfect meeting place.

The Park Garden Cafe is in the heart of Petoskey. The owners are Mr. and Mrs. Bell, a hard-working couple with many years of food-service experience. They welcomed us into their restaurant, placing us in the most public portion of the handsome bar once frequented by Hemmingway (who was, incidentally, a virulent homophobe.)

The Thursday night group grew from twenty to thirty and currently numbers about forty regulars. Every time I attend I see someone new. When we outgrew the bar area, Mr. and Mrs. Bell offered us a comfortable private dining room, which our more closeted members prefer. It is never easy to attend a gay group for the first time. Our present set-up is about as ideal as it gets.

And, we have an updated version of that classy bartender. He is a young, hip, strikingly handsome gay waiter who is assigned each week to our group. He greets us, by name, each Thursday night. He is professional and efficient and courteous. And, he is very much in love with one of the group's members, so we don't have to worry about him being alone.

Mr. Bell, the owner, makes a point of stopping by our section each week. He knows he doesn't need to check on the quality of the food or service. Rather, he takes the time to say hello and inquire about our past week. He and his wife have become our friends.

If I seem rhapsodic, it is because I find all the above so hard to believe. Due to the effort of two individuals, we now have a meeting place in this part of northern Michigan. I never expected to experience this form of hospitality in my lifetime, in Petoskey. If you would like to join us, simply meet at 7 pm Thursdays in the private dining room of the Park Garden Cafe.

ABOUT PHIL GRAMM

"Thank God for... the thousand of parents who would not be intimidated by the liberal media and the radical homosexual community," wrote Senator Gramm. He went on further to say he would take a hardline approach to gays and lesbians in the military and also indicated that he is looking forward to the second coming, that he wishes for biblical law to replace mere government law, and believes that biblical teachings should be "imposed on America."



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But after a while, you started to take me for granted.
You got sick of me.
You rolled around in the mud and climbed carelessly
through barbed wire fences with me on.
You just didn't care.
Eventually your favorite shirt was nothing but a torn up old rag.
And you were so disappointed in my quality that you threw me away in disgust.
Now you have a new favorite shirt to help you conquer the world.
She's a lot like me, 100% cotton and your favorite colors.
But there's something you should know.
I'm not an ordinary shirt.
I'm mending my holes and cleaning my threads.
And when I am done, I will be brighter and stronger than you or anyone else,
including myself, ever thought possible.
I wish you all the luck you deserve with your new shirt.
I just want to know...
How long before this one gets old?

anonymously contributed

STANDING ON THE SIDELINES

by Greg R. Baird

About a month ago, we wrapped up another year of Friends North at the annual meeting and all of us are looking forward to what 1996 will bring. The meeting was a great time to talk to others and share some of our favorite dishes. During the course of the evening, different people reported on their achievements throughout 1995 and where we stand on moving forward within our community.

It was a time also to select new board members for the next two years. Six new people, with fresh ideas are now part of the board! During introductions, a new board member stood up and said that he had been standing on the sidelines for a while now and wanted

to step out and get more involved. His statement made me think back to a few years ago living in Petoskey. I can recall how I felt getting the newsletter was enough support for my community. I was proud of the people who contributed articles or editorials as I thought they risked their lives by being out in the open. I looked forward every month to getting the newsletter as I read it from front to back. It was my only source of keeping in touch with the community.

In retrospect, I was standing on the sidelines with the rest of the crowd. It was a safe haven because I knew that if I stepped into a larger field I would have to give something, I would have to work together on a team and hopefully the people I had left off on the side would know I was supporting them. I was afraid of being a voice and to be out. I can't recall one gleaming moment when I decided to become more involved with our community. I think it was a series of events. My friend Tom had always talked about Friends North. He would tell me of the incredible people I would meet and also the coffee I would enjoy on Saturday mornings at Ray's Coffeehouse! I think what finally got me involved was some support I received about two years ago.

I was working at a local resort and in the dead of the night I sat down at a old Smith-Corona typewriter and wrote an article about inclusiveness within the gay community. I have always been a writer, I just have never submitted anything. When I finished typing, I called my friend Tom and asked him if he could take a moment and listen to what I wrote. He was quite taken back and said I should submit it to the next newsletter. After a lot of thinking, I did, and it got printed. What turned out to be a one time article has now turned into a ongoing column in the newsletter as well as a Friends North Board position. How marvelous and strange things happen.

It felt great to take a step out of the crowd onto a larger field, with others and make things happen. We are at a time when we need people to get involved. New faces, fresh ideas and personal contributions to help us plan for the community is needed more than ever. Currently, the Far Right has targeted gay men, lesbians, and our supporters. According to the Human Rights Campaign, The Far Right has raised over \$213 million in a year by using the anti-gay pitch! While the six largest gay and lesbian groups raised just 12 million last year. These are issues that affect all of us, and together we can move ahead. That is why it is vital for all of us to help and participate in Friends North programs.

If you are one of those individuals who are standing on the sidelines and viewing the organization from a crowd of others, take some time to step out, and be part of a growing group of dedicated people. There's support, friendship and a real sense of community. Your help, opinions and energy is what will keep us going. My best wishes to all of you for a wonderful, productive and healthy new year.

Hands on Wheels

Robin R. Clinton

Massage Therapist

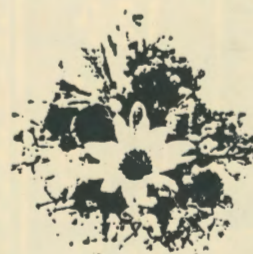
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by M'Lynn Hartwell

I recently found out about a national Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network from a local educator. While I know far less about this national organization than I would like to, I really like what I have seen so far. GLSTN's (pronounced 'glisten') mission statement reads:

We believe that such an atmosphere engenders a positive sense of self, which is the basis of educational achievement and personal growth. Since homophobia and heterosexism undermine a healthy school climate, we work to educate teachers, students, and the public at large about the damaging effects these forces have on youth and adults alike. We recognize that forces such as racism and sexism have similar adverse impacts on communities and we support schools in seeking to redress all such inequities.

GLSTN has also written "TEN ACTION POINTS FOR EDUCATORS

DEALING WITH GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES." These suggestions are not all-inclusive, but are intended as starting points as you begin to think about how to end homophobia in your school.

1. **GUARANTEE EQUALITY** Gay and lesbian members of the school community need to know that their schools value equality and that they are protected against discrimination. Schools should add "sexual orientation" to their non-discrimination statements in all school publications.
2. **CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT** Every member of the community has a right to play his or her role without fear of harassment by peers: it is the school's obligation to take proactive measures to ensure this right. However, in too many schools, physical and verbal harassment against gay and lesbian people is the norm. Schools must make it clear that neither physical violence nor harassing language like "faggot" and "dyke" will be tolerated.
3. **PROVIDE ROLE MODELS** Studies consistently show that personal acquaintance with gay and lesbian people is the

most effective way of reducing homophobic bigotry. Both gay and straight students benefit from having role models such as openly gay teachers coaches and administrators: straight students are offered an alternative to the inaccurate stereotypes with which they have been raised, and gay students get the chance (often for the first time) to see healthy gay adults, which gives them hope for their own future. Schools need to create the conditions necessary for gay faculty to feel safe in "coming out," just as heterosexual faculty "come out" daily through such acts as wearing wedding rings.

If no role models are available from within the school community, the school must work to bring in such individuals from beyond the campus.

4. **PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS** Peer support and acceptance is the key to any student's feeling that he or she "belongs" in the school. "Gay-Straight Alliances" have been the key to creating such an atmosphere in many schools. These groups welcome membership from any student interested in understanding issues of homophobia and sexual identity, regardless of sexual orientation. They have been successfully established in all kinds of schools and in communities as diverse as Los Angeles, Chapel Hill, N.C., Lincoln, Nebraska, and Minneapolis. The diverse range of schools which now have "GSAs" indicates that, if there is a will, there is a way to establish one in any school.
5. **PROVIDE TRAINING FOR FACULTY AND STAFF** School staff need to be equipped to serve all the students with whom they work, including gay and lesbian ones. Understanding the needs of gay and lesbian youth, and developing the skills to meet those needs, should be an expected of all teachers.
6. **REASSESS THE CURRICULUM** Teachers need to incorporate gay and lesbian issues throughout the curriculum—not just in classes such as health education, but in traditional disciplines such as English, History, and Science.
7. **PROVIDE APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION** While being gay is not a "health issue" (any more than being heterosexual is), health education on sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases should sensitively address the particular issues of gay and lesbian people in this field.
8. **DIVERSIFY LIBRARY AND MEDIA HOLDINGS** Often, the library is the first place students turn for accurate sexuality information. Too often, few or no works on gay and lesbian issues are found there. Librarians and media specialists need to be sure their holdings are up to date and reflect the diversity of our world.
9. **BROADEN ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS** "Extra-curricular" activities often set the tone for the community.



GLSTN (continued next page)

Programs such as assemblies and "film nights" should regularly include gay and lesbian content that reflects the diversity of our nation.

10. **DO NOT ASSUME HETEROSEXUALITY** The constant assumption of heterosexuality renders gay and lesbian people, youth in particular, invisible. Such invisibility is devastating to the individual's sense of self. Both the school as an institution and its professionals as individuals must be inclusive in their language and attitudes.

One of the most interesting efforts that GLSTN has made to date is their current "Back-to-School Campaign." The purpose of this effort is to get gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults to write their old teachers or the principals of their old high schools, tell them what it was like to be gay there, and ask what is being done to make it better for the next generation. GLSTN has undertaken this effort because we so often hear from educators that they don't think homophobia is a problem in their community. We are sure that, once they have received a letter from a former student who tells them exactly what it is like to be gay at their school, they'll understand the issue in a new and personal way.

The following individual agreed to participate in the Campaign and to lend his public support to it. He has generously offered to use a copy of his own letter to a former teacher for this newsletter. As you can see, the power of this technique cannot be underestimated. Please read on, and start thinking about who you are going to write! If you feel uncomfortable signing your name, please write anyway.



Dear Teacher:

You might remember me, though it's been a long time since I was in one of your classes at Valhalla High School. When I transferred there in 1976, at the beginning of my junior year, you and the other teachers probably thought of me as one of the school's most popular and successful students. At age 16, I had just won a silver Olympic medal. I coached the boys' and girls' diving teams and helped coach the girls' gymnastics team. The following year, my classmates voted me best-dressed, best dancer, and best physique. Everyone wanted to be my friend, and I'm sure most of my peers thought I was the luckiest, happiest guy on campus.

In reality, those years were very painful for me. Growing up is tough for everyone, but even more so when you feel different, as I did for a number of reasons. For one thing, I was dyslexic, and because of that I struggled to keep pace academically. But even where I excelled, as I did at diving, the success was bittersweet for me because I could not truly feel I deserved it. When teachers praised me or other students admired me, I couldn't help wondering, What would they think if they knew my secret?

My secret, of course, was that I am gay. Earlier, in grammar school, I was called names like "sissy" and "faggo" and even beaten up occasionally. By the time I was at Valhalla, those things had

stopped happening to me, though I'm sure they happened to others, and for me the name-calling probably continued behind my back.

But discrimination doesn't have to be overt or physical to be hurtful, especially to a high school student. Every time there's a reference to homosexuality and the other students snicker and laugh, you get the message: This is about you, and what it means is that you can't tell anyone, ever. Years later, other students have told me they remember that time differently—that if I had confided in them I would have found sympathetic friends. But at the time, there's no way you can reach out for help. Counseling wasn't an option I considered; it was even more stigmatized then than now.

I was more fortunate than many others at least I was able to partially escape my frustration and loneliness by channeling my energy into diving. But I still felt the pressure of isolation, and I used other means to escape as well. I withdrew from the school scene as much as possible. I would leave right after school and go to the beach, a guilty secret become overwhelmingly oppressive, and I decided to make the final escape. I stole a handful of Valium and Codeine from my parents' medicine chest, swallowed them, wrote a suicide note, and went to bed for what I hoped would be the last time. I survived, but a lot of high school kids don't: Studies show that an astounding one out of every three gay or lesbian adolescents in America attempts suicide.

If school was tough for me, it's so much harder for many other gay and lesbian kids. For some, it's a truly terrifying place where they are threatened with verbal harassment and physical violence every day. Today, all high school kids, gay and straight, face another threat: HIV. They know it's out there I didn't. Kids need to love themselves enough to protect themselves. And self-esteem is what high school kids are all too often lacking. That applies to all kids, but especially to gay and lesbian kids. They need extra support and understanding. And yet, it's hard even for well-meaning teachers to reach out to them individually, because you don't always know who they are and what's going on under the surface of their lives.

Still, teachers and school administrators can make a big difference. With this letter, I'm sending you a list of suggestions on how. It comes from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network, a New York-based group that encourages gays and lesbians across the country to write letters like this one as a part of a national awareness campaign.

GLSTN (continued next page)

HEAR . . . HERE!

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It's not an easy thing to do. Most of us would just as soon not think about those dark days, much less write about them. It's over, we think. But for millions of gay teens it's not over yet, and they need help even more than we did.

Please write me back and let me know what you're doing to reach out to gay and lesbian kids at Valhalla, to make their experience easier than mine was, and to let all kids who feel different know they're not alone.

Sincerely,
(signed) Greg Louganis

TRAVERSE AREA GLSTN CHAPTER NOW FORMING

A diverse group of Traverse City area educators, counselors, administrators and parents held a GLSTN chapter organizational meeting the 18th, of December 1995. If you are in education, a affiliated service, a concerned parent or friend and you have an sincere interest in the mental health and welfare of our youth, we invite you to attend the next Grand Traverse area GLSTN meeting the 22nd, of January at 7 p.m., please call 616/943-8800 for directions or more information.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

- Have you ever been fired from a job for being gay?
- Did you lose custody of your children because you were gay?
- Have you been a victim of a crime because you were gay?
- Were you ever denied housing?
- Did you have a partner who died? If so, did you have any problems with inheriting your partner's estate?
- Do you have a story of discrimination that should be told?

We need to document personal stories to substantiate the discrimination that we, as gays and lesbians, face on a regular basis. In order to do this, we ask you to share your stories with us. It might be difficult, it could even be painful, but your stories are needed to document the need for legislation giving us equal treatment.

We will accept your story either in writing or by interview.. We would be happy to put your story into words for you. Please call me, Richard, at 271-3042, or email Tux001@aol.com, or you may send them directly to the Friends North mailbox.



HIV/AIDS Wellness Networks Fundraising Calendar of Events

Sunday, February 18, 1996
8:00 am - 12 noon

United Way "Best Breakfast in Town" Hosted by Wellness Networks.

Join Wellness Networks of an All you can eat Sunday Brunch at the VFW Post 2780, 3400 Veterans Drive.
Proceeds will benefit HIV/AIDS Wellness Networks.

Adults \$5.00 - children 6-12 \$3.00 - Children under 5 FREE.
FOR TICKETS CALL — United Way 947-3200 or Wellness Networks 933-0279

Friday, March 1, 1996
7:30 pm Hors d'evours 9:00 pm Auction
Wellness Networks 3rd Annual Auction
at Side Traxx Nite Club

Plan an evening to help raise needed funds for Wellness Networks direct service programming. Please phone the Wellness Networks office at 933-0279 to donate an actionable item or to volunteer for this special event.

Sunday, March 24, 1996
11:00 am -6:00 pm

**Ice Cream Social at Dillon's
"the best little creamery in Michigan"**
153 East Front Street - Downtown Traverse City

Stop by Dillon's Ice Cream Shop for a delicious treat to support HIV/AIDS Care in N. Michigan
A percentage of the day's monies will go directly to Wellness Networks.



S H A M A N I S M

Shamanism is the most ancient method of mind-body healing. Shamans the world over saw illness as a break in our spiritual essence causing debilitation and disease.

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Symptom of power loss are chronic bad luck, illness, frequent accidents or low self esteem.

Symptom of soul loss are empty feelings, depression, loss of vitality, gaps in memory and long grieving periods.

When we are dispirited, who helps us? We have doctors for the body and mind. As a practicing shaman, Nancy Hayward uses techniques from the ancient ones. She journeys to other worlds and with spirit help restores personal power, knowledge, healing and wholeness to her clients.

Nancy has her training from the Foundation for Shamanic Studies. For information or for an appointment call her at 616-223-7999.

PERSPECTIVE ON THE NGLTF CONFERENCE "CREATING CHANGE"

by Jim Poole

Two days before the National Gay and Lesbian Tasks Force annual conference, *Creating Change*, the state of Maine voted down a ballot measure that would have banned civil rights laws protecting lesbians and gays. The Supreme Court had just gone through its oral arguments on Colorado's Amendment 2, in which several justices asked state lawyers good questions that left activists with a sense that the Court would find Amendment 2 unconstitutional. In Detroit, two men were found guilty in a murder case against a gay man.

It was a case of good timing for the conference, and there was a feeling of strength and success in our movement. Scott and I arrived Thursday evening and stayed through Sunday. After checking into the Westin Hotel, we wandered the four towers of the Renaissance Center looking for a place to eat dinner. We discovered that maps are absolutely useless in a building that consists of circular hallways stacked on top of each other. We found that it was quicker to walk the three blocks to Greektown the next night. Naturally, we ordered the "flaming cheese."

The conference had a broad range of workshops, including stopping hate crimes, anti-gay elections, creating youth support, disabled activists, the Hawaii Marriage Case, Grassroots organizing, and many more. Scott attended Saturday's all-day workshop on Rural organizing. The leader of this workshop, Flora Piterak, expressed some valuable points in the closing brunch. She said that although homophobia is rampant in rural communities, small towns have the least resources to deal with it. I was very pleased at the many people that attended the conference that were from rural areas. One woman came from Spirit Lake, Idaho, where they have started a lesbian and gay community center ten miles from the national headquarters of Aryan Nations. Hate crimes are not limited to the big cities. In a workshop on Rural Anti-violence, Jeff Langstrat, a member of an anti-violence organization in rural Minnesota, said that three out of four of the last homicides in his area were of gay men. The speakers at this workshop said that they have strong communication with their local police, who assist in reporting crimes of violence. Kendra Kirby said that her organization in North Carolina distributed whistles to citizens in an effort to stop violence.

I attended a workshop lead by Tim McFeely, the former director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. He focused most of his workshop on what went wrong during the push to lift the ban on gays serving in the military. Some of this key points were that we lobbied too late and had too little time, there was a poor trust between gay activists and the white house due to leaks to the press, and most importantly, he said, we never answered fears about the physical presence of gays being in the military. He said that we needed not to say that it was the right thing, but to explain to people why their concerns about the showers were invalid. I found his closing statement to be particularly interesting. He said that the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that we ended up with, is the compromise that so many of us make in our own lives when we choose not to come out. It is the way we live our lives on a daily basis.

I attended a workshop on anti-gay elections, led by Susan Hibbard, a campaign consultant for NGLTF in New York. One woman from Oregon spoke about the anti-gay initiative in that state that failed last year. She said that 5,000 volunteers helped in defeating the bill, and that they couldn't have done it without the support of rural communities. She said that 80% of Oregonians did not know that there is no civil right protection for gays. Another

woman spoke from Louisville where she said volunteers went door to door with petitions to pass a local civil right law.

I went to another workshop on Passing Local Civil Rights Laws, presented by Matt Coles, the director of the ACLU's Gay and Lesbian Rights Project. Matt was responsible for writing seven different non-discrimination laws for California cities. He said that he wrote all of them differently so that he could say to the state legislature, "wouldn't it be better to have one law for the whole state to make it more simple?" It apparently worked, because in '93, California became one of the nine states to have anti-discrimination laws for homosexuals. He said that it is easier for states to pass laws with a greater number of cities having local civil-right ordinances. Michigan has nine cities with ordinances, but none north of Grand Rapids. He discussed two ways in which campaigns can be run, one which is very open and involves public hearings and going door-to-door, and one he called the "Stealth Ordinance," such as Flint's. When the city commission voted on the proposal, they refereed to it by number only. He said that such a process can work well, as long as no one in Flint ever finds out that such an ordinance exists. he said that he prefers an open campaign such as Chicago had, which drew between 300-600 people for its town meetings, although no consensus was possible on any one thing. He said that such campaigns are excellent tools for educating a community and bringing people together.

My only complaint about the conference is that there were hundreds of pencils lying around, but no pencil sharpeners. I'm sorry I can not speak on the other workshops I attended after my pencil wore down. I got to see a little of the film, "The Question of Equality," which aired on PBS in October, but unfortunately was not shown by CMU Public TV. The film is very well made and covers some great issues. I attended the MoTown Madness dance, which was fun but was all house-style music with no Diana Ross numbers. I guess that would be my other complaint. Friday night's concert was a real smash, with performances by the Fabulous Flirtations and comedian Lea Delaria. I was very pleasantly surprised to hear Nel Carter perform at Friday night's concert.

Overall the conference left me feeling very empowered. Not as much by my own involvement as that of others. I guess if anything, I felt a little inactive among all of the dedicated activists there. Most of my activism has been done by educating myself by reading the Advocate and picking up *Between the Lines* at Ray's. But it is very reassuring to know that people are standing up in front of school boards, city councils, and courtrooms all over the country. Our movement has grown so large so fast. It is as though we invented the wheel some time around 1950, when newspapers referred to us as perverts, and forty years later are building sky-scrapers. Maybe we haven't made it to the moon just yet, but with every new organization that develops to stand up for gay rights, the political pendulum will swing a little less far back to the right.

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GROUPS:

FRIENDS NORTH BOARD AND MEMBER MEETINGS: The Friends North Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm. at Northwestern Michigan College, West Hall on the first floor, Room 2 in the cafeteria. Everyone is welcome! (issue 1)

FRIENDS NORTH RAP GROUP is a group of men and women who get together monthly for lively discussion on a particular topic and a good time. Please consider joining them on the second Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, 349 Washington, T.C. Look for the Rap Group announcement elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. (issue 1)

P-FLAG: (Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays.) This is a network of parents, friends, and families of lesbians and gays who meet monthly to offer information, support, and a place to talk with others about the issues concerning them. Gays and Lesbians are also welcome and encouraged to attend P-FLAG meetings. Meet at Grace Episcopal Church every third Wednesday of the month, at 7:30 pm. For more information call Cindy at 271-5045 (Issue 2)

WINDFIRE: This is a local youth support group for teens and others under 25 which meets on a weekly basis in an atmosphere that is comfortable and friendly. Please contact Third Level at 922-4800 or 1-800-442-7315 for location, date and time. (issue 1)

OUT 'N ABOUT is a lesbian coffeehouse featuring entertainment as well as a chance to meet others from the area. It all happens at the Unity Church, 3600 Five Mile Rd. in T.C. Please see the Out 'N About calendar elsewhere in this newsletter for times and specific activities. (issue 1)

TRAVERSE CITY FRONTRUNNERS If you are interested in running, call Paul or Jim at 271-4510 and leave your name, number, and that you are interested in Frontrunners. We will return your call with information on where to meet. We're back running as a group for the winter again. All ages and abilities are welcome. (issue 1)

WELLNESS NETWORKS SUPPORT GROUP is for people with HIV or AIDS and they welcome you to attend. Please drop in Monday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 at the Grace Episcopal Church library at 341 Washington in Traverse City. Every fourth Monday of the month the Significant-Other Support Group will be meeting at 3301 Veterans Drive, Suite 221, just north of S. Airport Road. For further information, please call 933-0279 (issue 1)

THE PETOSKEY GROUP: A social group for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual persons is meeting weekly in Petoskey. The group meets at 7 p.m. Thursdays. For information please contact Tim at 348-8151 or Zalmon at 348-5079 (issue 2)

NORTHERN MICHIGAN WOMYN'S CHOIR is always looking for new voices. To obtain more information or for a performance schedule, please contact Deb at 275-5924. (issue 1)

H.A.N.D.S is an HIV/AIDS Network located in Petoskey. They are currently seeking volunteers in the northern lower peninsula and eastern upper peninsula of Michigan. HANDS is a non-profit organization that has committed itself to helping and supporting the needs of HIV infected persons. They offer a number of services, including support groups, education, public awareness, and one-on-one friendship support. Volunteers are urgently needed in the Alpena, Gaylord, and Rogers City areas. If you would be interested in the program, please call 616-526-9213. (issue 1)

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: Meetings for gays and lesbians are held each Wednesday at 5:30 pm and each Saturday at 11:00 am at the Grace Episcopal Church, Washington at Boardman (across from the Court House) in TC. For further information, call John at 922-0746. (issue 1)

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

WASHINGTON D.C. QUILT: I am putting together a group of people who are interested in going to Washington next October to see the entire Names Project Quilt. Please contact me, Tom, at 616-947-4647 or write: 208 Circle Dr., Apt. C, Traverse City, 49684. (issue 3)

WAYNE STATE UNIV. CONFERENCE ON GAY ISSUES: On Friday, Feb. 9, from 8:30-4:00, WSU will present a conference titled "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues: Multicultural Community Building-Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities." Explore new and exciting ways that gay, lesbian and bisexual people can help strengthen and improve the communities in which they live. The keynote speaker will be John D'Emilio, director of the Policy Institute of the NGLTF. Info: 313-577-2246 (issue 1)

PLEASE SPONSOR OUR POSTCARD PROJECT: They do make a difference! The cost for printing the 2800 postcards is \$100.00. To contribute specifically to the Postcard Project, please call Richard at 271-3042 or send a check (in an amount of \$100.00 or less) directly to Friends North. We thank an anonymous donor from Traverse City and Philadelphia for this issue's cards. (issue 6)

QUESTIONS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS? Call locally 24 hours a day to 947-1110. This program is sponsored by the HIV/AIDS Wellness Networks Grand Traverse Area and is staffed by Third Level Crisis Center volunteers. (Issue 1)

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION of Petoskey is pleased to announce it will begin providing public services in the liberal religious tradition. Sunday services will be held at the Temple B'nai Israel on the corner of Waukazoo and Michigan Street in downtown Petoskey. Services will be held on alternate Sundays with dates disclosed in their newsletter, *Diversity*. Please call 348-3117 for details or write to us at POB 271, Petoskey, MI 49770-0271 (Issue 1)

HATE CRIMES WATCH: The Triangle Foundation of Michigan has begun a VICTIMS' PROGRAM COMMUNITY WATCH COALITION. The group will collect hate-crime information from Lesbian and Gay victims of such crimes. For details, call 313-533-1166 or 517-753-9823. Report Hate Crimes! Stop the Violence! (issue 2)

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Their Reproductive Health Clinic is open to women and men of all ages. Confidential services provided are physical exams, HIV counseling and testing, pregnancy testing, sexual transmitted disease testing and treatment, all methods of birth control available, FREE Norplants, Depo-Provera, IUDs, and Condoms. For more info about these and other methods which are charged on a sliding fee scale, call 922-4630. Services are by appointment only. (issue 2)

SUNDAY NIGHT MOVIES, JANUARY 21: 7:00 PM-\$5.00 Donation: The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Grand Traverse is offering the second film in a new series. *The Little Foxes* starring Betty Davis and Herbert Marshall. Directed by William Wyler, screen play by Lillian Hellman. This is one of Betty's great roles. The clothes, the sets, the drama ("I hope you die. I hope you die soon. I will be waiting for you to die.") call 616-943-8800 or 616-947-3117 for info.

FOR SALE/RENT



ROOM FOR RENT: Convenient location near downtown. \$250./mo, incl. utilities: 929-1332 (issue 1)

SHARED LETTERS:

December 1995

Dear Friends,

Just weeks ago, Lambda helped my partner Patty and me win a thrilling victory: New York's highest court overturned lower court decisions and allowed me to adopt Dana, our five-year-old daughter. Now, we will both be her legal parents.

Patty and I have been together for 19 years. When Patty planned to have a child, I played the role any partner would: I was with her for the doctor's appointments and sonograms; I was the only lesbian partner at the Lamaze classes; and in 1990, I coached as Patty gave birth to our beautiful daughter Dana.

Since then, we have shared parenting responsibilities. Like so many other parents, we arrange our work schedules around Dana's needs. Patty and I have always been Dana's parents. But it took a long court battle to allow me to become Dana's legal mother. This could not have happened without Lambda.

I began to legally formalize my relationship with Dana soon after she was born. A caseworker was assigned to do a home study, and she recommended the adoption be granted. Despite this, the family court judge denied it. We appealed, only to be told by the appellate court that although the adoption would be in Dana's best interest, state law would not allow it.

That is when Lambda took the case to New York's highest court, which ended our legal battle by finding that New York law does allow "second parent" adoptions such as mine of Dana. The Court wrote that "to rule otherwise would mean that thousands of New York children actually being raised in homes headed by two unmarried persons could have only one legal parent, not the two who want them."

Lambda has won an extremely important victory for parents and children in New York. But this work isn't finished. New York is one of only five states where appellate courts have recognized "second parent" adoptions, and we must win many more protections for our families. Give a generous year-end gift to Lambda today so that the organization can keep fighting in all of our battles, for all of our families.

Sincerely,
Gail Messina

(the address of Lambda Legal Defense can be found on the Resource page.—ed.)



'Little Friends' by Bruce Simpson

and the question with no answer, 'WHY?' are all we are left with.

When hate leads to the deaths of such beautiful community spirited people, it not only robs us all of the contribution to humanity these women gave by their mere existence, but it robs us of our HOPE. The hope that we are making this world a better place for our sons and daughters. The hope that one day no one will live in fear. The hope that we are all safe. If we give way to fear and anger, and succumb to hopelessness, that hateful murderer killed alot more than your dear beautiful friends and our comrades in PFLAG. I am writing to you for the entire Traverse City PFLAG chapter.

At our December meeting, we will have a moment of silence for our sisters. We will mourn our loss and their tragic passing, and we will hold our heads high with pride at our association with them through PFLAG. We will go out into our community and the world, with the hope that our work through PFLAG will not allow hate to murder any more of us. In Michigan, we support your chapter in it's shock and grief and also in keeping our vision of hope alive in loving memory of all our brothers and sisters, senselessly lost to hate.

On behalf of the Traverse City Michigan PFLAG Chapter
Cindy Robb

Dear Richard:

Thank you for your letter regarding the need for legislation to add sexual orientation as a basis for protection in hate-motivated crimes.

I remain consistent in my belief that violence is violence, no matter who it is perpetrated against. If any relief to your complaint is feasible, I feel one must look to the judicial system for more stringent guidelines for sentencing people who prey on others because of their sexual preference.

Please be sure, Mr. Tuxbury, I understand the fear and anger of being a victim of senseless crime. Should legislation come before the House for consideration pertaining to this issue, I will certainly keep your comments in mind.

Again, thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. If I may be of future legislative assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,
Michelle A. McManus
State Representative
104th District

(Following is a note to Candace Steele, PFLAG, Medford, Oregon regarding the loss of their friends Michelle and Roxanna)

Dear Candace;

These are the letters every one of us fears having to write. As parents and as friends, the single fear that looms in the back corners of our hearts, is to lose the people that we love. It is always so very painful to lose a child or friend to AIDS. The road to saying goodbye is a long and tough journey. We can each have time to reach our own path to acceptance. When we lose a valued and cherished loved one to HATE, there are no goodbyes, no understanding, no acceptance. Hurt and anger

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R E S O U R C E S

STATE AND NATIONAL HOTLINES

Department of Justice Hotline (for reporting
Hate Crimes against gays and lesbians) 800-347-HATE
Child Abuse Hotline 800-392-8222
Michigan Wellness Networks 800-872-AIDS
Gay/Lesbian National Youth Hotline 800-347-TEEN

STATEWIDE SERVICES SOCIAL / POLITICAL / MEDIA

The Network: Lesbian and Gay Community Network of W. Michigan
909 Cherry St. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506 616-458-3511
Lavender Morning
P.O. Box 729, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 616-685-6061
Kalamazoo Resource Center
P.O. Box 1532, Kalamazoo, MI 49005 616-345-7878
Affirmations Lesbian/Gay Community Center
Suite 110, 195 W. Nine Mile Rd.
Ferndale, MI 48220 313-398-GAYS
<http://www.webspace.com/~tcc/affirmations/index.htm>
Lansing Association of Human Rights
P.O. Box 18062, Lansing, MI 48826 517-332-3200
Capital Men's Club
P.O. Box 18062, Lansing, MI 48902 ... (Kelly Stevens) 517-482-0860
Ambitious Amazons/Lesbian Connection
P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48826 517-371-5257
Lesbian Alliance
P.O. Box 6423, East Lansing, MI 48826 517-394-1454
Triangle Foundation (Lesbian/Gay Foundation of Michigan)
19641 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit 48219 313-537-3323
..... Fax: 313-537-3379
email trijeffm@aol.com
PRIDE-Flint: P.O. Box 7014, Flint, MI 48507 313-238-9854
Aurora Newsletter: (reaching out to gays, lesbians, bisexuals in the UP &
Canada) POB 626, Marquette, MI 49855
Team Great Lakes
195 W. Nine Mile Rd., Suite 106, Ferndale, MI 48220 . 810-553-3586

NATIONAL SERVICE / SOCIAL / POLITICAL

P-FLAG: Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
1012 14th St. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005 ... 202-638-4200
GLAAD: Gay/Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
80 Varick St., #3E, New York, NY 10013 212-807-1700
..... Fax: 212-807-1806
email glaadnati@aol.com
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 202-332-6483
2320 17th St., NW, Washington, DC 20009 Fax: 202-332-0207
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 212-995-8585
ACLU Lesbian/Gay Rights Project
1370 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94130 415-621-0674
HRC: Human Rights Campaign (National Coming Out Day)
1012 14th St. NS #607, Washington, DC 20005 202-628-4160
..... Fax: 202-347-5323
email www.hrcusa.org
Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, Political Action Committee
1012 14th St. NW #707, Washington, DC 20005 202-842-7679

LOCAL SPIRITUAL:

The Reverend Emmy Lou Belcher
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Grand Traverse
6726 Center Rd., Traverse City—Home: 938-9078 .. Office: 947-3117
Rev. Nancy Hayward, Circle of the Sacred Earth 616-223-7999

LOCAL COUNSELING:

Third Level Crisis Intervention, 902 W. Front St. 922-4800
..... and 800-442-7315
Women's Resource Center 941-1210
Rodger Landvoy, PHD 929-1711
Susan Breuer PHD (Frankfort / Traverse City) 352-4261
Margo Million, ACSW 947-0511
David Blisk (Maple City) 228-5105
Barbara Jones Smith, PHD 947-1444
Elizabeth Most, MSW, ACSW (Petoskey) 348-2415
William D. Gould, MA (Gladwin) 517-426-2351
David Rushlow, ACSW, Munson Medical Center 935-6385
Bay Area Counseling (Petoskey/Harbor Springs)
Margalo Bley, MSW, ACSW 348-3616
Daniel C. Doran, PHD, CSW 906-495-5061
CDRS (a free substance abuse referral agency)
808-A S. Garfield, Traverse City 929-1315 or 800-686-0749

LOCAL SERVICE / SOCIAL / POLITICAL

Friends North (information line) 946-1804
Windfire Gay & Lesbian Youth Support Group—
Call Third Level for location & time 922-4800
or 800-442-7315
Side Traxx Nite Club, 520 Franklin St. off of 8th St. 935-1666
Traverse City Human Rights Commission, 400 Boardman 922-4700
Gay Alcoholics Anonymous,
Grace Church, Washington at Boardman, TC John 922-0746
P-FLAG, Traverse City
POB 1705, Acme, MI 49610 Cindy 271-5045
GLSTN (Gay/Lesbian/Straight Teachers Network) 616-943-8800
NOW (National Organization for Women)
Gail Trill 938-1333

LOCAL HIV/AIDS HEALTH COUNSELING:

Wellness Networks, Grand Traverse,
P.O. Box 1632, Traverse City, MI 49685 947-1110
Wellness HIV Support Group and
Family and Significant Other Support Group 947-1110
Grand Traverse County Health Department 922-4831
(anonymous HIV Testing Center)
Mary Dillinger, RN, Clinical Nurse Specialist 935-8140
Munson Medical Center HIV Clinic 1-800-847-8474
Community Health Clinic 929-4448
(anonymous counseling/testing; same-day results no fee)
H.A.N.D.S. (HIV/AIDS Support: Petoskey) 1-800-248-6777

HERE ARE SOME PHONE NUMBERS EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE: The White House (202) 456-1111; the U.S. Capital (202) 224-3121;
and some phone numbers for Northwest Michigan Residents—Carl Levin (202) 224-6221 or in TC (616) 947-9569;
Spencer Abraham (202) 224-4822 or in Grand Rapids (616) 456-2592; Bart Stupak (202) 225-4735 or in TC 929-4711

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT: THE NEW STRATEGY OF "NO PROMO HOMO"

by Richard Tuxbury

While the eyes of the country are focused on the courts with Amendment 2 and the Hawaii marriage challenge, the Christian Right has already begun their next onslaught. With the defeats of anti-gay bills in Oregon, Idaho, and now also in Maine, the Right has seen that their strategy over the last few years is failing. The direct confrontation of gays and lesbians through laws, referendums, and in the courts are simply not getting them to their goals.

This 'big war' in the states has fractured into many smaller fights, mostly on local levels, and they often involve school board issues. It's true that this strategy may be their last chance to succeed, but unfortunately, this may also prove to be nothing but an uphill battle for us.

The Right has targeted education—the last true stronghold of homophobia in this country. Their goal is simple: Keep gays and lesbians out of the schools and away from children, and to do what they can to NOT PROMOTE HOMOsexuality. While they have been working on the national, state and local levels, their real, and unnoticed, successes have been a step down at the level of the school board. Their well-organized plan of winning small and seemingly unimportant elections is working. They are infiltrating the system slowly and methodically.

The schools boards of this country might seem fairly insignificant to the average person. However, boards have the power to restrict employment of gays, to ban books, to set the curriculum, and to encourage their religion in the schools. They have the power to determine what and how the students will be taught while also setting the tone for the school.

For example, in Merrimac, NH, the Radical Right was successful in sneaking in their candidates this year. Within a short time, the following "No Promo Homo" language was adopted by the school district:

"We are very far behind in school board elections, as the Christian Right has been winning left and right around this country."

NO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT RECEIVES FUNDS UNDER THIS ACT SHALL IMPLEMENT OR CARRY OUT A PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY THAT HAS EITHER THE PURPOSE OR AFFECT OF ENCOURAGING OR SUPPORTING HOMOSEXUALITY AS A POSITIVE LIFESTYLE ALTERNATIVE. THIS SHALL INCLUDE THE DISTRIBUTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, INSTRUCTION, COUNSELING OR OTHER SERVICES, OR REFERRAL OF A PUPIL TO AN ORGANIZATION THAT AFFIRMS A HOMOSEXUAL LIFESTYLE.

Around the country, all people need to be on the lookout for "NO PROMO HOMO" resolutions. Accompanying these, are most likely "abstinence only" health curriculum, implementing a "moment of silence" in the classroom, promotion of creationism, and removing guidance counselors in favor of parental counseling.

On the national level, 'No Promo Homo' attachments to education bills have been seen. Among them was Paul Dornan's (R-CA) frightening

attempt to pass the Hancock amendment in Congress. It said that Congress could not fund any local educational agency that promoted or encouraged homosexuality. Nor could they 'affirm' homosexuality as natural, normal, or healthy... nor in addressing issues such as AIDS, could they present the 'homosexual act' as desirable, acceptable or permissible.

The National Advocacy Coalition on Youth and Sexual Orientation, in Washington, D.C., is tracking local situations around the country. People are encouraged to call and report any positive and negative developments in school board elections, supportive or degrading policies, restrictive curriculum, attacks on students, etc. Contact Rea Carey at 202-783-4165 ext. 49.



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Attorney General Janet Reno has been asked to intervene in the case by the Lesbian and Gay Task Force.

It could be you or I

This brutal murder has profoundly affected me. These women were active in their community and were generous with their time and energy. Both were involved in their church. Each was active within their local PFLAG chapter, in fact Michelle, served as PFLAG newsletter editor. Michelle and Roxanne were proud and vibrant workers for social change and justice. They knew that life was full of risks and they took them on with grace. Both women were from very close-knit families who have stated how proud they were of Michelle and Roxanna as lesbian, community and social justice activists.

The national media, including, Time, CBS, NBC and CNN, has been very sensitive in their coverage of this tragedy. Our community can be very grateful for the fact that they are actively distributing this story nationally. Hopefully this tragedy will wake up some people to the increasing levels of hate crimes in our country and the world.

The Medford community responded quickly to this incomprehensible tragedy with the creation of a community space in which to grieve "our fear was that too many were not able to be grieving with us and that they needed community space." Grief counselors were set up for twenty-four hour availability at no cost, and a phone bank was set up and they planned events. Local lesbians and gays held a private gathering Saturday and a Medford-wide community gathering was held Sunday.

How can we as individuals and as a community respond?

The last thing that we should be doing because of this tragedy is to pull the door closed to our closets. We need to openly discuss our homosexuality with as many people as possible including our family, our closest friends, co-workers we feel safe with and others with whom we socialize. This action is vital! We must put a face on homosexuality. Hating someone that you care for is nearly impossible. The reason we are targets is because many people are very ignorant about lesbians and gays. They

forget, or do not know that we are their mothers, fathers, daughters sons, and neighbors. They do not know we are the helpful grocery clerk or the people who stopped and helped them fix their flat tire. They do not know we are not only interior decorators but business executives, carpenters, plumbers, real estate agents, sales people, computer programmers, writers, and laborers. We are everyone. We are everywhere.

As long as we choose to remain "the other" or "alien" then we can be targets. To those who have been honest with themselves and to their friends and family, I say thank you. Without your leadership we would be ever so much worse off than we are now. I hope that each of us will seek inspiration from Michelle and Roxanna and that we can all make a difference by building community and by speaking the truth.

BYRON CENTER TEACHER TO STAY

A gay teacher in this small Grand Rapids area town kept his job after coming out to his students this fall. When asked by his students what he'd done over the weekend, music teacher Gerry Crane simply told them that he had been married in a ceremony. When the kids pressed further, Crane divulged that he'd married another man. Crane was a well-liked, 31 year old music teacher who was looked upon as one of the more inspirational and dedicated teachers in the school.

This incident divided the school, the school board, and even families. This small community became a battleground located in an area that has a highly conservative, Christian-Reformed population.

In a meeting in mid-December, more than 500 people gathered to hear the decision by the school board. The tenured Crane was told that "the board firmly believes that homosexuality violates the dominant moral standard of the district's community. Individuals who espouse homosexuality do not constitute proper role models as teacher for students in this district." The board went on to say that it would continue to "investigate and monitor the current circumstance and controversy and will take prompt and appropriate lawful action when justified."

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WORDS AND MUSIC:

A LOCAL GUIDE TO BOOKS, MAGAZINES, TAPES AND CDs

Rick Gould

Winter is a nice time to cozy up and read or listen to music. Here are some suggestions by local stores.

At **The Bookie Joint**, Shelley recommends the following titles:

Coming Out of Shame by Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael, \$22.95. The book focuses on how lesbians and gays can transform their lives by learning to change self-shame into a positive gay identity. Kaufman says, "The book teaches gays and lesbians how to feel whole, worthy and adequate."

Final Atonement by Steve Johnson, \$3.99. A Doug Orlando mystery, this fun read finds the tough, gay Brooklyn homicide cop solving the murder of a Hasidic rabbi.

The Only Good Priest by Mark R. Zubro, \$8.95. The third Tom Mason detective mystery has intrigue and romance, set in the gay community.

Sportsdykes, edited by Susan Rogers, \$8.95. A sexy literary anthology that explores the lesbian sports experience. Thirty pieces here, both fiction and non-fiction.

And Music:

To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything... Various Artists, cassette—\$10.95, CD—\$16.95. From the hit film that never came to Traverse City, a soundtrack that is fun, fun, fun!

Phantom Center by Ferron, \$9.98—cassette, CD—\$15.98. Earthbeat has re-released Ferron's 1990 album, totally remixed, with new additions Tori Amos and The Indigo Girls on background vocals.

Ain't Nothing But A She Thing, Various Artists, cassette—\$10.95, CD \$16.95. Includes Annie Lennox, Patti Smith, Melissa Etheridge, Sinéad O'Conner and others.

This is Not Going to be Pretty by Harvey Fierstein, CD only, \$16.95. Recorded at NYC's Bottom Line, this is a blend of comedy, drama and music. Fierstein's special musical style is, well, imagine Carol Channing in "The Exorcist—The Musical."

At **Waldenbooks**, Kevin gave us this list:

Dark Angels: Lesbian Vampire Stories by Pam Keeseey, \$10.95. Author of *Daughters of Darkness*, she continues her reclamation of the vampire as a sensual homoerotic being.

While England Sleeps by David Leavitt, \$10.95. This best-seller was off the shelves in the US due to a legal suit. Now this gay love story set in WWII England is available in paperback. Author of *The Lost Language of Cranes*.

Glamourpuss by Christian McLaughlin, \$10.95. Alex Young is a hot new soap stud who's bubble is burst when a tabloid catches him in a clinch with another man.

Dyke Life: From Growing UP to Growing Old, A Celebration of the Lesbian Experience. Edited by Karla Jay.

\$23. From race relations to body piercing, from raising children to the recovery movement, this is a collection of writings by women of different ages, races and religions to give voice to the diversity of lesbians.

Young Man from the Provinces: A Memoir, by Alan Helms. \$22.95. Helms tells of his coming of age in the pre-Stonewall era, starting with his Midwestern upbringing. His journey takes him to New York and Europe in his self-absorbed career as a model and ends with his self-acceptance as a gay man.

At **Horizon Books**, Alex gave us these suggestions:

The Key to Everything: Classic Lesbian Love Poems, edited by Gerry Gomez Pearlberg. \$10.00. Includes Chrystos, Emily Dickinson, May Sarton, Elizabeth Randolph and much more. A good gift for Valentine's Day.

The Name of Love: Classic Gay Love Poems, edited by Michael Lassell. \$10.00. Shakespeare, Whitman, Auden to Paul Monette, Allen Ginsberg and many more.

Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation by Urvashi Vaid, \$24.95. Of this work, Larry Kramer says: "One of our great leaders struggles to find answers about where we're going and how to get there. It's both a heartbreaking book and a hopeful one, as Vaid makes us realize the journey to gay and lesbian equality is a long and painful one... that must be taken by all of us."

Home Lovely by Lynne Rae Perkins, \$15.00. This local author has told a moving story of a young girl and her mother who move to a trailer. With the help of a mailman, the girl finds joy through growing flowers and vegetables. Signed copies available.

Untold Millions: Positioning Your Business for the Gay and Lesbian Consumer Revolution. By Grant Lukenbill, \$25.00. This book describes itself as the definitive road map for making your business benefit from this commercial opportunity. It defines the gay and lesbian consumer, what they want, how to create brand loyalty, customer communication in advertising, and more.

North Country Gardening: Simple Secrets to Successful Northern Gardening. By Neil Moran, \$16.95. This local author has created a practical guide to growing fruit, flowers, vegetables and other plants. Signed copies are available.

At **AB CDs**, Norm makes these musical predictions for hot CDs in '96:

Plumb by Jonatha Brooke and the Story.

Miao by The Beautiful South.

Ledbetter Heights by Kenny Wayne Sheperd.

By Heart by Jim Brickman.

Amplified Heart by Everything but the Girl.

Life by Simply Red.

Days Like This by Van Morrison

Forgiven Not Forgotten by The Coors.

World AIDS Day 1995

René A. Jeffries

World AIDS Day is a day that puts life back into perspective. There is no place untouched by this disease. Even the small town of Traverse City had close to 300 people attend the annual memorial service held at the Central United Methodist church. It was so wonderful to see so many people take time out of their busy schedules to attend.

It was an evening worth remembering. The memorial service had a diverse program schedule. The prelude and postlude was of traditional African rhythm performed by Bon Foulé. It really woke the spirit and breathed energy into the church. The invocation was given by Rev. Emmy Lou Belcher, which further enhanced the spiritual energies in the room. Joe Bertucci welcomed everyone, and kept the evening flowing. He also presented the Thomas Judd award and the Mary Fisher's Family AIDS Network award to a very deserving person, Mr. Jeff Pugh.

The mayor of Traverse City, James Thompkins, Jr. read the proclamation. This officially commemorated the day as World AIDS Day in Traverse City. This was followed by music and poetry. The music was performed by Jeff Haas, Janice Keegan,

Glenn Wolff, Ron Getz and the Northern Michigan Womyn's Choir. The poetry was read by Patrice Stewart, written by her son James Wesley Stewart.

The memorial names began with Joe Bertucci. You could feel the complexity of emotions surround you as each name was called out. It was like being enveloped by pure emotional energy. Each name held an individual truth that collectively touched all that were present. Those living with HIV/AIDS need to be remembered every day, not just on World AIDS Day. Showing our love and support is definitely a shared right and responsibility for all of us.

The evening concluded with a candlelight vigil/pledge walk down main street, ending at a local restaurant. There we enjoyed entertainment provided by Planned Parenthood's Teen Troupe Theater. We all laughed, shared our stories and offered support.

"You don't have to see God as straight, white and a man."



"I hadn't been going to church for five years, because I couldn't believe in anything. I wanted something I could relate to as a woman. A lesbian woman."

"It was the same for both of us. Walking into a Unitarian Universalist service and feeling immediately at home. We felt welcome. We didn't have to be different people—we could be ourselves."

"We could be together... a couple. And no one was going to kick us out."

"It goes way, way beyond tolerance. Unitarian Universalists encourage diversity. And acceptance."

"I mean, not everyone is Ozzie and Harriet, you know?"

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OF UNEQUAL BENEFITS, CAMPUS HOMOPHOBIA AND ACTIVISM

by Richard Tuxbury

Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant decided in November that it would not offer domestic partnership benefits to its gay and lesbian employees. This announcement came just two weeks after CMU president Leonard Plachta promised that he would focus this school year "on initiatives related to diversity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination at all levels of the University."

There is speculation that the University was afraid that the move to give gays and lesbians equal status might anger financial contributors. University officials denied this and said that they surveyed other universities around the Midwest and found that many did not offer benefits to its gay and lesbian employees. They also stated that gay and lesbian employees weren't interested in these benefits.

There seemed to be a number of reasons offered by CMU in defense of their move. CMU's director of gay and lesbian programs, Michael Stemmeler, says bluntly, "Offering domestic partnership benefits is a matter of equity - offering equal pay and benefits for equal work. It is also a way to help make the campus climate more comfortable for gay and lesbian faculty, staff and students."

Later, in mid November, vandals damaged library books that dealt with the topic of gays, lesbians and bisexuals. This happened on three separate occasions at Park Library, where books were defaced and thrown into toilets in the restroom. There was great concern by some on campus, while others felt that the incidents were not important.

In addition, the on-campus office of the Gay Lesbian Resource Center was vandalized, and hate messages, such as "The only good faggot is a dead faggot" were scrawled on the walls. Again, the University administration responded with less than outrage, and this raised the ire of our local P-FLAG President, Cindy Robb.

Robb took action, wanting to find a peaceful solution to what was appearing to be a situation that could quickly get out of control. She immediately organized a meeting with all Michigan P-FLAG chapters, the Triangle Foundation, and CMU officials in Mt. Pleasant.

There was not a moment of hesitation in participating by all the other state chapters, and the fact-finding meeting took place on November 29 on campus. "The safety of our children is being threatened, said Robb. It shouldn't be dangerous in American society to be a gay or lesbian person, and university campuses are the last place our children should learn hatred and bigotry. We certainly hope that our trip to Mt. Pleasant will be a strong stand in stopping hate crimes and creating a better understanding for our children."

Due to Robb's activism, over 40 people met at CMU to discuss the situation. They included: CMU's Dean of Students, Director of Public Safety, Affirmative Action Officer, Director of Gay and lesbian Programs, some faculty, and an assistant VP of Diversity. From outside the university community, were the Gay and Lesbian Program Director from U of M, Jeff Montgomery from the Triangle Foundation, and representatives from all the PFLAG chapters in the lower peninsula.

The meeting was long, involved and showed the many different agendas of the participants. There appeared to be a lot of frustration expressed by non-university people regarding the lack of visible support to gay/lesbian students.

The result of this meeting was a decision for a PFLAG member to attend every CMU Board of Director meeting. In addition, PFLAG President Robb issued a list of recommendations that included:

- The CMU Board should make a strong statement concerning hate crimes aimed at Gay/Lesbian students.
- Provide ongoing education and sensitivity training, campus-wide, for all students, employees, faculty.
- Set up a "safe space" for gay/lesbian students
- Increase in the current budget of \$800./yr. for gay/lesbian programs.

Cindy Robb suggests that concerned people write or call the CMU Board members to express their opinions about their rejection of partnership benefits to CMU employees. As well, it would be good to express your support of the above recommendations and that they be accomplished quickly. Robb can be reached at 616-271-5045 for addresses.

P-FLAG NEEDS YOU

P-FLAG is a wonderful, supportive group. It creates an atmosphere of warmth, understanding and security. I originally came to P-FLAG for support after coming out to my family and to become an active member. It has made a wonderful difference in my life and to many others that I have talked to. It is really encouraging to see the group grow and blossom. But there has been one thing that I feel is missing from our group. We need more support from the families and friends of lesbians, as well as lesbians themselves. We have a wonderful support group turn out of family and friends of gay men, as well as gay men.

I would like to encourage all of you that may not have thought about P-FLAG as something that could make a difference in your life, to attend. I feel the community really could benefit even more from the support of everyone. It would be wonderful to hear your stories, offer support through the good times and the bad. P-FLAG is for everyone, so please come.

Just as an added note: We have a wonderful library of over 40 books and several videos that you may borrow. Please see me at the meeting and I will be glad to help and offer a few suggestions of books/videos that may meet your interests.
René A. Jeffries

ALMOST-EQUAL PARTNERS

Many organizations now offer some benefits to gay employees' partners-but sometimes less than spouses get.

Apple Computer • BankAmerica • Barnes and Noble • City of Boston
Celestial Seasonings • City of Chicago • Colgate-Palmolive • Coors
Covington and Burling • Dayton-Hudson • Disney • Dow Chemical
Emory University • Fannie Mae • HBO • Levi Strauss
City of Los Angeles • Microsoft • Multnomah County, OR
City of New Orleans • City of New York • NYNEX
City of San Francisco • City of Seattle • Sony Pictures
Starbucks Coffee • TicketMaster • Xerox

ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

Scott Southwell

The NGLTF is the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, a DC based organization supporting grass roots organizing and national advocacy for equal civil rights since 1973. It holds an annual national conference to assess and analyze the outcome of the previous year's work and to reenergize for the coming year's battles.

Thanks to the financial assistance of Friends North and the Bike Tour organizers, I was able to attend the four day conference in beautiful downtown Detroit's Renaissance Center in early November. I spent that time surrounded by over two thousand gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered activists and individuals—learning, socializing, teaching and truly becoming energized to continue and increase my own involvement in the pursuit of equal rights for our community. As a matter of fact, when I returned to Traverse City, I told Jim I was prepared to leave my job and become a full-time gay rights activist here!

But I'm still employed.

There were an incredible variety of speakers, sessions and workshops: from political, workplace, school and rural organizing; computer training for the Digital Queer internet; fund raising; youth, bisexuals and the transgendered and their place in the movement; media representation of queers; the Olympics out of Cobb County movement; safer sex education and discussion, along with many others.

But all through the sessions I attended, the discussions I had or heard in the halls, in the presentations by such distinguished speakers as Urvashi Vaid, ex-director of NGLTF, and Tammi Baldwin, state representative from Madison, Wisconsin, even in the concert on Saturday evening when Nell Carter, the Fabulous Flirtations and Lea Delaria performed, I noticed a certain theme emerging—a theme which, to me, signaled that the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered movement has begun a new direction—a difficult direction—and the right—no, the correct—direction.

This theme identified for me the most important tool I have to fight the fundamentalist right (I do not call them religious—for they are not) for our equal civil rights. This tool is simple to use, but as I said, difficult.

I heard over and over the importance of coalition building—that it is time to meet with those who have similar goals—women, blacks, Jews, the poor—all the disenfranchised—and to join with them. Those who would discriminate against us are few, but vocal, and they are very adept at the process of dividing and

conquering. Because of our gay diversity—because we are all races, all religions, all sexes, all classes, and because we live in every community in America, the gay civil rights movement can not be a separatist movement. When we fight for our rights, we fight for the rights of all—we should include all in our fight. But how do we include this "all" in our fight, and who are they?

It is not by changing our enemies and enlisting them to join us. It is not Jesse Helms we must reach. He will not hear us. It is not Michelle McManus we must reach. She will not hear us. The people we must reach are those with whom we do business, our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends and our families—we must reach our community and we must enlist them in our battle.

For it is in the communities of America that the fundamentalist right is currently doing battle against us. When they win, and they frequently do, it is because our community does not know us.

We must initiate what Tammi Baldwin, in her opening speech to the conference called "the most important political act we can do." We must come out. We must come out to those with whom we do business, to our neighbors, to our co-workers, to our friends and to our families.

Most of these people are good, are kind, and are caring. And most people, if they know us as a friend, will support us. If our communities know us, they will support us.

Again, as representative Baldwin said, "it is the millions 'on the fence' with whom we can effect change." It is those who do not now know us who we must enlist in our battle.

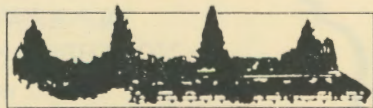
We cannot change Jesse Helms or Michelle McManus or the core of the fundamentalist right, but we can take away their power to harm us. There are many of us here tonight and we know many people. We must come out to them. They can neutralize the fundamentalist right's agenda of prejudice, hatred, fear and denial of equal civil rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and the transgendered and they will do it for their friends. They will do it for us.

We must come out.

Thank you.

QUOTABLE:

"The Bible containns six admonishments to homosexuals and 362 admonishments to heterosexuals. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love heterosexuals. It's just that they need more supervision." -Comedienne Lynn Lavner



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HAWAII STATE COMMISSION URGES LEGISLATURE TO LEGALIZE MARRIAGE FOR SAME-GENDER COUPLES

—National Freedom to Marry Coalition Hails Historic Step—
Honolulu, Dec. 8, 1995—In an historic first, a Hawaii state government-created commission, specifically charged with studying the freedom to marry that is denied same-gender couples, forwarded a report to the state legislature today recommending Hawaii marriage laws be amended "to allow two people regardless of their gender to marry."

The report by the Hawaii Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, whose members were appointed by the governor, will not go to the state legislature. The commission was created by the legislature in June, 1995, to determine how best to address the ways in which same-gender couples are affected by not being able to marry.

"After months of intense research and witness testimony, a government body has finally concluded that there is no legitimate reason for the state to continue refusing civil marriage licenses to same-gender couples who want to make the commitment of marriage," said Rich Tafel of Log Cabin Republicans. Log Cabin Republicans is a member of the National Freedom to Marry Coalition, a broad alliance of city, state and national gay and non-gay groups across the country.

"They looked at all the arguments for and against same-gender marriage and concluded it's wrong for government to say 'no' to people saying 'I do,'" said Tafel.

The commission was created in response to a landmark lawsuit challenging the denial of civil marriage licenses to same-gender couples. In May, 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that the "same-gender restriction" on marriage appears to violate the state constitution. The Court held that unless the state can identify a "compelling" justification for discriminating, it must stop. The case, *Baehr v. Lewin*, is now before the lower court, where the couples are represented by co-counsel Dan Foley of the Hawaii Equal Rights Marriage Project (HERMP) and Evan Wolfson of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund.

"The commission's report further strengthens our court challenge, clearly illustrating that the state has no 'compelling' reason to deny same-gender couples the freedom to marry," said Tom Ramsey, Co-Chair of HERMP. "If the legislature fails to end the discriminatory restriction on marriage, we're still confident that the Hawaii Supreme Court will, through the *Baehr v. Lewin* Case. It was less than 30 years ago that courts took a similar stand, ending the ban on interracial marriage."

The landmark report was hailed by leaders of gay and non-gay organizations nationwide as a key step in educating the public about how the denial of the freedom to marry harms couples and fosters inequality.

"Many Americans have never thought about marriage in connection with lesbian and gay people, or even about the reality that same-gender couples form families that need protection and deserve support," said Elizabeth Birch,

Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, a member of the National Freedom to Marry Coalition. "The commission did its homework, and looked at equal marriage rights fairly and methodically. We invite the public, judges, and legislators in the rest of the country to do the same."

The commission of seven members, headed by highly-respected former Lt. Gov. Tom Gill, represented a diverse range of views. Its report has already been editorially endorsed by Hawaii's two leading newspapers.

The National Freedom to Marry Coalition is a broad association of gay and non-gay local, state and national organizations, working to educate the public and encourage support for same-gender marriage.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY:

The honorable U. S. Senator Robert Dole seeking the Republican nomination for President of the United States has been flying in jets owned by Carl Lindner, the banana king, while paying for his airline tickets with frequent corruption, i.e., pushing U. S. Congressional legislation to help the Cincinnati-businessman sell more Chiquita bananas.

Wonder why our marvelous media never thought to check on the planes that Senator Dole is always flying hither, thither, and New Hampshire too?

Another thing that the "media," in its love affair with retired General Colin Powell, failed to make anything of was that Gen. Powell as a major was in charge of the initial Mai Lai massacre investigation in Viet Nam and reported back that there was nothing to the rumor, Powell neglected to even interview the soldier who reported the massacre. And this great general of the Gulf "WAR?" whose memory was so acute in his autobiography, failed to remember things in the 114 times during the Contra hearings in which Oliver North starred.

Only Ronald Reagan failed to remember more dramatically than Powell.

Yes, the Republicans are the party of honorable hypocrites and their multi-millionaire media cohorts are also honorable, but not very good reporters.

M'Lynn Hartwell)

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TRIANGLE FOUNDATION

Last November, Kirk Morcicky and Christopher Schema were found guilty in the 1994 murder of Gary Rocus in Dearborn Heights. As you know, this was a case in which the Triangle Foundation played a pivotal role. In fact, the police have repeatedly given public credit to the Foundation for assisting them in the original investigation. For their part, the police and prosecutors have become outspoken advocates against anti-gay violence, due to their work with the Triangle Foundation.

As the killers of Gary Rocus head to prison for the rest of their lives, Triangle heads toward the next gay murder trial: The People vs. Jonathan Schmitz, in the killing of Scott Amedure. This is, perhaps, the highest profile case with which they have ever been involved. Their advocacy has already made a significant impact in this case with the public arguments with Richard Thompson on the issue of naming this murder a hate crime.

Following this, many media outlets began to report this case as a blatant example of anti-gay violence, repudiating any notion that there is any level of acceptable defense for the crime.

Similarly, the terrifying attack on their office in June, which left Treasurer Henry Messer seriously wounded from a gunshot wound threw them into weeks of personal concern for Henry, as well as experiencing the ironic task of being their own client as victims of violent crime. Thus the summer began in confusion and with disruption and never seemed to rise out of that mode.

These unplanned, but unavoidable demands on their time and energy severely tax the personnel and financial resources of the Triangle Foundation. They arise even while they somehow continue to field up to 50 calls a week for victim assistance, while they respond to routine press inquiries about any number of gay/lesbian-related media stories.

Their unrelenting advocacy in the murder cases has consumed their resources for the past year. In addition, please remember that they operate with only one full-time, paid staff person and that he is only paid about \$1,000 a month. And, the efforts in the Amedure and Rocus murders cost at least an additional \$6,000. that was unplanned.

As you may know, Triangle Foundation played a role in the NGLTF Creating Change Conference, and also found time to host a national Roundtable conference of Anti-Violence Projects.

In order to continue this work on a level of professionalism which is their trademark, they need money more than ever. Please consider assisting them in our efforts. Their address is located on our resource page, and they may also be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.tri.org>

(Note: This article was edited and reformatted and was based on an informational letter from the Triangle Foundation to Friends North. -editor)

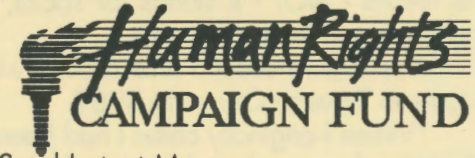
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WORLD WIDE WEB SITE:

[HTTP://WWW.HRCUSA.ORG](http://www.hrcusa.org)

By Entering Their Zip Code, Users Can Track Members of Congress on Lesbian



and Gay Issues, and Send Instant Messages

Washington—The Human Rights Campaign launched its one-of-a-kind World Wide Web site this week in conjunction with the official introduction of changes at the organization which reflect a new approach to building political strength, membership and enhancing the dialog about lesbian and gay issues with America.

The Human Rights Campaign's site on the World Wide Web, a burgeoning, user-friendly part of the Internet, can be found at <http://www.hrcusa.org>. The site features information about issues that affect lesbian and gay people, information about the work of the Human Rights Campaign, and how to get more involved in the political process. The site will also provide links to other gay-related Web sites.

The center-piece of the Human Rights Campaign Web site is the Action Center which is accessed by clicking the "Take Action" button. Users are prompted to enter their zip code, which brings up a page with their U.S. representative and senators. After clicking on their member's name, that member's up-to-the-minute voting record on lesbian, gay and AIDS issues is displayed. The user then has the option to send that member a message, regardless of whether or not that member has a public e-mail address. As the 1996 election season approaches, the Action Center will also include information about presidential, House and Senate races. Again, users will enter their zip code to display races in their area, which background research on candidates' positions on gay and lesbian issues.

The Human Rights Campaign, America's largest national lesbian and gay political organization, envisions an America where lesbian and gay people are ensured of their basic equal rights—and can be open, honest, and safe at home, at work, and in the community.

New Gay AA Location Selected

Grace Episcopal Church at the corner of Washington and Boardman Streets will host the group at the usual times: Wednesdays at 5:30 and Saturdays at 11:00 am.

Contact John at 922-0746 or Tom at 947-4647.

PROFILE; JIM INGLESON

by John Evans

When I asked our incoming president, Jim Ingleson, what his position was at Sugar Loaf he said "I'm in convention sales and services... the SMERF market... little blue people who like to go to resorts - NO! - it stands for social, medical, educational, religious and fraternal groups."

This is Jim's second time around with Sugar Loaf. He first came to Traverse City in mid-1989.

"When I originally came I had been working in Ft. Wayne for Hilton for a number of years and I decided that I wanted to be back up in Michigan where I could ski more... worked at Milliken's for about six months while I looked for a job - that's when I got my job at Sugar Loaf... I didn't get too involved (with Friends North) until the fall of that year - Tom Kincaid was one of the first persons I met."

Jim was elected to the Friends North board and served a shortened term in 1990. He continued his work at Sugar Loaf, but much of his spare time was devoted to caring for his mother, who died of cancer around Christmas of 1992.

One of eight children whose father was Dean of Students at Kirtland Community College, Jim was born and raised in Roscommon. He attended Northwood Institute in Midland. "I went down there to study fashion illustration. As a student I did one ad for Saks Fifth Avenue - it was published in the Free Press - the only thing I ever had published - one of my guest instructors was from Saks - she had greater faith in my ability than I did! I was at a point when I was trying to figure out 'was I gay - was I straight?' I wasn't as convinced as she was. I ended up getting a job as a waiter at a restaurant in Bay City in fall of my sophomore year. Three months later I was assistant general manager... so somebody saw some hotel ability in me and I've been doing it ever since."

After four years in Midland Jim moved to Ft. Wayne to take a job with the Hilton. "My next move was to Nashville to work for the Hermitage Hotel. I was reservations manager and special guest arrangements manager. Dealt with all the stars. Met a lot of people. Lionel Richie told me one time 'The thing I like about you is you treat me like I'm just myself.' I thought 'Sorry, I'm too busy. You're just one more person who needs something!'

While in Nashville Jim did an apprenticeship through the Tennessee Chef's Association and became a certified chef. As Jim said, "It was another case of being in the right place at the right time with the right attitude."

One night Jim and a friend were on their way to see the drag show at the Carousel Bar when the friend asked to stop in at a new gay restaurant because he knew the owner.

"The owner and I hit it off right away. Then the chef and I got talking. I have always liked food preparation - I think I was seven when I learned how to make spaghetti. An Italian woman down the street from our house spent hours teaching me. Anyway, this chef is the one who gave me the idea of going through the program. I worked with him for about a year and did all the testing. He left the restaurant after a year and I continued another year. I did this at night while working for the Hermitage during the day."

Eventually Jim left the Hermitage and became full time assistant chef at the gay restaurant. After about five years he left the restaurant and went to work in Ft. Wayne again at the airport Hilton, but when a Colorado firm bought it out, Jim soon left and came to Traverse City for the first time.



Jim Ingleson (he swears that is not a scepter in his hand)

During this period he met his current partner, Kevin. When Jim lost his job at Sugar Loaf in 1993 they moved back to Indiana for a year and eventually settled in Madison, Wisconsin where Kevin could continue his studies. On a Christmas visit Jim called up the folks at Sugar Loaf and was offered his present position. They moved back to Traverse in early 1995 within two weeks of the offer.

We got to talking about our families and their acceptance of us as gay men. "I came out when I was 28 years old... the day after my niece's wedding at the farm - met no resistance, just acceptance: 'We love you, always have, always will.' And it's a big family - eight kids, 32 nieces and nephews, 17 great-nieces and nephews. The only comment I got was my brother said 'Do you really kiss boys?'"

"I don't hesitate to tell people how it is and how I see it. You can hate someone you can't see, but if it is someone you can see and you like them, it melts away a lot of the prejudice... I was raped when I was eleven years old. I've had people ask me if I was gay before that. And I really believe being gay is something you are born with... In a family of eight kids I was treated the same as all my brothers and sisters."

We talked about the successful events of the past year and of the necessity for continuing to have programs that draw people together. "I just hope that we'll make an effort to continue to try to reach as many people as possible. We need to find a way to generate more members in small towns where there are people who think they are alone. And this election year: get people thinking about voting - it is one of the most positive steps we can take."



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