

Windy City Times

Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Newsweekly

Windy City Times Vol. 1, Number 1

Thursday, September 26, 1985

Mayor's committee named

Gay and lesbian activists chosen

By Tracy Baim

The appointments to the 15-person mayor's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues were announced Monday late afternoon by Mayor Harold Washington's liaison to the gay and lesbian community, Kit Duffy.

In addition to the 15 slots there will be symbolic position for closeted gays and lesbians. One of the 15 positions will be a "job share" between Women & Children First Bookstore owners Linda Bubon and Ann Christophersen.

The 16 people slated include eight women and eight men. Three blacks and one Hispanic were selected.

Washington announced the formation of the committee the day after this year's Gay and Lesbian Pride Rally. At the June 30 rally, Washington had been scheduled to make the announcement but failed to remember to do so.

Duffy released the committee names on Monday after Washington approved her recommendations. Duffy made each of the choices herself, despite original notice that a selection committee would choose the committee. She said because of potential controversy surrounding such a selection process, she made the decision herself based on numerous interviews with community members.

Accompanying this article is a list of the 16 people. In next week's *Windy City Times*, there will be full backgrounds on committee members.

Duffy explained that the committee will examine critical issues in the gay and lesbian community. This will include areas such as city funding, purchasing and grant requirements, and how the city can better meet human and health services needs.

It is possible, Duffy explained, that the committee will subdivide to coincide with city committees, such as those on economic development or human services. One specific action could be a seminar on purchasing and grants, especially for women and minorities. Basically, the committee can possibly assist gays and lesbians in hooking into the city process, she said.

The specific power of the committee members is limited. They make recommendations and members will serve as activists within the community. However, to avoid losing credibility, the committee will not be able to direct legislative lobbying.

About 40 people applied for committee positions. Duffy said she viewed the formation as whole with the many community priorities in mind. She was cognizant of geographical representation, but the people who applied did not come from all areas. She said she definitely tried to have as many women as possible on the committee.

One major qualification was the ability to work with the other people and the

Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues

Carolyn Bay: Professional community organizer and ACTION co-chair.

Caryn Berman: Social worker with organizing background.

Art Brewer: Doctor, experienced in health issues, particularly AIDS.

Ann Christophersen and Linda Bubon: Co-owners of Women & Children First Bookstore.

Chris Cothran: Metropolitan Business Association, National Coalition of Black Gays, Co-owner Tangible Type.

Rhonda Craven: Communications and art background.

Ted Hoerl: Small business owner, Far North Side activist.

Marie Kuda: Long-time active feminist, one of founders of Chicago Mattachine.

Achy Obejas: Latina community and political organizer, communications.

Rich Pfeiffer: Community activist, Gay and Lesbian Pride organizer.

Linda Rodgers: Paris Dance co-owner, community activist.

Larry Rolla: Attorney, active in wide variety of issues, including civil rights.

Ron Sable: Part of Cook County Hospital Sable/Sherer Clinic, community organizer.

John Simmons: Executive director of Joseph Holmes Dance Theatre.

Bill Young: Harris Foundation, expertise in private funding.

Symbolic position To represent the closeted gay and lesbian community.

Colorado HTLV-III AIDS test results kept center proposal

By Brian Eric Quinby

My daughter has fought too long and hard for her life to have it end just because some people with AIDS are afraid of public condemnation.

COLORADO—So wrote Debbie Hawkins of Aurora, Colorado, in a letter to the editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* of September 2. Hawkins' daughter requires regular transfusions and Hawkins is scared. The sentiment expressed in her letter is typical of the AIDS hysteria which is sweeping Colorado faster than a range fire and which is reaching peaks higher than the mountains which have made this state so famous.

The latest manifestation of this fear is an attempt by the Colorado Department of Health to promulgate regulations requiring the registration of all those who test positive for the presence of HTLV-III antibodies in their bloodstreams. As expected, the Colorado Board of Health has decided to keep a list of those people who test positive. The panel which made the decision said it is more important to stop the spread of the disease than to worry about the possible consequences of a breach in confidentiality of the information on the list. The panel's action is thought to be the first of its kind by any state agency in the country.

Health officials say fewer than one-fourth of AIDS carriers become victims of the disease. However, all virus carriers could spread the virus. The rule takes effect Oct. 30 and requires doctors and laboratories to phone the Health Department whenever a patient is shown to be a carrier. The patient's name, address, age, and sex are kept on file at the Health Department from that time on. Other diseases such as measles and hepatitis are reported in the same way in Colorado.

The Health Department said it will also counsel the doctors on how to relate to their patients, and if the doctor cannot be reached, will call the patient directly and offer counselling, according to a wire service story. Dr. Thomas Vernon, director of the State Health Department, said only three people will have access to the list of persons with AIDS. Ann Lockhart, a department spokesperson, said more than 1,700 people have been tested for the HTLV-III virus, with half of those returning positive results. When the reporting requirement was first announced in August, many gay and lesbian activists objected on the grounds that the lists could lead to discrimination against the community.

The HTLV-III antibodies are—according to a leaflet published and distributed by the Colorado AIDS Project—only associated with AIDS, not a predictor of illness or death, and the test for their presence is not well known for its accuracy. The leaflet has been appearing in bars, stores, and other establishments frequented by Denver's gay male population, and advises that the test not be taken.

According to Julian Rush, director of the project, the awareness campaign is having an effect. At a recent seminar on the issue of testing, at which over 200 gay men were in attendance, Rush told the CGL, "After hearing some of the issues involved, almost three-fourths indicated...that they would not take the test."

Earlier this summer, the Department of Health held a public hearing concerning registration. Officials explained that such steps were necessary in order to insure that those who show the presence of the antibodies "receive proper coun-

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willingness to work and "get their hands dirty." He stressed that the people selected see this appointment as working on behalf of the community, not as a mere status symbol.

Originally, the committee was to be 10-

strong. But the number grew as Duffy found it difficult to leave some names off. Even though it was expanded, however, many could not be chosen; Duffy realizes there may be some upset feelings. As a

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most promise. Only one drug, Isoprinosine, is so far available in experimental research near Chicago, with trials on pre-AIDS patients underway at the Veterans Administration Hospital and Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Suramin, at least in the test tube, inhibits the enzyme known as reverse transcriptase, which the AIDS virus HTLV-III uses to reproduce itself in humans. How the drug inhibits the enzyme is unknown, but it has been used to treat parasitic diseases and African sleeping sickness for some 50 years. Like all anti-viral agents, suramin is highly toxic, causing reduced blood clotting and light-sensitive skin eruptions.

A National Cancer Institute study on 10 AIDS patients showed HTLV-III disappeared in the blood stream of four who took the drug. But virions—genetic material that transmits the virus from one cell to another—reappeared when treatment stopped.

Based on that study, several hundred AIDS and pre-AIDS patients are now

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Eyler trial to begin Nov. 18

A trial date of Nov. 18 was set last week for Larry Eyler, 31.

Eyler, suspected of killing several young men and boys over a two year period, is charged in the murder of uptown teenager Danny Bridges, 16. Bridges' body was found Aug. 21, 1984, in eight pieces in garbage bags in a dumpster located behind a building next door to where Eyler lived, at 1628 W. Sherwin.

Bridges, like many of the other 24 victims linked to Eyler by police, was a prostitute. Officials said he had been tied up, sexually assaulted, and stabbed repeatedly.

Blacks and AIDS conference Sept 28

"Black People and AIDS," an informal conference aimed at Chicago's black community, will be held Saturday, Sept. 28, at the Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted.

The conference, sponsored by the Kupona Network, an ad hoc committee of concerned men and women, in conjunction with the South Shore Community Unemployment Union, begins at 9:30 a.m. and will run until 4:30 p.m. Information about the fatal disease and how it specifically relates to black people will be presented by physicians, nurses, and other professionals experienced in caring for persons with AIDS. For information contact Angela Abner, (312) 733-7600.

African swine fever update

One hundred sixty samples of blood have been tested for African swine fever virus by the New York state Health Department. Included were random samples from a blood bank and 46 samples which were also positive for HTLV-III/LAV. Five samples tested weakly or strongly positive for the African swine fever virus; however, there was no statistical correlation between ASF-positive samples and HTLV-III-positive samples.

According to Charles Ortleb, publisher of *The New York Native*, there were also 25 samples with atypical reactions, meaning they did not respond properly in any expected way. Testing for ASF is extremely difficult and the United States Department of Agriculture is now expressing doubts about the reagents that were used in New York. (These came from the USDA testing station at Plum Island, New York.)

While the USDA and the New York Department of Health claim swine fever does not cause disease in humans, Ortleb notes the USA is also claiming that African swine fever is nonexistent in this country.

African swine fever is devastating to pigs and is capable of destroying the entire swine population in a country in a matter of a few years. In the early 1980s the U.S. government spent \$18 million to kill all the pigs in the Dominican Republic which had become infected with ASF. This was done in order to prevent its possible spread to this country.

Gerber-Hart moving Oct. 1

Gerber-Hart Library is set to move Oct. 1 across the street from their present location. The library, the Midwest Lesbian and Gay Resource Center, will move to 3238 N. Sheffield, which offers more space for both library patrons and materials—and will make it possible for the library to make many stored materials available for the first time.

Library directors Ruth Ketchum and Joe Gregg point out that they will be conveniently located across from the Rodde Community Center, where the library is at present.

During October, the library will be closed while the new location is being adapted for library use. This Saturday, Sept. 28, will be the library's last day in its present location. Persons needing library assistance during October may call 787-3450 for limited service. A grand reopening event is planned for November, with specific details announced later.

In establishing itself in its expanded housing, the library is in need of community support in the form of donations of expertise and materials in the areas of cleanup/rehabilitation; anyone with tools, paint and brushes, and such finishings as tables, chairs, lamps and other lighting hardware, carpeting, shelving or file cabinets which they would care to donate to the library or with expertise in wiring, plastering, painting or other remodeling work which they would care to share, are encouraged to contact David at 549-4182 or Joe Gregg at 787-3450.

The directors note donations of money or materials to the library are tax-deductible. Volunteers to assist in general cleanup are also needed and welcome.

Ketchum and Gregg pointed out this is the third library move since its 1981 founding.

"Each stage in our development has been one of solid growth—from a small room in the Lake View Citizen's Council offices to larger space shared with Gay and Lesbian Horizons and the Lake View Mental Health Clinic, the library now looks forward to further success in its new quarters, including hoped-for expansion of hours of operation as well as the opportunity to make available for the first time many exciting and important archival materials, artwork and recorded music which had been previously inaccessible due to shortage of space."

Nation

Chicago man suspected in numerous child molestations

CHICAGO—Police in Gary, Indiana and Chicago said a local man may have committed as many as 100 sexual assaults on children over the past ten years. According to the *Chicago Tribune* more than 300 sexually explicit photos of children were found by police in the Lake Station, Indiana home of Steven Toth, 68. Toth, a retired steelworker, has so far been charged with one count of rape involving a 16 year old girl. The girl told police Toth raped her after she tried to get him to give back photos of her. In addition to the pictures, police found address books and audio cassettes believed to be interviews with some of the alleged victims. Toth is presently in jail under \$5 million bond.

You may have missed...

LOS ANGELES—The Automobile Association of America, apparently buckling under to a threatened lawsuit, has agreed to offer "multiple car discounts" to gay couples. The discount, until recently, was only available to married "straights."

PHOENIX—The Human Rights Commission has decided not to deal with the gay issue and has apparently shelved all talk. A city official said, "Gay rights in Phoenix ain't going to happen, period. You're talking about a Western city, cowboys, conservative philosophy, strong Christian churches."

CAMBRIDGE—At the prodding of lesbian and gay activists, Harvard University has enacted a nondiscrimination policy to protect gays, lesbians, political activists and the disabled.

Former Chicagoan is first Gay Games entry

SAN FRANCISCO—A former Chicagoan is the first lesbian to file entry forms for the Gay Games II next year in San Francisco. Marilyn Therese Christopher, 26, is now a resident of the Bay Area. She will compete in the Physique contest. "I look forward to the games as a chance to be myself, to take part in the event with other women who have worked equally hard to achieve their goals." The first man to enter is Dave Studach, 36. He will take part in the marathon. Dave is originally from Oregon.

Gay man to run for mayor

WINTER GARDEN—27-year-old Mark White is seeking to become the second openly gay mayor of a city in Florida. According to *The Weekly News* White is a professional actor and owner of a catering service in West Hollywood, California. White's platform includes a plan to end hiring discrimination based on sexual preference in the Fire Department. He also would let gays redecorate the town if elected. White also said he would have welfare recipients do 40 hours a week of volunteer work for the city. Winter Garden is a suburb of Orlando. White said he faces an uphill struggle against the incumbent Ralph Fulford.

NGTF violence survey out

WASHINGTON—A comparison of seven separate anti-gay/lesbian violence surveys revealed similar "fag bashing" patterns nationwide. The comparison was done by Kevin Berrill, Violence Project Coordinator for the National Gay Task Force. According to Berrill's results, 20% of gay men and 10% of all lesbians have been physically abused because of sexual preference. More than 90% of all respondents reported some homophobic victimization. Berrill gained his results by comparing surveys done in Philadelphia, Wisconsin, Maine, New Jersey, New York, and Richmond, Virginia. The results, said Berrill, were used to help pass a bill in California protecting gays and lesbians from violence and harassment.

Woman wins settlement

PHILADELPHIA—Elissa Dorfman, the former general sales manager of radio station WCAU-FM, recently received \$250,000 in an out-of-court settlement from her former employers, according to the *Philadelphia Gay News*. Dorfman sued after she was sexually harassed at a company dinner in 1982. Dorfman said the host of the dinner repeatedly touched her sexually and publicly humiliated her. Afterward WCAU employees asked her if she was a lesbian, insinuating she would not have made such a big deal of the matter had she been straight, according to court papers in the case. Dorfman said, "In their view, I'm either a lesbian or a slut." Dorfman also won a letter of recommendation from her old bosses in addition to the money.

Military man suspended after marriage to man

SPOKANE—An Air Force Sergeant with an unblemished record has been suspended from duty following his marriage to a pre-operative transsexual, said a story in the *Philadelphia Gay News*. SSGT. Danny Stephens, 28, now faces a courtmartial with a possible dishonorable discharge attached along with imprisonment. Charges also include living in a homosexual relationship as well as illegally obtaining a military identification pass for his wife Jillian. The couple's attorney said the pair were married in Las Vegas four years ago and were in the process of saving money for Jillian's sex change operation. The military became aware of the situation reportedly after an anonymous letter from a member of the local gay community.

Fear of sex growing

PHILADELPHIA—A university researcher in upstate New York said erotophobia is growing in America. Erotophobia is a fear of sex, according to the *Philadelphia Gay News*. Psychologist Donn Byrne said the problem exists among women more than men and occurs more frequently in people who are affluent or come from strict religious backgrounds.

Lesbians guilty in cop fight

ALBUQUERQUE—Five women who accused police of illegal harassment and detainment were themselves convicted of disorderly conduct. The *Philadelphia Gay News* said the confrontation took place during a birthday party.

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GAY

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Campus votes on gay funding

BALTIMORE—The University of Maryland's Student Government Association voted to place a referendum question on the November ballot concerning funding of gay organizations on campus, said the *Washington Blade*. The SGA is trying to block funding to gay groups, according to the newspaper. Gay and lesbian activists attacked the move, calling it unfair and a possible violation of student government rules and regulations.

Phone porn wins in Utah

SALT LAKE CITY—A federal judge has dismissed criminal charges against a New York pornographic telephone service because Congress apparently over-looked phone sex in recently passed anti-porn legislation, according to the *New York Times*. The judge who made the ruling called the message, by Carlin Communications, "verbal garbage" and said company officers should be ashamed of themselves. But he said prosecution for transmitting sexually explicit messages over the telephone lines had not been addressed by Congress.

West Hollywood to sponsor gay/lesbian conference

WEST HOLLYWOOD—For the first time in history, this November openly gay and lesbian elected officials, as well as appointed ones, will gather at a conference sponsored by West Hollywood, California city officials. West Hollywood is the largest gay city in America. The conference will provide an opportunity for those currently in elected positions and those considering running for office a chance to meet and to learn campaign skills. For more information contact organizers by writing to the West Hollywood Conference, 1742 Massachusetts Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

Race bias suit filed against DC club

WASHINGTON—A southeast Washington discotheque which caters to lesbians is the subject of a \$1 million racial discrimination suit filed by a former disc jockey. The *Washington Blade* said Archie Lucas filed the suit because he was fired after refusing to stop playing music liked by black patrons. According to Lucas, club owners were trying to discourage blacks from frequenting the club. Part owner Allen Carroll said he asked Lucas to "broaden" his play selections after both black and white customers complained about too much rhythm and blues music. In the suit, Lucas claims a waitress at the club approached him and asked him to play a Dolly Parton song to "get these niggers out of here."

Women far behind in pay

NEW YORK—Despite legislation banning sex discrimination in hiring and the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women still lag far behind men in wages according to the *New York Times*. Since 1955, the median earnings for women working fulltime in America has fluctuated between 57 and 64 percent of the median for men. Occupation, according to the story, accounts for most of the gap. "Women's work" pays an average of \$4,000 less per year than "men's work."

Gay singles "coupling" up

LOS ANGELES—A readership poll done by the *Advocate* says gays and lesbians are forming monogamous relationships like never before. According to the survey, the couples are spending disposable income on the home—buying VCRs, home furnishings, and food. Going to bars and movies are no longer priorities, said the study. A spokesperson said gays and lesbians are now more health conscious, and vitamin stores and gyms are popping up around the communities rather than new bars.

Frisco 'straight' parade?

SAN FRANCISCO—A Marin County man thinks it's a great idea to organize a parade for straights, according to the *Bay Area Reporter*. Organizer John Clark calls the event "Great to be Straight." It is reportedly a take-off on gay/lesbian pride parades. Clark said if gays can parade, so can straights. He also wants to hold an Anita Bryant look-a-like contest.

AIDS
World**Doctors meet on AIDS**

VANCOUVER—More than 200 doctors met in August for the third annual meeting of the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights. One entire day of the three-day session was devoted to AIDS, according to *Cruise Magazine*. Doctors also discussed the problems of alcoholism and chemical dependency—which are two to three times more prevalent in the gay and lesbian communities.

Nation

Test debate in Florida

MIAMI—The Dade County Commissioners have given a tentative okay to a law which requires some 80,000 food service workers to carry cards saying that they are disease-free. County health officials, according to the *New York Times*, said such a plan would be costly and inefficient. The County Commissioners said the proposed program is an attempt to stem the spread of AIDS. A public hearing must be held before the ordinance can become law. Until 1974, food service workers in Dade county were issued health cards certifying they were free of tuberculosis and syphilis. The program was abandoned because health officials said it was too inefficient.

Broward County sued

FT. LAUDERDALE—A former budget analyst for Broward County in Florida has filed suit for \$15 million, charging he was fired from his job after revealing he had AIDS. According to the *Weekly News*, the county has a policy on its books that calls for the dismissal of any employee who has, or develops, AIDS. The employee may also be stripped of all

medical benefits. The policy came to light because Medical Examiner Dr. Ronald Wright wants to test a safety plan which he is proposing for the entire nation. However, other county medical examiners are refusing to go along with the test for fear of losing their jobs.

Insurance companies screening applicants

WASHINGTON—Life insurance underwriters are being told to look for signs of herpes, unusual forms of pneumonia, and other illnesses which they think could indicate a person has AIDS, according to a story in the *Seattle Gay News*. "Our immediate concern is that people might load up on insurance if they are told they've got AIDS," said Rob Bier, a spokesperson for the Life Insurance Association of America. Another spokesperson said the insurance industry also wants to use the controversial HTLV-III antibody test as a way to screen people seeking new or renewal health policies.

Nurses refused masks, gloves

SAN FRANCISCO—A labor commission in California has denied a complaint by four nurses that they were denied protective clothing, said the *Bay Area Reporter*. The women all work at San Francisco General and said they feared contracting AIDS. The group wanted to wear masks and gloves while treating patients, but hospital officials said their demand was unreasonable. The labor commission said there was insufficient information to support the complaint.

Maryland hospital AIDS waiver

BALTIMORE—A private nursing home has been given a waiver by the state enabling it to accept persons with AIDS for care and treatment, said a story in the *Washington Blade*. Lorraine Raffel said Seton Hill Manor applied for the waiver because something had to be done to alleviate the suffering of AIDS patients. "Everyone," she said, "should have equal access to health care. . . AIDS patients must not become the lepers of the 1980s."

'Straight Slate' pens**Houston AIDS ordinance**

HOUSTON—A group calling itself the Houston "Straight Slate" candidates has proposed an ordinance they say will put an end to the spread of AIDS. An article in the *Montrose Voice* said the ordinance would prohibit all carriers of the AIDS virus from working in schools and day care centers around children, working as food handlers, and as medical and dental personnel. The group said people already working in these areas would be required to take the HTLV-III antibody test in order to retain their jobs. Under the proposed ordinance, bathhouses and sexually-oriented businesses would be shut down.

NY student still has AIDS

NEW YORK—The Health Department said it is standing by a doctor's diagnosis that a public school pupil has AIDS. According to the *New York Times*, the child's lawyer says the diagnosis was erroneous. A spokesperson for the health department said the doctor's report was done three years ago and still stands. Meanwhile, at a news conference, Mayor

Koch said he is setting up a second panel composed of doctors to determine on a case-by-case basis whether children with AIDS will be allowed to attend class.

8 UN cases of AIDS

NEW YORK—A spokesperson for the United Nations revealed last week there have been eight cases of AIDS among UN staff members in the last four years, and four of the staff members have since died according to the *New York Times*. Chief Medical officer, Dr. Michael Irwin, said no one with the disease is presently working in the building. "As is the case in other large organizations in the city, there is no policy to bar such persons from working if they are physically able to perform their normal duties," said spokesperson Francois Giuliani. The UN issued the statement after rumors began circulating that as many as 40 staff members had contracted the disease.

City firemen posting names

WASHINGTON—Two city firehouses were recently caught posting the names and addresses of persons with AIDS on blackboards where the public can view them, according to a report in the *Washington Blade*. A spokesperson for the fire department said the blackboards are to be used for special information, not for merely listing AIDS patients. Deputy Chief Ray Alfred said other information such as whether or not a person is obese, has meningitis, is deaf, or is blind may also be posted.

AIDS reaches into heartland

OMAHA—The Omaha AIDS Project has begun in Nebraska. The *New Voice* reports the organization was formed to handle the growing awareness of the tragedy of AIDS. A spokesperson said the sole purpose of the group is education. Presently the group is seeking volunteers to work the phones to answer questions and deliver much-needed information. Some volunteers will also be trained to help with in-home care of persons with AIDS.

Eddie Murphy apologizes

OMAHA—Comedian Eddie Murphy is apparently trying to make up to the gay and lesbian community nationwide. According to *Parade*, Murphy apologized for his joke about a straight girl who passes AIDS by kissing gays on the lips. The tasteless joke gave rise to the "Eddie Murphy Disease Foundation," dedicated to fighting his anti-gay sentiment.

Men's Night Out
programs announced

A series of workshops sponsored by the Men's Network of Chicago will run the second Wednesday of each month, starting with yesterday's (Wednesday, Sept. 11) workshop on exploring men's work experiences. The programs will start at 7:30 p.m. at the Wellington Avenue Church, 615 W. Wellington Ave.

The next workshop, Oct. 9, will be "Stress for Life, a Man's Perspective." The program will examine the nature of stress and present a method of using it to a person's advantage.

The Nov. 9 program is on building male friendships, overcoming barriers such as fear of intimacy, competition, commitment and homophobia. December's workshop will "explore ways for men to interact in a new and non-competitive way with friends and colleagues" in a "New Mens Celebration of the Holidays."

Scheduled 1986 workshops include: Jan. 9, "A New Look at Fathering"; Feb. 12, "Men and Violence"; and March 12, "Black Men and the Men's Movement."

There is a \$8 charge for each workshop, \$5 for Men's Network members. All workshops are open to both men and women, unless otherwise noted. Call 561-8814 or write P.O. Box 11076, Chicago, Ill. 60611, for information.

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Grant Ford's Silver
Jubilee Sept. 28

Holy Covenant Metropolitan Community Church presents Grant Ford's Silver Jubilee Saturday, Sept. 28, with dinner and dancing. The event will be at the William Tell Inn on Joliet Road in Countryside, cash bar starting at 6 p.m., dinner at 7:30.

Tickets are \$25 each. For information or to RSVP, call 579-1299.

NY opera benefit

Entertainment unions and management trade groups are sponsoring a Nov. 3 benefit show at the Metropolitan Opera in New York to raise funds for AIDS research.

The show, "The Best of the Best," will have honorary chairs Stephen Sondheim and Lauren Bacall. Sponsoring groups include many local unions in addition to Actor's Equity, Dramatists Guild, and others, according to *Variety*.

NOW

Continued from page 11

Every staff member got a letter from Smeal and Lois Reckett in August, Riddiough said. Lois Reckett, who had been a Goldsmith supporter up until the last minute at the convention, had been reelected as vice president-executive.

The letters told staff members they would be terminated with no severance pay, and recommended they use up their vacation time before the end of the month, Riddiough said. The notices even went to the staff of Cathy Webb, a Goldsmith supporter who had been reelected as secretary.

This was more than an act of "sore winners," Riddiough said. "It makes me very concerned for the way Smeal intends to run the organization." She worried that Smeal had set up an "antagonistic rather than conciliatory situation," and this would be "bad to participation at all levels."

Prior was also concerned that openness to the grassroots and a conciliatory attitude might be missing from Smeal's administration. Attitudes may be even more important than action plans, she said.

"I think national actions and policies affect local chapters to the extent of finances and recruitment," Prior said.

But she added that "local chapters sink or swim on the actions of their own members."

Laura Kaufman, program coordinator for Chicago NOW, said the change in national leadership will not change the local programs and local priorities of the chapter.

"We still continue to do our own programs," she said, "based on what is going on in the local chapter. NOW works on different levels. Each level has its own leadership."

Chicago NOW, one of the biggest, oldest, and best-funded local chapters, has strong, "very qualified and wonderful people" leading it, Kaufman said. Local and state legislation for lesbian and gay rights would continue to be priorities for Chicago NOW, she said, despite no recent legislative victories.

"Legislation is the kind of thing that develops over time. You continue to build up support for it. You have to just keep going," Kaufman said.

Riddiough, who said she may return to her home town of Chicago after she is through with some business in Washington, hopes the national level not only

keeps going with lesbian rights work but expands into issues such as AIDS and gay parents. She said she's "not holding my breath." It will be insistence on the part of local chapters, Riddiough said, that will make the national level keep up the action.

Abuse

Continued from page 11

Several key terms are used in AA. "Working a program" means going through the 12-step AA process. But 12 steps does not mean there is a set period of time to be in AA. Rather, AA is a lifetime of commitment. Each of the 12 steps are worked over and over in an effort to remain sober.

For example, one step refers to "turning it over." This turning over means if you've lost your car keys, the frustration and anger—rather than turning into a need for a drink—are turned over to the "higher power"—as each person understands that higher power.

"It is a simple program, but there is very much to learn. It is tough—and difficult to keep up with," one woman said.

In addition, the realization that alcoholism is a disease has not only helped AA members. It has also helped non-alcoholics discover that being alcoholic is not a choice, not something someone knowingly and willfully attempts to be.

The woman in AA six years said because alcoholism is a disease and can't be shed, her time in the program could easily translate into six days.

"Each day I could go back."

Gay/lesbian meetings

There are now two weekly lesbian meetings at the New Town Alano Club, a place for recovering gay and lesbian alcoholics. The women enjoy being supported in a gay/lesbian environment, where sexuality is periphery rather than central.

"I prefer gay meetings," said one older lesbian. "I was drinking more and going to the bars more after I came out as a lesbian. I associate my being gay with alcoholism."

"I never thought I drank enough to be in AA, though. Drinking was my outlet for reality. The program is a different—not new—way of life. I'm learning about myself. There's a lot of acceptance of who I am."

One woman, apprehensive about being interviewed, stressed the positive aspect of AA. She defined an alcoholic as any person when alcohol interferes with any part of their life.

"I was straight, in my late 40s, coming out and with kids," she recalls. "I was getting clear of my own feelings, to talk about it honestly with myself. I had never thought a lesbian thought in my life." Eventually, she pulled together and now finds great strength from women in recovery with her.

One woman who raised a family and lived a "straight life," said her alcoholism has nothing to do with her being gay, but everything to do with the disease of alcoholism. She said a dependency syndrome led to relationships where self-esteem was based on the other person. Since joining AA, she has discovered herself and her strengths.

In comparing the gay/lesbian to only lesbian meetings, she said, "I feel most at home in women's meetings."

Having the gay meetings, said a woman in her 20s, means feeling more comfortable, not working on sexuality but rather on "the things that get me drunk."

Originally, there were discussions within the group as to whether or not to list the group as "lesbian." Eventually, they did use the name, and now they're two lesbian AA groups at the New Town Alano Club.

Moving forward

While some people lose a great deal—emotionally, physically, materially—before seeking help, others are more fortunate. Relationships often are sacrificed for alcohol, and some of the lesbian AA members recounted stories of relationship problems triggered by alcohol or substance abuse.

"Some of us had to suffer a lot more. I suffer over and over again," one woman said.

Some group members go to bars and sometimes are treated as a "fashionable trend" one woman said.

"If we're all happy and positive when we go into the bars, they don't think we are alcoholic," one woman said. "That's why all my close friends are in the program—my lover's in the program."

In many cases, once a person joins AA, they have to let go of old friends, especially if those friends are not supportive of the sobriety.

One of the chief concerns of AA is remaining anonymous. With the close-knit nature of the lesbian and gay community, it is often difficult to maintain this anonymity.

In order to remain sober, the woman in her 30s said, a person must change their behavior.

"My first two years, I thought if I just removed the alcohol and drugs, it would be okay. I was still acting the same way. Doing the same behaviors," she said. "There is a difference between being dry and being sober."

Another woman added: "Alcohol is the

symptom, not the disease. Some have and some don't."

Alternatives

While the focus on bars in the gay and lesbian communities is not necessarily viewed as a cause of alcoholism or substance abuse, the high availability of drugs and alcohol don't make it easy for someone trying to avoid them.

Some of the women, as noted before, do go to bars. Others avoid them and turn to the few alternative spaces available—such as Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, Kinheart, sports programs through the Metropolitan Sports Association, and private parties.

Lifetime commitment

Because AA is a lifetime commitment, it many times can seem overwhelming. The women said they do the program day by day, not looking at the long-range.

"You can sit in your own shit," a former substance abuser said. "It's easy because discomfort is all we ever know. So we're used to it. I have to fight to be okay. work on it one day at a time. You can bullshit yourself—and not get better."

"We are all rebels. We all have a choice not to drink. We always put sobriety and the program first," she said.

Getting an alcoholic friend to join AA is something that has frustrated many of the women. But as with all AA members pushing the program is not recommended.

"Each individual makes their own decision. You can't save somebody—or you'll go down with them. I want everyone to be saved, but you can't do it, a younger woman said.

But that commitment to the program, to the lesbian group, has been rewarding for those who stay.

"I never felt so much love in my whole life," a woman said.

"We welcome all newcomers. We have a support system for people to call. But all we can do is be available. We welcome them in. When they're sick and tired of being sick and tired, they'll know the time—and they're welcome."

"We'll give them so much love. We don't care, as long as they're here that day. It is the quality not the quantity of sobriety that counts," she said.

Not every meeting runs smoothly, but one woman said at each meeting, non-judgmental compassion is there for other women.

To be in AA, the desire to stop drinking is the only requirement. Some women have been drunk during a meeting. "We're sick, but we're working on it," a woman said.

The bottom line for many of those who stick to AA, despite how tough it may be, one woman said, is the program is free and it works.

Dykes to Watch Out For

presents
Politi-Cola
OR,
THE BIRTH OF AN ACTIVIST

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IRENE, A COCA-COLA AND PROUD OF IT, HASN'T BEEN HERSELF SINCE THE UNWELCOME ADVENT OF 'NEW COKE'.

A CURIOUS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE UNNERVES HER STILL FURTHER.

Interestingly, the Coca-Cola Company's 'New Coke' pitch was developed by the same strategists who masterminded both the Reagan and Hart presidential campaigns last year.

No!...No!
SHE BEGINS TO BE PLAGUED BY STRANGE, VISIONARY DREAMS...

WHATEVER ITS OUTCOME, THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL BE A HISTORIC ONE OWING TO AMERICA'S RECENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MODERN TWO-COLA POLITICAL SYSTEM...

WE'RE HERE AT THE PEPSI PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION WHERE THE PEPSI CANDIDATE, GERALDINE FERRARO, IS ABOUT TO SPEAK...

THE COKE PARTY IS LIVING IN THE PAST! PEPSI IS THE HOPE OF AMERICA'S FUTURE!

IRENE WAKENS NIGHTLY IN A COLD SWEAT, SCREAMING WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?!!

HER THERAPIST IS NOT MUCH HELP.

YOU'RE GETTING TOO MUCH CAFFEINE.

THE DREAMS GROW MORE FRIGHTENING!

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH ALL THE OLD COKE?

SELL IT AS MISSILE FUEL!

MARKET IT IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES AS INFANT FORMULA!

OR INSECTICIDE!

OR BIRTH CONTROL!

IRENE DECIDES TO GO COLD TURKEY.

THEN, CAFFEINE-FREE, SHE HITS THE STREETS TO JOIN THE FIGHT FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

SODA'S A PATRIARCHAL PLOT! WHY DO YA THINK THEY CALL IT POP?!

Azzano/Richards: Growing strong with RSVP

By Tracy Baim

On Broadway just north of Belmont, RSVP is at home among several other gay-owned businesses and located in an area populated by many gay men and lesbians. While this does not make RSVP a gay restaurant, about 60 percent of the customers are gay.

"Mary [Azzano] and I knew each other for awhile, and we both wanted a business. At first we thought of a pub—but there were too many bars. Then we thought of a gourmet deli, and we worked from there," RSVP co-owner Karen Richards said.

That working has involved easily 70 hours a week each since the restaurant's February, 1984 opening at 3324 N. Broadway.

Karen is the food expert while Mary brings an expertise to the beverage department.

RSVP's intent, Karen explained, was to offer affordable prices on French cuisine or other items normally priced high. "Many people have expensive appetites and live beyond their means. We create an affordable price," she said.

The atmosphere in RSVP is very casual, something the clientele appreciate.

Karen has long ties with the Chicago lesbian community, going back to her role in the formation of Women In Crisis Can Act (WICCA), and to cooking for benefits for numerous groups.

At present, because of the hours each woman puts in at RSVP, their time to attend community functions is limited. However, RSVP has a solid record of donating money and service to many gay and lesbian groups, as well as other groups.

Groups receiving donations (in the form of ads in programs, for example) include Artemis Singers, Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, Frontrunners, and many AIDS projects. Mary is also one of the founders of the Biscotto-Miller Fund, which was set up to help people in the theater who are diagnosed with AIDS. Mary said she has lost three very good friends to AIDS.

The women emphasize the individual over the group when donating, so they often give to groups directly supporting

persons who have AIDS, rather than those who may take some of the money for administrative costs.

In part because of their own commitment to the community, Mary and Karen have seen the growth of a devoted clientele. Affordable food and a key location—on a strip of many shops—have definitely meant success. They are now hoping to expand their catering and delivery businesses.

Karen and Mary realized the political significance of hiring a balanced staff. They did not want this to be a restaurant where only women would feel welcome (where other similar restaurants have failed in the past), and they also wanted positive interaction among gay men and lesbians, to help in some way unify the two communities.

"It was strategic hiring of a mixed staff—it was a priority," Mary said.

Mary pointed out what she views as a noticeable economic change among many women. She said women seem to be eating out more, enjoying the extra money they may now be making. As a whole, she said, women "are more professional and still totally politically aware."

When visiting gay restaurants in other

cities, Karen noted that for years gays have been making other gays pay enormous amounts, serving frozen food at

expensive prices. RSVP's goal is not to exploit their customers, but to offer the best food and affordable prices.

During September, RSVP showed off both to themselves and their customers how hard work can pay off. Each day of the month, they have offered a different international cuisine. Karen's two months of research into the project paid off, and the staff took the challenge well.

"This is tremendous work," Karen said, "But it is also enjoyable."



Ginne Clemmens, Oct. 18, at Opal Station, bids farewell to Chicago.



Karen



Mary



Sept. 28 at Opal Station: The Transformations.

mountain moving coffeehouse for womyn and children

September 28 - Hunter Davis

A concert of foot-stompin', finger poppin' energetic delight.

October 5 - Haresuite

Return appearance of Ohio based band, now includes a drummer.

October 11 - Friday Night- Paula Walowitz, Sharon Karp & Friends

Hot dyke duo performing original music.

October 12 - The Heart String Band

Three womyn from Madisyn, Wisconsin playing country, blues and bluegrass.

October 19 - Mary Watkins

Recording artist, pianist/composer/arranger performs her blend of gospel, jazz and classical music.

October 26 - Closed

November 2 - Nancy Vogel

Popular guitarist and songwriter promoting her first solo album "Something To Go On."

Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children, 1655 W. School, 769-6899, performances: one show with two sets; 8:30 & 9:45 pm. Doors open at 7:30 pm. Drug & alcohol free. Admission is suggested donation. Front row seats for all events reserved for the hearing impaired and differently abled.

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