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St. Paul repeals gay rights

Eugene Defends Rights May 23

The Briggs Initiative

The Attorney General of California has proposed the following title...

BRIGGS
GETS SIGNERS

Constitution

...and two of King's par... managed fighters in th...
...the FCC gave ABC 30 days...
...for Eugene (C...
...ment, cancer...
...was married by com...
...Tom Burke, a...
...and Vietnam veteran.

Briggs Initiative Qualifies For Nov 7 Ballot

The anti-gay Briggs Initiative has qualified for a place on the November 7 general election ballot and at the same time been challenged in the courts. Secretary of State March Fong Eu announced on May 31 that the measure, sponsored by State Senator John Briggs (Rep.-Fullerton), received the valid signatures of 358,576 voters. It needed 312,404 to qualify.

The measure would create a mechanism for removing gay school workers from public schools in California. In case of firing, the initiative would provide for a two stage hearing, one for written findings and the other for judicial review. Existing law already provides for the firing of teachers who engage in behavior deemed unfit for the classroom and provides a procedure for carrying out the dismissal. If passed by the voters, the Briggs initiative would empower school boards to search out, identify and dismiss any employee "advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting . . . private or public homosexual activity." It would also prohibit school boards from hiring openly gay school workers.

In effect, the measure would require discrimination against openly gay school workers or against any school workers who exercise their right of free speech in defense of

gay people.

At the same time that the initiative qualified, a series of law suits were filed with the California Supreme Court seeking to prevent it from appearing on the November ballot.

One suit against certification of the initiative was filed by the California Federation of Teachers, gay teachers organizations and several individuals, both heterosexual and homosexual. Another suit was filed by the Metropolitan Community Church whose membership rolls include a high percentage of gay people.

The American Civil Liberties Union supported the groups by filing its own friend-of-the-court brief.

The California Federation of Teachers lawsuit asks the court to rule the initiative unconstitutional on grounds it "singles out homosexuals for unfitness hearings and invites a campaign of harassment against them."

David M. Fishlow, executive director of the ACLU in San Francisco, said at a press conference "This is not a gay lawsuit in behalf of gay teachers."

The initiative, he claimed, represents a "threat to all school teachers" who could be labeled as homosexuals and subjected to a "faulty due process system." —UPI

Local Citizens Against Briggs Organize to Fight Initiative

About 30 people met at the California Teachers Association Headquarters May 23 to organize a committee to fight the Briggs Initiative. This Proposition, to be voted on in November by Californians, is aimed at removing anyone working in the public school system who is openly gay or who supports or condones gay lifestyles.

At this meeting a number of working committees were formed and have already began to function. The committees already working are the Speakers Bureau, Door to Door Campaign, Liaison Committee, Fundraising Committee, Literature Committee and a Steering Committee consisting of a least one member of each other committee. Additional committees will be forming at the next general meeting. We need all the help we can get. We are particularly anticipating a strong active role by Sonoma County women.

With the passage of anti-gay and the removal of pro-gay laws becoming a common occurrence across the country, it is more important than ever that we actively stand and turn this trend around in November. To do this we will need the concerted energy of every progressive thinking person in this state.

We need YOU to participate in this battle, men and women, gay or not, in the closet or out. If they

can come after one group today they can come after another tomorrow.

Get involved!

The next meeting of the Sonoma County Citizens Against Proposition _____ (we're waiting for a number from the Attorney General) will be:

General Meeting

California Teachers Association Headquarters

2490 Guerneville Rd. (Near Fulton Rd.)

Santa Rosa

Tuesday, June 13 at 7:30 PM

San Diego Gay Sues: Church Tax Status

San Diego, CA—Jeffrey Vowles, a 42-year-old gay man, has filed suit in federal court challenging the tax exempt status of religious organizations. Vowles believes that laws regulating sexual activity represent a fostering of religion by the State in violation of the Constitution and are a "continuous attempt to influence legislation by Judaic and Christian religious organizations." The suit seeks to have certain laws regulating sexual conduct ruled invalid on the basis of violation of basic civil rights. —GCN

No Rights For Gays

Not since 1967, when it ruled that homosexual aliens could be deported as "persons afflicted with a psychopathic personality," has the U.S. Supreme Court considered a case considering homosexual rights.

Last week the justices declined once more, refusing to review a decision upholding the constitutionality of a North Carolina law prohibiting homosexual acts between consenting adults—thus, in effect, leaving laws on homosexual behavior up to the individual 50 states.

Lawyers for the defendant in the case, convicted in North Carolina of an "abominable and detestable crime against nature," had argued the state prohibition was overly vague and a denial of the defendant's rights to equal protection: Federal courts ruled against him, whereupon civil liberties lawyers urged the Supreme Court to use the case to study homosexual rights.

But only Justices William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall agreed to accept the North Carolina case for a hearing, whereas court procedure requires four assenting votes before a case is accepted. —S.F. Chronicle

Attorney General to Investigate Briggs

Sacramento (UPI)—The state attorney general's office will investigate whether Republican Sen. John Briggs violated any laws by borrowing money for his unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign from his two ballot initiative campaigns.

John Gordner, a deputy attorney general who specializes in election laws, said in an interview that district attorneys in Contra Costa, San Diego and Santa Barbara counties requested for the investigation.

Campaign spending reports showed that as of April 23, Briggs had borrowed \$317,956 from the California Defend Our Children and \$63,250 from Citizens for an Effective Death Penalty. Some of the money had been paid back, however.

"There is some question whether that is an appropriate use of the money," Gordner said.

He said state law restricts use of money donated to initiative drives. The focus of the investigation would be to find out if loaning such money to another campaign violated any of those restrictions.

Briggs, who last week dropped out of the contest for the Republican nomination for governor, has submitted petitions to place initiatives on the November ballot that would ban avowed homosexual teachers from the classroom and increase the types of murder punishable by the death penalty.

Wife Rape Same As Littering Says Committee

An all male committee in the California state legislature has decided it is not a felony offense for a man to rape his wife. Under present law, wife rape, like littering, is a misdemeanor offense, punishable by a maximum fine of \$500 and a possible short prison term. The State Assembly's Criminal Justice Committee, in deciding against more severe punishment for wife rape, reasoned that passing the proposed law would mean a man convicted of raping his wife would be treated as a sex offender for the rest of his life. The committee's chairperson explained that giving a wife the legal right to prosecute her husband for rape would intensify family battles.

—Off Our Backs via BP



Lesbian Couples Sought In Study

Seattle, WA—Lesbian couples are being sought to participate in a national study of what makes relationships between people work and what effect, in particular, the problems of being lesbian have on how long the relationship lasts. The information will be used to better understand the issues of intimacy in general, and to share how other couples resolve problems on their relationships.

Drs. Pepper Schwartz and Philip Blumstein of the University of Washington, who are conducting the study, are presently seeking couples to complete confidential questionnaires. A smaller number will be interviewed later. Dr. Schwartz has testified nationally on behalf of lesbian mothers and gay foster parents. Blumstein and Schwartz are both members of the National Gay Task Force and have been active in gay civil rights in Washington.

For purposes of the study they are looking for couples who are living together. Those who are interested can write Schwartz and Blumstein c/o Department of Sociology DK-40, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98105.

—GCN

Staff Box

The NEWS is published monthly by the Sonoma County Lesbian and Gay Alliance, a personal support, information and community action group of gay people.

This issue was assembled by Larry Berner, Deborah Kelley, Sandy Lowe, Pat McCloskey, and Robert (Melvin) Muller.

Masthead designed by Pat Urquhart

Denver Gays Protest Murder

Denver, Colorado—Over 200 lesbians, transsexuals and gay men marched through downtown Denver on April 2. The protest was sparked by the police killing—the second in less than 9 months—of a transsexual. Tony "Irene" DeSoto was shot through the heart by a plainclothes police officer on March 30 while "resisting arrest." On July 14, 1977 Eugene "Tracy" Levy, a Black transsexual, was killed by another Vice Squad officer.

Speakers from the Transsexual/Lesbian/Gay Defense Committee, organizers of the march, protested the "racist, sexist and homophobic attacks" and called for an investigation. "If the police can kill one of us without active resistance and self-defense from the community, they can kill any of us," said a spokesperson. —BP

Gay Health Workers Organize for LA

Washington, D.C.—The steering committee of the Gay Public Health Workers Caucus of the American Public Health Association met here recently to plan activities for the coming year. The caucus will staff an exhibition booth, maintain a hospitality suite and sponsor the presentation of scientific papers related to health needs of lesbians and gay men at this year's APHA convention. The convention is scheduled to be held in Los Angeles, October 15 to 19.

The Gay Public Health Workers Caucus is a group of health workers whose goals are to improve the health care received by gay men and lesbians, protect the civil and human rights of gay health workers and to "help eradicate homophobia and sexism from U.S. society."

For further information or to join the Caucus, write to Walter Lear, M.D., GPHWC, 206 W. 35th St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. —GCN

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British Gays Join Anti-Nazi League

The campaign for Homosexual Equality, Britain's largest gay group, has joined the Anti-Nazi League, in line with a vote taken at its conference last year in Nottingham.

The League is organizing a country-wide campaign to oppose the National Front in the next elections. The National Front is Britain's leading far-right organization. The Front's newspaper SPEARHEAD is quoted as saying that homosexuals will be exterminated in gas chambers if the party comes to power. —BP

Florida Oranges Cause Cancer

If you've joined the boycott of Florida orange products, you've made a healthy move. It turns out that Florida oranges are dyed with Citrus Red 2, a known carcinogen, while California oranges are not. —Lesbian Connection

Spock Says Gay Isn't Infectious

Wichita, Kansas—...Flash! Micron-sized particles of homosexuality have been found NOT to be present in classroom situations, according to Dr. Spock, the child-rearing mentor of millions of postwar parents. "I am here to teach parents", Spock states, "that children don't turn gay by sitting in a room with a homosexual lawyer, doctor or teacher. Sitting in the same room with a gay teacher will not make anyone a homosexual." Spock urged those who voted either to pass or repeal gay rights ordinances to bear in mind that "homosexuals are not brought up by homosexuals." Parents are the chief role models for their children and even they have little control over their child's sexual preference. —SEN

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Advocate's Closet Strategy Assailed

by Larry Berner

In the June 4, 1978, issue of the Advocate, publisher David Goodstein wrote an article outlining his plan for running the campaign against the Briggs Initiative. He also trashed several gay activists (including Sonoma County resident, Judy Free-spirit--Welcome to Sonoma County, Judy!) for their refusal to join him in his campaign. He sums up his article by outlining the wins we might get out of this campaign:

"1) We have a real opportunity to communicate the truth about our being human, responsible adults seeking simple basic rights to work, live and be happy, nothing more and nothing less. Thereby the majority of gay people, who still are closeted after all, could be made prouder of themselves.

"2) We can show the American people that the real underdogs in the struggle are gay people, not Baptist bigots and their lapsed Catholic allies.

"3) We can allow our enemies to truly show who they are: right-wing extremists led by a man who is terrified by his own effeminacy, small stature, and sexual insecurities."

The first thing I think we should be very careful about is making bitchy and scurrilous attacks upon our enemies as Mr. Goodstein did in his characterization of Sen. Briggs as being "terrified by his own effeminacy, small stature, and sexual insecurities". I don't know how well Mr. Goodstein knows Sen. Briggs; but, I seriously doubt that the relationship has been sufficient for him to make such a diagnosis of the Senator's psycho-sexual condition. But, on the other hand, perhaps Mr. Goodstein learned how to do that from Werner Erhart. (Bitchy remarks about allies are permissible!)

More importantly, Mr. Goodstein proposes that Gay people make those "wins" by doing absolutely nothing during the campaign. He states:

"In some campaigns, the conduct of



gay extremists might not matter. The poll (commissioned by the Concerned Voters of California, CVC an organization which included David Goodstein on its steering committee) clearly indicates that in the one ahead almost all gay people could help best by maintaining very low profiles. De-structively, we can do a lot to assist John Briggs by being visible and in any way stereotypical. I know that sounds awful; this is an awful situation. And among the really terrible decisions that must be made is how visible should gay people be in the campaign.

"Spokespeople for our side, according to what CVC learned, ideally should be non-gay mothers, police officers, and clergy. Rather than speaking for us, they should speak for teachers. The issue that they would address is not what we do in bed, or how we live our lives, but the right to privacy and free speech of teachers."

So, this is how we convey the truth about who and what we are? Sure, it is very important that all our non-gay friends speak out for us; but, can they "communicate the truth about our being human, responsible adults" while we hide in the closet stuffing envelopes? the truth about us IS US. People will be educated about us only when they hear from and see us as members of their community. To many people, we are unseen, wierd creatures who commit unspeakable acts with each other and lure young children into our clutches. The only way to combat this ignorance is for us to be visible as their

friends, neighbors and working associates. We can speak about our love for each other and our lives with each other. And, we can show our respect for the rights of all children to choose their adult roles free of intimidation and assault. We have no need to be ashamed of ourselves, even though Mr. Goodstein finds us too outrageous and disgusting to be viewed by the voting public.

As far as directing the campaign, the article states: "People with experience in ballot initiative elections maintain that one experienced campaign professional should call the shots. Our radical activists believe they themselves should. This impasse is nothing new in the gay political experience. It has not been resolved." Is there a campaign professional experienced in a campaign such as the Briggs Initiative? Those who "called the shots" in Dade County, St. Paul and Wichita don't seem to have made much impact. Do you know of any individual other than yourself whom you would trust to "call the shots"? This campaign can and must be run by the collective decisions of all interested Gay people. We in Sonoma County can and will decide how to approach the local voters. Even though this initiative is aimed specifically at Gay schoolworkers, it is clearly an attack on all Gay people and all of us have a stake in its outcome.

Many people in California, such as those interviewed by the CVC poll don't want to have to think about us or deal with us in any way. Well, they don't have the luxury of that choice anymore--the Briggs Initiative has intruded upon their choice of pretending we don't exist. The people of California must not be allowed to vote to affirm this attack on us unless they know who we are. This can happen through the highly visible, personal contact, grassroots campaign planned in Sonoma County, complemented by a professionally run media campaign.

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mandala 620 fifth St. Santa Rosa 527-7777 NATURAL FOODS Cafe LIVE MUSIC NIGHTLY 7:00 - 9:30

Eugene Defeat Questions Tactics

The residents of Eugene, Oregon voted on May 23 nearly 2 to 1 to repeal an amendment to a city ordinance barring discrimination against gay people in housing, jobs, and public accommodations. The final tally indicated that 22,898 voted in favor of the repeal to 13,427 against.

Both the gay rights organization and the group in favor of repeal had predicted a much closer vote. Eugene, the home of the University of Oregon, has a strong liberal reputation and a history of progressive legislation. The successful repeal follows the defeat of similar gay rights laws in Dade County, Florida, St. Paul, Minn., and Wichita, Kan.

After the vote many gay rights leaders are reassessing the effectiveness of their low-key campaign strategy.

"Maybe we were just too low keyed," said Bruce Wismer, 27, who tends bar at one of Eugene's two gay bars. "We ran a political campaign instead of an educational one and obviously people here still need a lot of education about gays."

"Our leaflets had a lot of small print and many people didn't take the time to read them. Their leaflets (the repeal campaign's) said in big letters: 'You can read this in 10 minutes.' Their radio ads said: 'Vote, if not for yourself, for your children.'"

VOICE is the organization that campaigned for repeal of the amendment. It urged voters to reject it on the grounds that there was little evidence of discrimination against homosexuals and the law would grant them special privilege. Many liberal voters apparently were convinced by this argument, believing the law was unnecessary and would simply add to bureaucracy.

"Maybe we were just too low-keyed"

Although gay rights activists agree that they'll continue to press for anti-discrimination laws, they haven't reached a consensus on their strategy. The differences between the gay men's and the lesbian communities represents one identifiable problem. In Eugene, a lesbian community has been flourishing while most gay men are still in the closet.

Lesbians have organized three collectives that run profitable businesses: a restaurant called Gertrude's Cafe, a trucking firm and a bookstore. The businesses employ gay women and serve both a homosexual and heterosexual clientele.

While a man in drag is a rare sight, it is not unusual to meet women with shaved heads and wearing men's clothing. The lesbian community has strong ties to heterosexual feminist organizations and most lesbians agree that their community is not likely to

be affected by repeal of the amendment.

In contrast, there is little public evidence of a gay men's community. Gay men here rarely show affection in public. There are only two bars in town where gay men congregate and many homosexuals even avoid them for fear of being discovered or harassed.

"People need a lot of education about gays"

Although the gay rights campaign has brought more gay men out into the open, the repeal of the amendment might drive most back to anonymity.

"Gay men's consciousness doesn't exist here," said Bruce Wismer. "Gay women here have traditionally been more supportive of one another than gay men have. The women's community is older and better established, and the women are always helping one another out."

Lucas Wilkham, 26, an unemployed gay teacher who led the gay rights campaign, said he intended to leave Eugene following the vote primarily because of the restrictions on gay men's lifestyle in Eugene.

"A gay man in Eugene has to look like every other man," says Wilkham, who came to Eugene from New York eight years ago to attend the University of Oregon. "It's partly self-pressure because gay men in Eugene aren't attracted by men who look like sissies. And there isn't any place to meet men if you're not into the bar scene and I'm not."

Wilkham attributes the differences between the gay men's and women's communities to the support lesbians have received from feminist groups and the lack of gay men's businesses where male homosexuals can find work and support.

"Rednecks are also more likely to harass men than women," he said. Before Eugene gays could organize to fight repeal of the amendment, he said, they first had to settle differences of style and philosophy among themselves.

Gay women wanted to inject feminist issues in the campaign while gay men wanted to avoid them. The more radical elements of the community wanted to make the campaign a platform of discussion for gay custody rights and economic issues, whereas the moderates lobbied to limit discussion to the amendment.

In the end, the moderates prevailed and Eugene's gay rights campaign was far different from previous ones elsewhere. Instead of focusing on broad human rights issues, the gay rights campaign stressed examples of gay men and women who had lost their jobs and their homes because of their sexuality.

Douglas Huneke, a Presbyterian

minister active in the gay rights campaign, said he and others plan to pursue in the courts individual cases involving discrimination against gays.

"VOICE told us that gays are protected under existing laws," he said. "We should just go to the courts to find out if they're right."

But Lucas Wilkham, a coordinator for the failed campaign, wants to make another attempt at the polls in a year or two and more lobbying in the Legislature and the City Council, which approved the gay rights amendment in November.

However, most gays agree that the campaign unified what had been a loose highly diverse homosexual community.

"It brought us all together," said Wismer. "I've never seen people so friendly with one another before. The women and the men have really cooperated on this."

"Gay men's consciousness doesn't exist here"

Maureen Gieber, a mother of seven who headed the repeal campaign, predicted that the repeal will encourage more cities around the country to fight gay rights ordinances at the polls.

"We've had to fight this three times at the state level, and homosexuals have never proved their case of discrimination," said Geiber, 46, who works as a lobbyist for the Council of Catholic Women, adding, "Right now, I'm exhausted, relieved it's over and hoping the gay thing won't pop again soon."

But if it does, the Kansas-born woman will be ready. She said VOICE will continue as a citizen's group to take stands on other political issues on the future.

—S.F. Chronicle and Examiner

There will be a western music benefit Friday, June 23, 9 PM at Moonrise Cafe, 250 Sebastopol Ave., S.R. to benefit Women In Apprenticeships 1st Conference On Women In the Trades.



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Sacramento Bee Comes Out Against the Briggs Initiative

The following is an editorial reprinted from the Wednesday, May 10, 1978 issue of the Sacramento Bee.

The backlash against equal treatment for homosexuals which began in Miami last year has been spreading rapidly. Three weeks ago, voters in St. Paul, Minn., repealed an equal rights ordinance in that town, and last week Sen. John V. Briggs submitted petitions with enough signatures to qualify his initiative permitting school systems to dismiss avowed homosexuals for the November ballot.

Briggs' initiative is not directed to homosexuals per se, but to people "advocating, encouraging, soliciting or promoting" homosexual conduct in such a way that it is "likely to come to the attention" of other school personnel or students. It is thus directed not at conduct but at words and speech, not at what a person does or says inside the classroom, but at what he or she may say or write outside. In that respect it is similar to the quaint practices of the past under which school systems fired teachers who smoked or kept late hours or, in the case of women, who were known to go out with men.

The voters will have a chance to respond to the Briggs initiative in November. In the meantime, what concerns us are the misunderstandings, the gratuitous violation of rights and, in many instances, the sheer irrelevance or the backlash. We generally judge teachers by what they do in the classroom, not by what they advocate outside; we judge the people who rent housing by what they do to the walls and woodwork, not by their sexual preferences; we judge an employee's competence by his skill and enterprise on the job, not by his politics or his choice of friends.

We don't believe that homosexuals have any more right to advocate homosexuality in the classroom than Democrats have a right to urge the re-election of Jerry Brown in the classroom. But we also believe that, within the limits of legal behavior, what a person says or does outside should be his or her own business. If a teacher who promotes or defends homosexuality outside the classroom can be fired because he may become a pernicious model inside, then there is no end to the views and attitudes which can be similarly censured.

In the case of the schools, there continues to be an unfounded fear that homosexuals are particularly likely to molest or corrupt innocent children. Yet all the studies we've seen indicate that the molesters are as likely to be heterosexuals as homosexuals and that, in any case, women almost never molest anyone. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that children's sexual identity is fairly well established before they reach school age. It's therefore hard for us to comprehend why homosexuals should be regarded as greater threats or as more likely to corrupt children than alcoholics, socialists, Catholics, Republicans, Birchers or vegetarians.

Immoral conduct by teachers in the classroom already constitutes ample ground for dismissal. Clearly people who engage in such conduct should be fired—along with the sadists, the incompetents and the psychological bullies who haven't been singled out for special treatment. But what a person says or does outside should—within the limits of legal conduct—be his own business.

Wichita: A Mandate For Righteousness

Wichita, Kan.—In a resounding "mandate for righteousness," Wichita voters told homosexuals to keep their lifestyle to themselves and repealed a gay rights ordinance by a 5-to-1 margin.

"People are saying loud and clear to the nation that America does not feel that pro-homosexual legislation brought under the civil rights issue is legitimate," said the Rev. Ron Adrian, a Baptist minister who led the group that forced the referendum. "I think God's using this vote to openly rebuke the pro-homosexual forces."

The vote on favor of repeal was 47,246, and 10,005 supported retention of the 7 month-old ordinance, which prohibited discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation because of "sexual or affectional preferences."

The 83-to-17 per cent victory margin came in one of Wichita's largest election turnouts, with 44 percent of the city's 128,888 registered voters casting ballots. Both supporters and opponents of the ordinance had expected repeal but the margin of defeat surprised all.

Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller of the National Gay Task Force in New York said they were shocked the rights of homosexuals had been lost in still another referendum.

"Other minority groups have not been subjected to such tests of their civil rights; indeed, if they had been, they might well have lost too," they said.

Anita Bryant, whose representative called from Texas where she was appearing as an entertainer, said she thanked God and congratulated the citizens of Wichita for "this moral victory."

"It is now obvious that the will of the American people is to return this country to pro-family Bible morality," said Bryant, whose Protect America's Children group donated \$10,000 to the Wichita repeal effort, headed by the Concerned Citizens for Community Standards. —AP

Carter, Bryant Speak At Baptist Convention

Washington, D.C.—President Carter and Anita Bryant will share top billing at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in mid-June.

Carter, a Southern Baptist layman, will deliver the closing address at the convention June 16. Bryant, who has been leading a nationwide crusade against lesbians and gay men, will also address the meeting.

The convention is expected to take up resolutions on homosexuality, abortion, ordaining women and tuition tax credits. —GCN

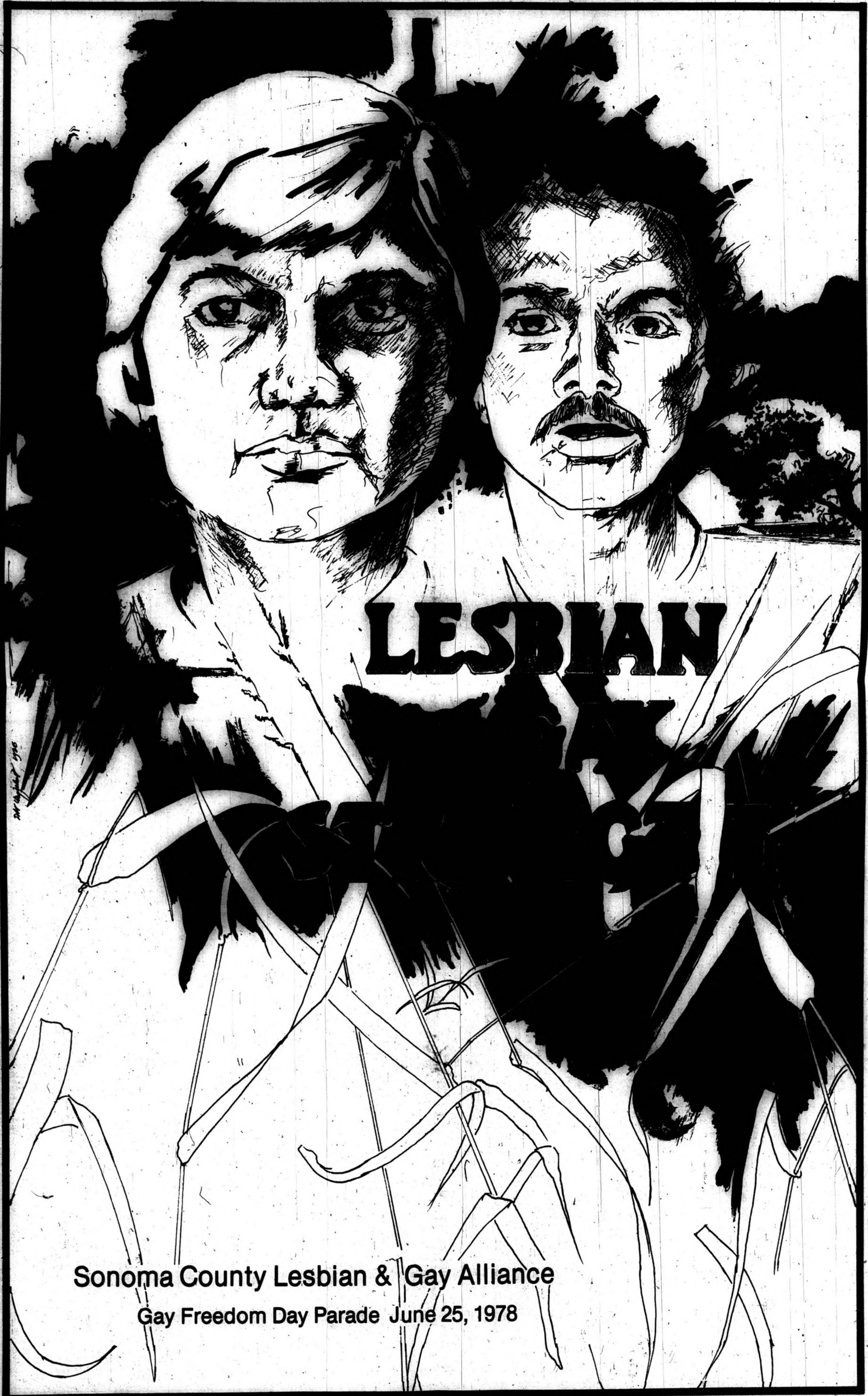
NEWS FLASH!!!

Santa Rosa, California

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"MY DAUGHTER THE FRAMER" located in the Town & Country Shopping Center at 1617 Terrace Way offers a complete workshop to all "do-it-yourselfers" who want to have fun and save \$8 by framing their own pictures. The shop provides all the supplies, tools and equipment that a framer needs as well as free instruction and help every step of the way. Everyone can frame beautifully the first time! Prints, paintings, engravings, photos, posters etc. can be framed easily and fabrics, canvases, needlepoints and batiks can be stretched as well. "MY DAUGHTER THE FRAMER" has a unique 42" x 48" vacuum mounting press that can be used to mount displays photos, posters, maps and cover motherboard windows with a favorite fabric. "MY DAUGHTER THE FRAMER" also provides the finest "CUSTOM FRAMING" at low prices and proudly displays a beautiful gallery of affordable art by talented Bay Area artists. A 10 percent discount is given to artists, students and senior citizens. Shop hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Thursday evenings 'til 9 p.m. For further information please call 542-3696. So...come one and come all so you can say, "I framed it myself!" at "MY DAUGHTER THE FRAMER."





LESBIAN

Sonoma County Lesbian & Gay Alliance

Gay Freedom Day Parade June 25, 1978

Healdsburg Gay Teacher Furor

by Larry Berner

I wrote a couple of articles for the April, 1978, issue of the SONOMA COUNTY LESBIAN AND GAY ALLIANCE NEWS and signed my name to the articles. The publication of those articles has led to my being one of the most "out" Gay people in Sonoma County. The disclosure that I am a Gay teacher, first published in Gaye LeBaron's column on April 26, found its way to the front page of the Press Democrat on May 12 and 14, and the Healdsburg Tribune on May 17.

During the six years I have lived near and taught first and second grade in Healdsburg, I have not consciously tried to hide my living situations, my close relationships with other men or my social and political activities from from my community; however, I was still closeted in that I had never discussed or mentioned my gayness except to a few close friends. Being out has brought forth a most incredible show of support, encouragement and concern from my co-workers, Gay people, a large segment of the Healdsburg community and even from people who don't know me. All this support helped me get through the period of fear, paranoia, general tension and more than a little worry over what the hell I would do for a living if I got fired.

During the first couple of weeks after I was mentioned in the Gaye LeBaron article, I lived through the fear and paranoia that had built up during those years in the closet. Rumors were flying that there was to be a demonstration in front of the school by Briggs supporters (I later found out that the planners decided that they would only look foolish out there picketing), that petitions were circulating demanding my dismissal and that a large group of children were going to be pulled from the school (18 children were withdrawn).

During this time, my supporters also

started stepping forward. The other teachers expressed their personal support and concern and prepared a statement to be read at the School Board meeting. Thirty staff members stood at the May 11, Board meeting while the following statement was read: "We strongly urge the Board to oppose the Briggs Initiative. Section 44837.6 (b) and 44933.5 (c) of the initiative reads as follows... 'public homosexual conduct' means the advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting of private or public homosexual activity. The word 'advocate' in this section is most restrictive to all our civil rights, freedom of speech and free association. By supporting this philosophy, the board supports the restrictions of all citizens' civil rights. In the First Amendment, all of us are guaranteed the right of freedom of speech. We certainly hope that the Board would consider all of the components of the Briggs Initiative, and would find that it is unwilling to support an initiative that goes against the rights of all the citizens as provided by the constitution."

In addition to the teachers, parents of some of my present and former students spoke publicly, wrote notes and came by to personally express their support for my right to continue teaching. The mother of one of my students wrote: I am sickened by the small-mindedness, banner waving like attitudes expressed at last night's Board meeting. It appears that our community, though beautiful in appearance, has an ugly, bigoted, fearful side. "Allow me to say I totally support your human rights to work, live and believe how you want. You are an excellent teacher to my daughter, that is why I chose you. I'm sorry that this is happening to you."

Another wrote: "I was very disturbed to learn that a handful of people are causing you so much trouble and that your job is perhaps threatened because

is one of the most important things we can teach children in our schools and it is the duty of the Board of Directors to practice it and set the example.

It is certain that people who seek to deprive others of their civil rights are setting a dangerous precedent and are threatening the civil liberties of every one of us. Who will be next on the list of those undeserving of civil liberties? I find it deeply disturbing that a few people assume they have the right to decide who is entitled to civil rights and who isn't. I'm sure if we looked closely enough an anyone's life we could find something which could be used to deprive them of their rights. Undoubtedly, the very ones who would deprive Mr. Berner of his rights would be outraged if someone attempted to deny them the right to earn a living in their chosen field because of their religious, sexual, or social practices.

of their actions.

"You have my full support and deepest sympathy. I have written a letter to Mr. Threewit (Principal of Fitch Mountain School) in your support. If there is any way I can help you please let me know. I know Michael loves being in your class and likes you a lot and that makes me happy. My best wishes go with you." The text of her letter to the principal and the School Board is printed in full in the enclosed space.

In spite of all the furor, I find that now I am really in no different position than I was before my gayness became public. All they know about me is that I am Gay. That is not sufficient cause for dismissal. Because they have no knowledge of my engaging in, advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting of private or public homosexual acts, they could not get me even if the Briggs Initiative passes. There is a bit more whispering and pointing at the local produce market and grocery store; but, even there friends and strangers walk up to me and tell me how much they admire what I am doing and that I have their full support. Most of the letters to the Press Democrat and the Healdsburg Tribune have been very supportive. I have gotten practically no negative input--only one straight man has told me that he is pissed about having to deal with this because all his friends know that he is an acquaintance of mine.

Since the "controversy" has settled down for now, I have had time to take stock and I have discovered that my life is really no different than it was before my coming out. Even though my orientation and preference in emotional and sexual relationships is widely known, my more intimate relationships are and shall remain private. This disclosure has freed me from some of the prisons I had created in my own mind; I no longer have to fear the unknown. It feels real good out here, come on out and join me!

I have met and talked with Mr. Berner and I like him. My son, Michael, is very happy in his class and also likes him. Personally, I would rather entrust my child to Mr. Berner's care than to many heterosexual teachers I've encountered. Mr. Berner has my full support and I certainly hope the teachers and the administration will stand behind him.

As for those who are quoting the Bible in this matter, I would remind them that the New Testament was given to replace the Old so that a more enlightened and compassionate law would replace a simpler and more primitive law. The greatest law is to love God above all else. The second greatest is Love thy neighbor as thyself. All other laws follow from these two.

I suggest these people read their Bibles more closely so they can discover and keep within them it's true spirit and meaning.

To: Mr. Threewit
The Board of Directors
Fitch Mountain School

I sincerely hope that you and the Board of Directors will not be pressured into firing a capable teacher because of a handful of people who have taken it upon themselves to sit in judgment on another human being in matters which are really none of their business.

Civil rights are guaranteed every person living in this country. Women, blacks and other minorities have had to fight for theirs and now it seems homosexuals are having to fight to keep theirs. I think it is time people stopped finding new groups to discriminate against and realized that every human being has the right to enjoy the civil liberties guaranteed by our constitution. I would remind you of the plaque on the wall of one of the buildings in your school dedicating it to Truth and Tolerance. Tolerance

Conference Efforts Renewed

by Sandy Lowe

The Lesbian and Gay Experience, a conference planned for May 31 by more than forty Sonoma County men and women, was canceled almost two weeks before its scheduled presentation by the sponsor of the event, the Academy for the Helping Professions. The excuse given for this unexpected move was that fewer than 20 people had responded to the Academy flyer. (An Academy workshop on Dreams, planned for the same month, drew 42 registrants.) The gay men and women who had worked together for almost two months preparing the Conference received the news of its cancellation with a mixture of anger and disappointment. At a subsequent meeting of the Conference group it was decided to file a letter of protest with the Academy and to go on with the Conference, presenting it under the auspices of the Lesbian and Gay Alliance. It will take place as a two-evening event on Wednesday and Thursday June 28 and 29 at the California Teachers Association Building, 2490 Guerneville Rd. at 7PM.

The cancellation of the Conference came as a sudden and arbitrary decision. No prior indication had ever been made that the Conference might be canceled, and no attempt has since been made to determine the cause of the poor registration.

Members of the Lesbian and Gay Alliance were in frequent contact with Dr. Bob Williams of Mental Health Services who served as liaison for the Academy. At first we were led to believe that 120 professional people might attend the Conference. The prospect of sharing our experiences and concerns with these people fired our enthusiasm and soon dozens of gay people were at work in a giant volunteer effort. The Alliance, in consultation with Dr. Williams was given complete freedom to determine the structure and content of the presentations. The Academy, for its part, was to advertise the Conference, book the facilities and pay the Alliance \$250 for its services.

As plans for the Conference progressed, however, we grew concerned that the publicity for it seemed paltry. It lacked definition and clarity and, considering the delicate nature of the subject and the traditional phobias of non-gays, it did nothing to advance the unique aspects of this presentation or to assure registrants of the care and concern that were going into its preparations.

At the beginning of May we expressed our concern that publicity for the event was inadequate. We offered a second flyer, more descriptive and informative than the first. We suggested and offered a detailed press release. We added names to their mailing list, and finally we sought permission to call the agencies on their list to solicit participation in the conference on a more personal basis. None of these offers



CONFERENCE PLANNING GROUP MEETINGS -- Thursdays at 7 PM

June 8 - Benton Street Clubhouse
(Benton and North Streets, S.R.)
June 15 - GTA Building, 2490
Guerneville Road, S.R.
June 22 - GTA Building

was accepted. Finally, with almost a week to go before the end of registration, we were abruptly informed that the Conference was canceled. The Alliance received no fee.

The ineptitude and timidity of the Academy in facilitating this Conference is matched only by the historic disregard and mistreatment of gay people at the hands of the helping professions. Still, we are convinced that there are many professionals who are sincerely concerned for past atrocities; who want to learn; who do not want to perpetuate professional mistreatment, and who would like to become positively involved in gay people's struggle for a freer life. The Academy did little to make our service available to them. They are the losers.

The fact is that the gay people who have worked to formulate the Conference have grown stronger by working together during a period of increasing political persecution. Since we started working together, circumstances have changed rapidly. The rise of the anti-gay backlash and the advent of the Briggs Initiative in particular have sharpened our priorities. At this point it seems urgent to educate our friends in the general community about the realities

of our lives.

Consequently, the Alliance Conference has decided to "go public". We have rescheduled the Conference to make it available to a broader audience than the Academy would have allowed. Members of the helping professions will once again be invited along with the general public and members of other concerned organizations including the California Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Commission on the Status of Women and many more. Gay people in and out of the closet, parents and children of gays, and all our friends in the general community will be urged to attend.

The purpose of the Conference will also be broadened. We will still be concerned "to speak out of our own experiences and needs to professional people who historically have neither understood nor been sympathetic to our existence but who often exercise great power over our lives." We will also be interested in talking with our non-gay friends who are outraged by the historic and contemporary oppression of gay people and who are genuinely concerned for the lives of gay people but who do not know how to speak on our behalf.

The Conference will be an exercise in the public discussion of the Lesbian and Gay Experience. The Conference will take place on two evenings, Wednesday and Thursday June 28 and 29 at 7PM at the California Teachers Association Building, 2490 Guerneville Road. Presentations and a variety of workshops will take place each evening. People will be invited to attend one or both presentations. Child care will be provided. There will be a suggested donation of \$2. No one will be turned away. For more information call 838-4237.

Men's Conference Speaker Protests College Spies

Dr. Roy Mikalson
President
Santa Rosa Junior College
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Dear Dr. Mikalson:

A member of our organization, Mr. Richard Snowdon, was invited to your campus to present a workshop on men's issues and male violence at the S.R.J.C. Men's Conference on Wednesday, May 17. During the course of the day he found that representatives of the administration were "observing" only in the workshops oriented around gay issues. Additionally we were informed that the word "gay" was not allowed to be used on the conference poster to identify a gay therapist who was one of the keynote speakers, and that crucial publicity was considerably delayed due to this.

When we heard what had happened we decided that we would all join Mr. Snowdon in protesting your administration's policy of discrimination, intimidation, and violation of basic human rights. Discriminating against one group, picking them out as suspect, policing their workshops exclusively, filing official reports, all adds up to an attempt at intimidation, an attempt to make it harder for all workshop participants to speak freely. This is in itself a violation of basic human rights and additionally lays the foundation for increasingly serious denials of rights. We were encouraged by the fact that workshop facilitators took time out from their presentations to use the very presence of the monitors to raise the consciousness of workshop participants and demonstrate to them concretely an undeniable example of discrimination against gays.

You should be reminded that the Briggs Initiative has not been passed, and that even if it were passed your policy would still not be justified, because in a country supposedly founded on protecting human rights we all have a responsibility to refuse to comply with legislation that denies those rights to gays. Giving in to some people's manipulated fear and hysteria leads to the destruction not only of human rights but of people's lives. We all have a responsibility to take a public stand against those people who would return us to the chilling and oppressive days of Joseph McCarthy.

We would like to ask if you monitor with equal energy those teachers who subtly or blatantly advocate violence and discrimination against gays and against women. We would like to suggest that your administration spend its time constructively, by working to stop the sexism, heterosexism, and violence that is so prevalent in our culture and society. And there is much work to do on every college campus. We are hoping that you understand that it is the responsibility of an educational institution to enlighten the minds of both students and the general public, rather than to give in to the darkness in the minds of some current politicians and media personalities. We call upon you and your administration to fulfill that responsibility and to take leadership in humanizing our society rather than colluding with those forces working to further dehumanize it.

If you or members of your administration are still unsure about the justness and need for full human rights for gay people, we would suggest that you contact members of local gay organizations in Sonoma County to educate yourselves about the human reality of gayness and clear your minds of the distorted, imaginary, manipulated images of gays produced by the media and put out by hate groups. If you already do believe in the justness and need for full human rights for gays, then we would like to remind you that if you give in on this issue, not only will you be failing in your responsibilities to gays, but you will also be setting yourselves up to give in on the subsequent demands for limitations to freedom that will surely follow the present intensification of gay oppression. If you are committed to denying full human rights to gays, then we will support in every way we can any legal action that is taken against the policies of your administration.

We are hopeful that you view with regret the decision you made regarding the Conference and that you will make full public apology to the conference organizers and participants, to the campus community, and above all to the gay community in Sonoma County. We also hope that you will initiate an active program to defend and extend gay rights and to eliminate every discrimination against gays on your campus.

We would like to thank you for your attention to this matter and request a reply.
Sincerely,

Rich Snowdon and Men Against Sexist Violence
3434 California Street #4
San Francisco, CA 94118

Gay Freedom Day Parade Route Set

The Seventh Annual Gay Freedom Day March and Rally will be held Sunday, June 25, in San Francisco.

The march will assemble on Howard Street, between 2nd and 3rd Streets, with the march itself beginning at 11 AM.

The march will conclude in Civic Center with a rally beginning at 1 PM.

Last year's march brought out over 250,000 gay people and straight supporters with a rally that included speakers such as Sally Gerhardt and Assemblyman Willie Brown, live music, and booths selling food, t-shirts

The march celebrates the day when New York gays fought back after local police began another of their routine harassings of gay bars. This came to be known as the Stonewall Riots and is generally considered to be the beginning of contemporary gay liberation.

Sonoma County had one of the largest contingents in the march last year and a large turnout of lesbians and gay men is again expected this year.

The Sonoma County Lesbian and Gay Alliance will again be having a marching unit in the parade.

Live Radio Coverage

This year those who will be unable to participate in the march will be able to listen to live coverage of the event over radio station KSAN, 94.9 FM.

The station plans to present live continuous coverage of the march reported from the reviewing stand, starting at 11 AM, June 25.

Law School Backs Gays

St. Paul, Minn.—Exactly one week after this city repealed the affectional or sexual preference provision of the city's Human Rights Ordinance, a St. Paul law school, Hamline University School of Law, went on record against such discrimination.

The law faculty, unanimously by voice vote, approved a resolution which stated that discrimination in the admission of law students based on affectional or sexual preference violated school policy. The faculty also endorsed a resolution similar to one passed by New York University's School of Law in March, which makes the school's Placement Office off-limits to employers who discriminate on such a basis.

Earlier, the Dean of the law school, by written memorandum, informed employees of the school that decisions regarding hiring, retention, and promotion of gay people would not be affected by the April 25 city-wide repeal.
—GCN

Right Wing Strategy of "Hot Buttons": Gay Rights, Abortion, The ERA...

The increasingly successful campaigns to repeal homosexual-rights laws are a plot by the "radical, reactionary... right wing," Midge Costanza, a special assistant to President Carter, said recently.

She told a news conference the votes are going against the homosexuals "because those issues are not being addressed on the level of human rights. The opposition has a lot of money, they are selling these issues as a challenge to the family unit... which is absolutely ridiculous.

"I think there is a move in this nation. I think it is being sponsored by what we refer to as the right wing," she said.

"I think they are supported by some very radical, reactionary groups and I think it is frightening."

They "are the same people who are against the Equal Rights Amendment, against women's rights, against abortion, against human rights of the people" she said.

"When just one segment of society has their rights challenged, then nobody's rights are secure."

In fact, there is a new right wing movement sweeping the country which is seeking to exploit emotional issues to build a national grass roots conservative alliance. This "new right" is spearheaded by such groups as the Conservative Caucus (TCC), the Committee for Survival of a Free Congress (CSFC) and the National Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC).

TCC Director Howard Philips explained their strategy, saying, "We're going after people on the basis of their hot buttons." Those "hot buttons" have included capital punishment, the Equal Rights Amendment, busing, abortion,

the Panama Canal, and "right to work" laws.

In the last year, they have seized upon a new "hot button" which may have a broader appeal than any other conservative issue—gay rights.

They have put measures to repeal gay rights laws on the ballot in Miami, St. Paul, Wichita and Eugene and threaten to do the same in every city which has a similar law.

In California, the new right is taking their anti-homosexual campaign one step further—they are attempting to MANDATE discrimination. The Briggs Initiative would, in effect, ban anyone who is gay or who supports gay rights from working in the school system.

The Initiative would legislate the unprecedented right of a public agency to search into the private lives of citizens. It would establish on the local level a two stage procedure of hearings and judicial review which could be used to harass any school workers, gay or non-gay, who exercise their rights of privacy, free speech, free association and academic

freedom. The passage of the measure could signal the beginning of a new McCarthy era of witchhunt and intimidation.

There is evidence that a significant portion of the money donated to Briggs' Defend Our Children was raised by Richard Viguier, chief fundraiser and direct-mail specialist for many

new right groups, who lives in Virginia. Lesbians and Gay men are not the only targets of right wing initiatives in California. The new right is pushing a series of statewide initiatives which read like a laundry list of conservative causes: Anti-Abortion, Anti-Affirmative Action, Anti-Busing, a stronger death penalty, an initiative to prohibit teachers from exercising their right to strike and the Jarvis-Gann Initiative which will certainly cut funds drastically for social services.

The purpose of the concerted right wing attack is to build a political power base at the expense of poor, unorganized and disadvantaged people.

—UPI and Lesbian and Gay Action

Quakers Begin National Gay

Affirmative Action Program

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has announced an affirmative action plan aimed at gay people, women and Third World persons. The AFSC has a long history of action in the civil rights and peace movements, and the new plan is seen as a logical next step.

Discrimination against gay people was brought to the AFSC's attention relatively recently. In September

1975, four gay people on the staff or committees of the organization sent a letter throughout the organization announcing that they were gay and requesting discussion of the problems gay people face within AFSC and in society as a whole. As a result of the discussions that took place, the board of directors, in June 1976, recorded, "The AFSC Board of Directors supports the civil and human rights of homosexual and bisexual persons and commits itself to implementation of this concern." Shortly thereafter a newly created Affirmative Action Planning Committee was given the charge to consider oppression and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in addition to race and sex.

The committee's final report said, "Gay people are one of the few groups of people remaining in this country against whom it is legal to pass discriminatory laws, and mount popular campaigns denying them rights." The plan covers employment; committee, board and coalition memberships; contractual relationships; and program design and execution. Stated employment goals are: "The minimum five-year goals are at least 20 per cent Third World people and at least 40 per cent women. Each regional office should actively seek the participation of openly gay people on its staff; a minimum of one in each region and five in the national office within the next five-year period."

(A copy of the plan can be obtained from Paul Brink, AFSC Information Director, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.) —AD

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