

Avengers demand lesbian-oriented HIV/AIDS studies

Despite elaborate security and secrecy measures, the Lesbian Avengers found the Bay Area office of the Centers for Disease Control. What followed was a demonstration focused on highlighting the CDC's neglect of lesbian and bisexual women in its HIV/AIDS policies.

Three Lesbian Avengers wore saran wrap



(over clothing) around their pelvises, while others carried a 20-foot banner which said, "Dykes demand the CDC study woman-to-woman AIDS transmission." The activists chanted, "CDC, we're outraged. You don't know shit about dykes and AIDS."

A crowd of about 200 gathered outside the San Francisco International Airport customs area (where the agency's no-longer secret office is located) to watch the demonstration. Fifteen police officers gathered at the scene but did not interfere with the demonstrators.

"I guess they didn't want to mess with a group of screaming lesbian and bi women," said Avenger Katie Hern. "No one wanted to appear in the newspaper dragging away a dyke in a pair of saran wrap panties."

The Lesbian Avengers have three primary demands: that the CDC conduct thorough studies

of the possibility of woman-to-woman HIV transmission, that it fund outreach efforts directed at lesbian and bisexual women, and that the agency revise its definition of "lesbian" so that it more accurately reflects the lesbian population. Currently the CDC defines a lesbian as "a woman who hasn't slept with a man since 1978."

Although the agency currently claims that the risk of woman-to-woman transmission is negligible, the results of a recent study conducted by the group Wholistic Health for Women's Lesbian Health Clinic, in West Hollywood, Calif., tell a different story. In a survey of over 6,000 women, the clinic found that all sexually transmitted diseases can be passed through sex between women.

"The implication of these findings is compelling," said Suzann Gage, R.N., C.N.P., executive director of Wholistic Health for Women and the Lesbian Health Clinic. "It validates our nearly 10 years of clinical experience in serving and treating lesbians, as well as over 20 years of my own personal clinic practice in providing health care for lesbians. Small but significant numbers of women do become infected with STDs from unprotected sex with other women. Transmission of STDs between women...needs to be taken seriously."

Gay and lesbian Republicans meet

Lesbians and gay men met last month in Los Angeles for the 1994 Log Cabin National Convention, the largest political gathering of gay and lesbian Republican activists ever held. The convention drew 150 people from 40 Log Cabin clubs in 31 states, to report on the progress of the sexual minority Republican movement.

Messages of support were received from leading Republicans around the country, including Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, New York

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Sen. John Chafee (R.I.) and Oregon's own Sen. Bob Packwood.

Delegates at the convention elected national officers. Abner Mason, founding member of the Massachusetts Black Republican Council, was elected president; Dr. Evelyn Kotch of Philadelphia was elected vice-president; and Gregory Curtis of New Orleans was re-elected secretary.

Resolutions ratified at the convention included one thanking Republican co-sponsors of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994 for their recognition that no one in the United States should fear for his or her job because of factors not related to job performance. The convention also asked President Clinton to direct the Veterans Administration to establish connections with non-VA hospices in order to provide services to veterans with HIV/AIDS.

Sen. Barry Goldwater (Ariz.) accepted the Spirit of Lincoln Award, saying, "We are all Americans, regardless of race, creed or color. That's the way we are. That's the way we want to live." Bruce Bawer, author of the book *A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society*, accepted the Log Cabin Leadership Award.

Job discrimination hits queers "in the pocketbook"

The University of Maryland at College Park released in August the results of a study on the impact of job discrimination targeting lesbians and gay men. The findings indicate that lesbians and gay men earn less than their nongay counterparts of similar education and training, and in similar occupations. These findings challenge the stereotype of queers as an "affluent elite."

"Opponents of equal rights for gay and lesbian citizens have spread stereotypes and exploited public misunderstanding about the problem of job discrimination," said Oregon Gov. Barbara Roberts. "These stereotypes are used to divert attention from the real problem of discrimination and to oppose equal protection under the law. The truth is that sexual orientation does not correlate to income, education or any other class-related characteristic. Gay and lesbian citizens are found in every type of workplace and in every community."

The study found that gay men earn 11 to 27 percent less than their counterparts, while lesbians earn 5 to 14 percent less. Hearings are being held currently in Washington, D.C., on the Em-

ployment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Queer union activists urge support of ENDA

The Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance has called for the support of Senate Bill 2238, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994. The AFL-CIO has already endorsed the bill, which was introduced by Sens. Kennedy and Chafee.

In a statement of support, the AFL-CIO said, "This bill extends the legal protections from employment discrimination provided to those who have historically been denied equal opportunity in the workplace. It is a step in the right direction of providing equal opportunity for all Americans."

Nancy Wohlforth, L/GLA co-chair, said, "We seek support statements from the labor movement at all levels—union locals, central labor councils, state federations and the international unions—in order to bring the full influence of organized labor upon congressional delegations. This is just one more statement of labor's historical support for the rights of lesbian and gay men in the workplace."

Two men overcome four assailants

Andrew Miller of Manhattan and Terrence Joyette of Brooklyn were attacked early one Sunday morning as they crossed an intersection in New York City. Their assailants, four young men, began by shouting anti-gay insults, then jumped out of their truck and began a physical assault, according to *The New York Native*.

Miller and Joyette responded by fighting back, beating three of the assailants badly enough that they required treatment at a local hospital after their arrest. All four of the attackers were charged with third degree assault and released on their own recognizance without bail. Their case was scheduled to be heard in late August.

"We hope this incident spreads the word that gay men and lesbians can and will fight back when attacked," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. "The reality is that we fight back all the time, but the odds are usually so far against us, there's not much we can do."

Compiled by Jann Gilbert

cathartic comics I featuring The Brown Bomber and Diva Touché Flambé by Prof. I.B. Gittendowne

