

Milwaukee Update: Feb. 1981.

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MILWAUKEE update

A Monthly Publication of Gay People's Union, Inc.

FEB. 1981

UNITE AGAINST ASSAULTS!

Milwaukee's gay/lesbian community is reeling under a series of senseless attacks. Like many other cities, Milwaukee has experienced an increase in assaults and attacks.

On Christmas night the door-person at the Factory was shot and killed by a man with a .357 magnum handgun. On January 24 another gay man was shot in the head four times and robbed in an alley in back of two southside bars, the YP and Shadows. There have been numerous other reports of rapes, assaults, robberies, vandalism, etc. in the area of many of our popular nightspots.

The problem is not peculiar to Milwaukee. Even San Francisco, the "gay mecca", has a serious assault problem. In New York the son of a fundamentalist minister fired shots into two gay bars, killing two people and injuring many others. In Texas a gay activist was shot in the head by a police officer, who later claimed that his gun went off accidentally.

There is a growing feeling within the gay community nationwide that these attacks are the result of the hatred being spread by right wing fanatics. The Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party have openly called for gays and lesbians to be killed. The Rev. Jerry Falwell of the "Moral Majority" is seeking sponsors for a Congressional bill that would require us to register as subversive agents. The United States Congress has already passed legislation that specifically denies gays services that are available to any one else. Legal Service Corp. funds cannot be used to promote, defend or protect homosexuality.

The gay & lesbian community is perplexed by all of this. After all, the vast majority of us consider ourselves to be loyal Americans. Many of us voted for Reagan and belong to conservative groups. But even among conservative lesbians and gays there is a growing recognition of the need to unite and help bring an end to the terror of the "New Right". Growing feelings of anger are bringing gays and lesbians together locally and nationally to make our rights a major issue in the 80's.

On the local level, Gay Peoples Union has started an assault project. Realizing that many of us are afraid to report incidents to the police, GPU is offering confidential help and legal advice. GPU seeks to document cases of assault, robbery, damage to property, harassment, etc. no matter when it happened or whether or not it was already reported to police.

WE'RE BACK

Milwaukee Update, the newsletter of the Gay Peoples Union returns with a new look after a somewhat lengthy absence while in transition.

Our purpose remains the same--to keep you informed of the activities of Gay Peoples Union and other groups and perhaps interest you in putting some idle time that you have toward some productive and helpful activity.

We intend to publish monthly and as necessary, for distribution to our members anyone else who wishes to receive our mailings. If you would like to be on our mailing list return the coupon on page 4. Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome and should be sent to GPU-Milwaukee Update, PO Box 208, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

DA McCann has been made aware of the dilemma many gays face in reporting incidents and has agreed to help by referring cases of assault or police harassment to the Sensitive Crimes Unit where they will receive confidential and understanding assistance.

The Gay & Lesbian Pride Week committee is planning a week of activities which will draw gays and lesbians closer, while spotlighting different organizations and different aspects of the gay & lesbian culture.

On the national level the National Lesbian and Gay Communications Network is planning an international march of the United Nations. The New York sub-region of the network has issued a call to all gays and lesbians to march "as an act of defiance to the right." It is hoped that up to 500,000 people will march and draw attention to the problems experienced by gays and lesbians internationally. In Iran for instance gay men are routinely executed. The United Nations World Health Organization classifies homosexuality as a sickness.

As more assaults occur, as more hateful pronouncements come from the Right, as more bills are proposed in Congress to deny us our rights, our once placid community will become more united and increasingly mobilized to fight back through peaceful means. The gay marching song "We Are An Angry Gentle People" may soon become "We Are An Angry Fighting People."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ELECTED

Gay Peoples Union begins the new year with a newly elected Board of Directors and officers.

In elections held Jan 5, Alyn Hess, Tim McCoy and Chuck Poulson were elected to join presently seated board members Miriam ben Shalom and Bruce Davies. Re-elected as GPU President was Paul DeMarco. Si Smits was re-elected Treasurer. Bill Meunier was elected V.P. and Karla LaWatsch was chosen to serve as Secretary.

Top priorities for the new Board is to rally the community behind the new Gay Community Center Building Fund (GCC). The building currently housing the Farwell Center is up for sale and is not really suited to the growing needs of our gay & lesbian community.

Several alternate locations have been inspected and others are yet to be seen. As the organization which has operated and maintained the gay community center, GPU needs to know what the community needs are and especially what will be supported. We will soon be distributing a survey throughout the community which with your assistance will help us determine the community needs.

GAY COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING FUND

A Gay Community Center Building Fund (GCC Fund) has been established by GPU. Help make the Gay Community Center in Milwaukee a reality. Send your tax deductible contribution to GPU-GCC Fund to PO Box 208, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

Fundraising events are being scheduled throughout the community to benefit the GCC Fund.

JAY GARLAND MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The GPU Board of Directors has extended the deadline for the Jay Garland Scholarship Award to March 1st. Any person over 18 residing in the Milwaukee area and enrolled in a program leading to a degree, certificate or personal license is eligible for the \$100 award.

The applicant need not be a member of GPU, nor need have declared his/her sexual orientation.

Applications are available at GPU meetings on Mondays at the Farwell Center, by writing to PO Box 208, Milw. 53201, or by calling the GPU HELPLINE at 271-5273.

INCIDENT REPORT PROJECT

A member of Gay Peoples Union has volunteered to compile statistics on violence, robberies, harassment etc. directed at the gay community. This effort is being coordinated so that documentation can be presented to authorities responsible for providing protection for the citizens of Milwaukee. Gays and lesbians are taxpaying citizens and we will demand equal protection and an end to harassment and needless arrest.

Anyone who is the target of, witness to, or hears about any act of violence or harassment against a gay brother or sister is encouraged to report the incident (regardless of when it occurred). This can be done by calling the GPU HELPLINE 271-5273 or by completing an "Incident Report" form available in many of Milwaukee's night spots. Information may be reported anonymously if necessary, however some way to contact to would be helpful.

Please keep two things in mind; first, the nature or seriousness of the incident should not be a factor in whether or not a report is filed. We need to know of even the most minor incidents to be sure we know of all of the problems facing our community. Second you should file a report even if you think someone else already has. We would rather have several duplicate reports than none at all.

PLEASE help us in this effort to prevent senseless violence and uncalled for harassment. Help make Milwaukee a better and safer place to live and work for all people!

GAY PEOPLES UNION MEETINGS CALENDAR

ON THE EVENING OF MONDAY JANUARY 19TH DR. MARK NESSLER WAS MURDERED BY PERSONS UNKNOWN. HIS BODY WAS DISCOVERED WITH FOUR BULLETS IN HIS HEAD IN AN ALLEY BEHIND 800 S. 1ST/2ND STREET. ANYONE WITH ANY INFORMATION OR PARTIAL CLUES (did you see anyone hanging around that area or cars harassing people, etc?) SHOULD CALL DETECTIVE FRANK COLE 765-2323 EXT 325 OR 360. YOU MAY CALL ANONYMOUSLY.

Mon. Feb. 2: Monthly Business meeting, 8PM. Also: Everything you always wanted to know about GPU, but were afraid to ask.

Tue. Feb. 3: GPU Fundraising Committee meeting, 7pm at Farwell Ctr.

Mon. Feb. 9: GPU Board of Directors meeting, 7:30pm. Also: Open Rap, "How do you relate to those other faggots and dykes?"

Mon. Feb. 16: Gay Community Center benefit at Beer Garden, 3743 W. Vliet "Spaghetti Dinner all-you-can-eat" \$5.00 donation. Also, barbers available for haircuts for add'l donation.

MCCANN MTG

The murder of Dennis Wesela at 1:20 am December 26th sparked great concern in our community. Leaders of the Gay Peoples Union, Business Association of Milwaukee (BAM), and the Cream City Business Association (CCBA) met with D.A. Michael McCann to express their concern and outrage about this killing and several other related issues.

As a result of this meeting McCann will assign all assault cases and police harassment cases to the Sensitive Crimes Unit of his office to assure that they are handled in a sensitive, confidential and understanding manner.

McCann also expressed concern over the amount of violence directed at the gay community. He assured the gay leaders that Wesela's accused murderer, John Pegelow, would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. He also pointed out that there is little his office can do if gays & lesbians do not report incidents. McCann told the group that if those committing these acts aren't apprehended they are likely to continue. He also promised his office's assistance with reports of police harassment or failure to respond. He told the group that even if the report is anonymous it will help, provided that the police squad car number, license number or police badge number is obtained and reported. Anyone wishing to report incidents IN CONFIDENCE should call Asst. DA Thomas Hammer 278-5042 or 278-5055.

GPU: 10 YEARS of SERVICE!

Milwaukee's Gay Peoples Union (GPU) will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year.

Struggling at times with conflicts and internal clashes in its formative years, GPU has survived and prospered, and continues to provide many services to the gay & lesbian community.

Gay Peoples Union is YOUR organization. We want to hear your ideas, your concerns. Above all (as an organization of volunteers) we want to see more men and women get involved putting their talents to use for the benefit of the gay community in Milwaukee.

Among the services offered by GPU is the Hotline. Staffed by trained counselors, the Hotline (271-5273) offers confidential counseling, info and referrals from 7 to 10pm.

The GPU Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinic provides confidential diagnosis and treatment for a wide range of sexually transmitted diseases by a staff of trained professionals (volunteers). These services are available in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere on Wednesday eves 7-10pm and Saturday Noon-2pm. Donations and additional volunteers will enable GPU to expand the hours of operation of the STD Clinic.

We also have a Speakers Bureau that arranges speaking engagements at meetings of professional and business groups, educational institutions and with religious and church groups, for the purpose of increasing the understanding that the public has of the gay and lesbian in our society.

As our volunteers increase in number new projects and services become available. Volunteers are needed to coordinate a housing and employment service. A Legal Advice Clinic could be started with the help of just one person with legal training.

Gay Peoples Union holds weekly meetings on various topics every Monday at 8pm at the Farwell Center, 1568 North Farwell. Members and non-members are welcome to attend.

GPU is also compiling a referral list of professionals and businesses. Please contact us if you are a professional person (accountant, lawyer, physician, counselor, etc) or if you own or manage a business that provides any product or service that would welcome referrals from the GPU Hotline.

GPU maintains and operates the Farwell Center for use by the community. If your group needs a place to meet, contact GPU.

AS WE MOVE INTO OUR 11TH YEAR OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE TO MILWAUKEE'S GAY COMMUNITY, WE APPEAL TO YOU FOR A DONATION (LARGE OR SMALL) TO HELP US CONTINUE THE IMPORTANT WORK THAT GPU IS DOING. ALL DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS ENTITLE YOU TO RECEIVE OUR MONTHLY MAILINGS OF MILWAUKEE UPDATE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

_____ \$12 Basic _____ \$20 Household (two) _____ \$50 Contributing
_____ \$100 Sustaining _____ \$500 Supporting _____ \$6 Low Income
_____ Check if you do not wish to be on our mailing list for Milwaukee Update.

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

In addition to my membership dues I would like to make an additional donation to be used for the following program or project:

_____ STD (VD) CLINIC _____ LEGAL DEFENSE FUND _____ SCHOLARSHIP FUND
_____ GCC FUND _____ LIBRARY FUND _____ OTHER

Donations tax deductible under 501C3 of IRS Code.