

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.



# The Wisconsin Light



**DEMANDING BASIC RIGHTS**—Dozens of demonstrators protested on June 21, 1992 at the recently opened Cracker-Barrel restaurant, near Kenosha. Protesters carried signs (left) and were confronted by law officials numerous times during the two hour demonstration. Kenosha Sheriff's department

deputies confiscated signs (right) that contained language they objected to. The deputy holds a sign while wearing plastic gloves.

## Police Confiscate Signs, Arrest Four During Cracker Barrel Protest

By Terry Boughner

In what was described by one observer as "cops on a rampage," police and other Kenosha, Wisconsin law enforcement officials, confiscated signs, shoved people to the ground, manhandled the press and arrested peaceful protesters demonstrating on public land outside a Kenosha Cracker Barrel store on June 21, 1992.

According to Stan Straka, a member of Queer Nation/Milwaukee and organizer of the demonstration, an estimated 70 people took part in the protest. These included people from Milwaukee, Madison, Kenosha, Racine and a sizable contingent from Chicago.

The demonstration was part of a nation-wide protest against the restaurant chain's discriminatory policy against

Lesbians and Gay employees which includes firing Lesbians and Gay male employees in other states. Straka said the protest was intended as a "peaceful demonstration" to "raise public awareness in Wisconsin" to the "immoral and illegal" policy of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Wisconsin is the first state with a Gay the creation of, and currently chairs, the Dane County Task Force on AIDS.

She is also a member of the County Board's Personnel and Finance Committee and is the former chair of the Human Services Board.

Baldwin is a member of the National Association of Openly Gay and Lesbian Elected Officials, Rainbow Coalition, the National Women's Political Caucus, the National Organization for Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Democratic Party.

rights law where the Cracker Barrel chain has opened a restaurant.

The demonstration began at about 11:00 across the street from the recently opened Cracker Barrel restaurant. The restaurant is located at I-94 and Hwy. 50 in Bristol, Wisconsin.

An estimated 25 law enforcement officials were there, including those from the State Patrol, the Kenosha County Sheriff's Office and the Kenosha police. Also present was the Kenosha District Attorney, Richard Ginkowski.

Several officers were wearing gloves, variously described as being of rubber or plastic. When asked why they were wearing them, one officer replied it was "fear of Hepatitis." Another answered, "because you never know what can happen." In a phone interview, Ginkowski told *Wisconsin Light* that the wearing of gloves was "the officer's individual choice."

Ginkowski who was video taping the event, called himself "a strong" and "long-time supporter of Gay rights." He said he was at the demonstration, using the camcorder to make sure everyone's rights were being respected.

The demonstrators positioned themselves across the access highway from the restaurant, close to an intersection and on public land. Demonstrators held signs condemning Cracker Barrel's assault on Gay rights. People began chanting "Racist, sexist, anti-Queer, Cracker Barrel get out of here" among others.

According to Dan Fons, a member of Queer Nation/Milwaukee, the trouble began just as the group was finishing the protest. It was Queer Nation/Chicago's idea, he said, to finish the protest with a

## State Supreme Court Declares Hate-Crimes Law Unconstitutional

[Madison]—The Wisconsin law that increases penalties for hate-crimes was declared unconstitutional in a 5-2 decision on Tuesday, June 23, 1992 by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Nathan S. Heffernan, writing the majority opinion, stated that the law was unconstitutional because it suppressed freedom of speech. The Wisconsin High Court's decision came the day after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the St. Paul, Minnesota's hate crimes ordinance was in conflict with the U.S. Constitution.

In the St. Paul case, the ordinance regulated "fighting words" rather than motive behind the crime as in Wisconsin's case. However, Heffernan said, the "ideological content" of thought regulated by the two measures was identical.

State Rep. David Clarenbach (D-Madison) author of Wisconsin's Hate Crimes Law, released the following statement on Wednesday, June 24, in

reaction to the court's decision:

"The court's decision does not mean that we must stop fighting hate crimes," Clarenbach said.

"Our effort goes beyond the facts of any single case, or the language of any single statute. It is an effort by many groups of differing backgrounds and beliefs to preserve the right to live free from intimidation or violence rooted in bigotry."

Clarenbach went on to say that "I will continue to work with police and prosecutors to give them the tools they need to fight the rising tide of hate crimes, without infringing on anyone's First Amendment rights."

The State Supreme Court's decision came in the case of Todd Mitchell of Kenosha, who was sentenced to four years in prison in 1990 under the hate crimes penalty enhancer for beating and robbing a white teenager, Gregory Riddick.

## Madison's Tammy Baldwin Running For State Assembly Seat

[Madison]—Dane County Supervisor, Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat, formally declared her candidacy for the State Assembly seat being vacated by David Clarenbach earlier this month at a campaign kick-off party attended by more than 100 supporters. Baldwin, a Madison native and attorney in private practice, is the first only Gay or Lesbian candidate to run for the Wisconsin legislature.

"I am running to bring a new voice and a new perspective to state government," said Baldwin, who is the only woman in the Democratic field. "It's time for our representative government to truly reflect the diversity of all the people."

Baldwin said that Madison and Wisconsin were at a critical juncture facing many challenges and many choices. She said her priorities would be to listen to and invest in people; to promote civil rights and opportunities for every member of the community; and to battle against racism, sexism,

homophobia and other forms of bigotry in state law and policies.

"We can let differences in race, gender, sexual orientation and income divide us," said Baldwin. "Or we can choose to turn toward each other with respect and open minds to build a strong and healthy community."

Baldwin also said her election was critical to maintain an advocate for Gays and Lesbians in the legislature.

"For nearly two decades, David Clarenbach has represented the interests of the Gay and Lesbian community with great courage and vigor," Baldwin said. "I am the only legislative candidate in Wisconsin who has both the will and a supportive district to carry on David's tradition."

Tammy Baldwin, 30, a graduate of Smith College and the University of Wisconsin Law School, has served as a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors since 1986. She fought for

## Help Needed In Researching Gay Milwaukee History

[Milwaukee]—Through the assistance of a generous patron, I am beginning work on a history of Gay Milwaukee. As envisioned, the book will cover as far back as there are records. I need your help.

If you have pictures or other memorabilia; if you would be willing to be interviewed on tape (confidentiality assured if you desire), please write or phone me: Terry Boughner, 1843 N. Palmer, Milwaukee, WI 53212, (414) 372-2773. Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.



**A CARPET OF PEOPLE**—Thousands attended Milwaukee's PrideFest and parade on June 14. Related stories and photos appear in this issue.

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