

AREA BRIEFS

Gay Synagogue Rabbi Gives Edgar Invocation

Rabbi Linda Holtzman of Beth Ahavah, Philadelphia's lesbian and gay synagogue, gave the invocation at a recent fundraiser for local U.S. Senate candidate Bob Edgar.

Holtzman said that the event was "very inspiring. By the end of the evening I really believed in Edgar." Holtzman sat at the table with Mayor Wilson Goode and his wife Velma, Edgar and several other dignitaries.

"My gut feeling towards Edgar is he really means it when he talks about women's rights, minority rights," Holtzman said. "It's nice to see someone committed to the things that we need to be doing." Her invocation was about two minutes. It was not mentioned in her introduction that her synagogue is gay.

The fundraiser featured seven members of Congress, among them Ted Weiss, Paul Simon and George Mitchell. Holtzman was invited to do the invocation by the fundraiser planning committee. The fundraiser was held at the Franklin Plaza Hotel on September 22.

Student board to meet

The Northeast Lesbian and Gay Student Union will hold a meeting of its board of representatives in Philadelphia during the weekend of October 18 at the University of Pennsylvania.

The board, which includes one or two individuals from each of the more than 125 schools active in the union, will plan a fourth annual conference to be held in New York March 28-29. It will also work on ways to improve the diversity of individuals active in the organization.

The conference, expected to draw more than 1,000 students from Maine to West Virginia, will be hosted by Gay and Lesbian Allied Students of New York. The theme is "Celebrating Gay and Lesbian Identity."

The union is also sponsoring a contest for a new logo. Submissions cost \$5 each and winner splits the total with the union. A minimum prize of \$50 is guaranteed. The board will choose the winner based on originality and aesthetic appeal. All entries must be accompanied by a check of money order payable to the union, 68 Bay State Rd., Boston, MA 02215. The winner will be chosen on October 18.

Persons interested in finding out more about the union or coming to the board meeting in Philadelphia should contact Robin Sweeney or Ethan Felson at (215)758-0020.

Gay group granted recognition

Lehigh University, one of the most conservative non-religious schools in the Northeast, granted official recognition to the school's two-and-a-half year old Human Diversity League, a union of lesbian, gay, bisexual and supportive students.

According to the group's charter, its purpose is to "increase awareness of sexual minorities." The group plans a number of activities on campus, including a weekly coffeehouse, monthly movie discussion nights and an outside speaker each semester.

Human Diversity chair Ethan Felson said that he was very pleased by the university's announcement. "We have been waiting a long time for official status. Recognition will lend great legitimacy to the group." It will also allow the group to reserve meeting rooms on campus, to have a table at student activities night when first year students sign up for campus clubs and to apply for funding.

The university is located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and has 4,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students.

Lyness hearing protested

A group of women protested against Main Line neurosurgeon Dr. Samuel Lyness at his hearing before the Pennsylvania Board of Medical Education and Licensure at the Norristown Courthouse on September 23, 24 and 25.

Last year in two separate trials Lyness was cleared of charges that he sexually assaulted female patients in his County Line Road office.

The protesters demanded that the board revoke Lyness's license, the *Inquirer* reports. They carried signs that read "The word of one man cannot be taken over the word of seven women" and "Sexual assault is malpractice." Defense attorney Jean B. Green described the protesters as "lesbians" who distorted facts in the case.

"The more [this case] is made public and the more seriously the board takes it, the more women will be encouraged to come forward in other cases," said Mary Hawryshkiw, one of the organizers of the protest. The protest was organized by the Wages for Housework Campaign. The board can revoke, suspend or restrict a doctor's license.

NOW files insurance suit

Five auto insurance companies have been accused of discriminating against women in a suit filed with the State Insurance Department by Pennsylvania NOW.

According to the *Inquirer*, the suit charges that the companies practice "irrational ratemaking... and sex discrimination overcharging" by considering, as a primary factor in rates, the gender of the applicant and not the number of miles driven. According to the suit, women drive fewer miles and therefore should pay less. State Farm Mutual, Nationwide Mutual, Allstate, Liberty Mutual Fire and Insurance Services Offices are named in the suit.

"Insurance companies are collecting two years worth of premiums each year for insuring their low-mileage cars," said National NOW president Elie Smeal. She said that the rates as they stand now violate the state's ERA.

But Nationwide spokesperson David Snyder said that "miles driven is not the best factor" for setting rates.

Del. receives AIDS funds

The CDC has granted Delaware's Division of Public Health \$86,519 of the \$121,000 it requested to expand its alternative testing site program, the State Department of Health and Social Services has announced.

State AIDS Program Director Jim Welch said that the money will allow the hiring of an additional counselor and possibly the opening of a

(Continued on page 4)

PCHA Officer Resigns In Speech at AIDS Walk

by Tommi Avicoli

Lorraine Hassan has resigned from her position as vice president of the Philadelphia Community Health Alternatives (PCHA), citing as her reason the way in which current differences between PCHA and ActionAIDS, a split-off group, is being handled.

ActionAIDS, which is mostly composed of members of the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force's support services, split off after the PCHA board passed resolutions restructuring the organization in ways they found unacceptable. PCHA is the parent organization of PATF.

Hassan, a co-founder of BEBASHI (Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues), announced her resignation on September 25 at a rally following an AIDS candlelight walk that drew over 2,000 people. (See story on p. 1).

Hassan told PGN after the rally that current decisions are being made by three individuals within PCHA rather than by the board. She said that an emergency board meeting should have been called to discuss presenting a "united front" in the controversy between PCHA and ActionAIDS.

Hassan questioned why "this time was taken to re-organize" when the number of white AIDS cases has evened out and minority cases are on the rise. "I don't know what the urgency was in doing those things," she said. She agreed that "restructuring needs to be done."

According to Hassan, she was "put in a position of having to defend" one particular resolution of the PCHA board.

The PCHA board passed two resolutions that angered many members of PATF. One set out clear delineation of the structure of the organization in terms of who makes decisions. The other took the power of distribution of the John Locke Fund out of the hands of its original committee and gave it to PCHA director Tom Livers. The fund dis-

tributes non-medical emergency assistance to persons with AIDS.

Because of the outcry over these two resolutions at PATF's steering committee, a special session was held between PCHA and PATF board members.

At the special session, however, the PCHA board announced a third resolution, presented by Hassan. The resolution has been interpreted as either restructuring or dissolving PATF's steering committee.

Hassan was asked to present the resolution "to diffuse the situation so it would not come down to a personal attack situation. I was in agreement because I thought it appropriate." She said that she is angry because at the end of the meeting there was an agreement to set up another meeting to work out differences but "both parties reneged."

"I don't have the time to deal with that situation," Hassan said. "I want to turn my attention to more important matters, like educating the black community."

PCHA President Dr. Nick Ifft had no comment about the resignation. He said that he was away from the rally during Hassan's speech, returning a page call. He said that just before she spoke, Hassan



Lorraine Hassan: announced resignation at AIDS rally

handed PATF spokesperson Ed Diehl a 3x5 card with a message that she was resigning effective immediately and a formal letter would be forthcoming.

Hassan said that BEBASHI and IMPACT (Interpreting Minority (Continued on page 32)

Abortion Veto Urged on Gov.

by Tommi Avicoli

The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) is busy organizing telegrams and calls to Governor Dick Thornburgh urging him to veto Senator Joseph Rooks' Certificate of Need (CON) amendment.

The amendment would force abortion clinics to file for approval from local health systems and the

State Department of Health before they expand or relocate. Attached to a bill dealing with underage drinking, it passed the Senate in June and the House on September 24.

NARAL has also activated its phone alert network and spoken to Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Scranton in the hopes that he can convince Thornburgh to veto the legislation. Scranton is currently Lieutenant Governor. Thornburgh has until October 3 to veto or sign the bill.

If the governor vetoes the legislation, it may not be reconsidered, NARAL Director Frances Sheehan said. The Senate recesses on October 1 until after the election in November. She feels that the veto will be a "moot point" after the election and will not be overturned.

Sheehan said that Scranton is pro-choice. "He's pledged that if *Roe vs. Wade* is overturned, he'd veto any bill that limits abortion."

Having Democratic hopeful Bob Casey in office, on the other hand, Sheehan said, "is the kiss of death." She said that Casey is anti-abortion and "in favor of a constitutional amendment outlawing abortions. He bought a full-page ad in the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Convention ad book saying best wishes." Casey supports the bill.

Sheehan said that in January anti-abortion legislators plan to "lead the battle to get a modified abortion control act." With Casey as governor, "we have no chance of winning." The legislation would then have to be fought in the courts. "It'll be open season on the abortion issue," she said.

In an interview with PGN, Casey said that he supports a abortion "if the mother's health is at stake." He does not support it in cases of rape or incest, he added.

NARAL can not publicly endorse candidates, but Pennsylvanians for Justice and Freedom of Choice, a political action committee, has come out in favor of Scranton, Sheehan said.

First AIDS Housing Facility To Open

by Tommi Avicoli

The first independent residential facility for indigent persons with AIDS in Philadelphia will open around October 7.

Terence Young, Philadelphia AIDS Task Force (PATF) housing program acting director, said that he is not revealing the location of the house. The city is funding the program, which allows for the establishment of up to five houses.

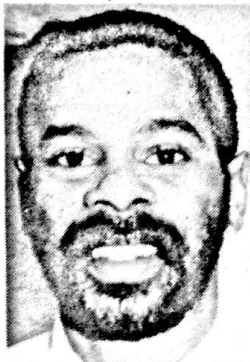
The city's initial grant for the program at the end of the last fiscal year was \$60,000. This fiscal year the city is contributing \$185,000. Judy Mason, an administrator at the Department of Human Services, said that there is no limit on how many times the grant can be renewed.

Mason said, "We're looking at five people in the houses, 25 beds altogether."

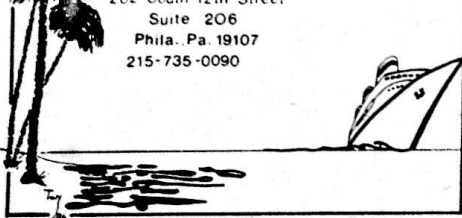
Young said that PATF met with representatives of several neighborhood councils about the housing program before a location was chosen. He said that there has been no resistance from the councils. Young was hired on July 21. He was not involved with the neighborhood meetings.

Residents of houses are responsible for their own food and money management, Young said. The first house will provide shelter for five persons with AIDS.

A second house may open sometime between December 21 and January 1, Young said.



Terence Young, acting director of the housing program for people with AIDS



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press before the dinner. King recalled that she and her husband had discussed gays. He believed that "there will come a time when we have to come to grips with the issue." She said that he did not discriminate against anyone—including gays—"if they were competent and shared our commitment to the struggle." She added that he was "very sympathetic" to the problems gay people endure.

King attributed homophobia among blacks to "lack of information" and said that a few black organizations have begun to address AIDS, citing an Atlanta benefit sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Vivian Shapiro, who steps down as HRCF co-chair in December, asserted that this year "we have had as many victories as losses and our victories are more significant." She cited the Congressional primary wins of HRCF-backed Democrats John Lewis of Georgia and Bella Abzug; the U.S. House vote upholding the D.C. AIDS insurance bill; and the \$250,000 HRCF expects to donate to candidates by the end of the year. This sum will place the group among the top ten independent PACs.

Lowell Weicker's September 10 speech on the Senate floor urging funds to expand AZT trials—a position which, he said, came as the result of a meeting with HRCF—"changed the course of history of our very lives," Shapiro added.

In an emotional salute to Abzug, she said, "We all owe Bella a awful lot. She stood there alone for us when we could not even stand there for ourselves."

In a different vein, Shapiro related that the Waldorf had asked HRCF to shift the dinner date after one of their largest accounts

Award, named by the New York publisher, producer, writer and gay activist who died in 1979. Andy Humm noted that he is probably the first recipient to try to sue its namesake. "Back in the '70s when my colleagues and I regarded Bob as an elitist insider, we went to the Board of Elections to sue his new gay PAC for violation of election laws," Humm recalled. "Such infighting is much less amusing now. We absolutely cannot afford it."

Remembering Livingston's 1978 pledge to New York City Council that "we will be back again and again and again" until it passed the gay rights bill, Humm, who as spokesperson for the Coalition of Lesbian and Gay Rights was a key bill organizer, said, "I guess you asked me to receive this award because the god-damn bill finally did pass."

But Humm made clear that the battle was not over. "We have a President who can barely say AIDS, a governor whom we [the Coalition] are suing because he thinks that it is more important to ban blow jobs than to explicitly inform people how AIDS is really transmitted and a mayor who has done so little to help 700 homeless people with AIDS that he is to be a target of a demonstration at Gracie Mansion. These are not leaders. They are followers. And the only way we are going to get them to act courageously is to show them our courage, to be ourselves, to be gay."

In accepting the Bell Award, honoring the gay journalist who died in 1984, Fierstein noted that "in about 36 hours the first ray of hope [AZT] will start being given to 6,000 people." He added, "Hopefully, 36 hours from now will be an end of ever losing anybody again."

Meara, who said husband Jerry

explained that HRCF invites people from outside the gay community to keynote the dinners because "as a community we can feel very alone, and we want the community to know we're not alone."

Hassan Resigns

(Continued from page 3)

Perspectives for Action) are in contact with some state representatives to let them know that people in their districts "are dying from AIDS and they can no longer hide from it."

BEBASHI and IMPACT also plan to reach out to the black community through prayer breakfasts with black clergy and presentations to black community leadership. Hassan said that they plan to "get the strategy [for reaching the black community] from them."

Hassan said that PATF "has the resources to be doing these things" and should have done them "four years ago."

IMPACT member Curtis Wadlington said that IMPACT, which is a committee of PATF, is "going back to PATF" to request support for an October 5 reception for Ted Johnson, newly hired PATF minority outreach coordinator, as well as for a poster and literature campaign geared towards the black community.

"We want to do it from within," Wadlington said. "If we can't, then it's time to pull out."

IMPACT member Carl Epps said, "As IMPACT, we have been appalled by the hiring of a minority coordinator, but we're not satisfied. It's not enough. Show us you're willing to go into the [minority] community with us."

Wadlington said that PATF has never said no to IMPACT's request for money but has put off the group by saying, "We have to get approved by this one and this meeting and that meeting."

The reception for Johnson is at 1199C, 1319 Locust Street, at 3 p.m.

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