

National/International News

Library Employees Victorious

Minneapolis, WI - The Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission has determined that the city of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Library Board discriminated against three lesbian employees by denying them dependent health insurance coverage. The three-person panel awarded Jane Anglin, Marie Hanson, and Judith Bagan a total of \$90,516 in compensatory and punitive damages in addition to attorneys' fees and costs. The order upholds a September 1991 finding by the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights that denial of dependent health coverage constitute discrimination because of affectional preference. Minneapolis, like a number of other municipalities and a few states, protects residents from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Jane Anglin first applied for health care coverage for her partner in July 1987 and continued to apply every year during open enrollment period until she left her job at the library in 1990. In November of 1988 Hanson and Bagan joined Anglin by applying for their partners. Hanson and Bagan remain library employees. All the initial applications were denied and subsequent applications were not accepted. The employees took their case to the Library Board which told them it was a matter for the City Council who referred them on to their employee's union. The city has the option to appeal the order. At press time the Mayor and City Council had not commented on whether they would do so. (*Equal Time*)

Albany Gay Rights Ordinance Now Law

Albany, NY - The Albany Common Council narrowly approved a lesbian and gay rights ordinance on December 7th. Signed by Mayor Whalen a few days later, the ordinance immediately became law. The 8 to 6 vote followed by the mayor's signature ended a five year struggle. Early in 1992 Mayor Whalen reversed his previous position against the ordinance. The ordinance prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing sales, rental of commercial space, housing rentals (except owner-occupied two family wellings) and public accommodations.

The mayor and all 15 Common Council members are up for re-election next year; opponents of the ordinance, including Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and Con-

cerned Citizens of Albany, have pledged to run candidates that will support amending or overturning the ordinance. (*Community*)

Cambridge Mayor "Comes Out"

Cambridge, MA - Cambridge Mayor Kenneth Reeves announced on December 11 that he is gay, but said it should not have come as a surprise to anyone. Reeves said his sexual orientation, which has been Cambridge's "best-known secret" during his public life, never received much public attention because the media overlooked it. It was at an awards ceremony that Reeves decided he needed to be honest. The Greater Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance gave Reeves a "Friend of the Community" award. At the end of his acceptance speech, Reeves said, "I am not an honorary homosexual. I am a real Homosexual..." In an interview with *The Washington Blade* Reeves explained his decision, saying, "I felt it was duplicitous and deceptive...to be accepting some sort of 'friend to myself' award."

Reeves, believed to be the nation's first openly gay African American mayor, has been a member of the city council since 1989. Elected to mayor in January of 1992, his term will expire in 1994. With Reeves' announcement, Cambridge becomes the largest city in the United States with an openly gay mayor. (*The Washington Blade*)

California Fundamentalists Follow Colorado Lead

Sacramento, CA - Rev Louis P. Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition has sent a fund-raising letter calling for a "statewide ballot proposition on the heterosexual ethic" in California. The letter gives the success of Colorado's Amendment 2 as an example of what Sheldon's group wants to accomplish. "Pro-family activists won a measure prohibiting 'special rights' in Colorado", the letter states. The Traditional Values Coalition, which is based in Anaheim, CA has also announced formation of a Minnesota affiliate to oppose attempts to enact a statewide ban on antigay bias in that state. (*Equal Times*)

Lewiston Police Dept. Seeks Ordinance

Lewiston, ME - In January, members of the Lewiston Police Department's Hate and Bias Crime Task Force presented a proposed ordinance to the City Council to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in areas of housing, credit, and public accommodation. Supporters of the ordinance include Lewiston police Chief Laurent Gilbert, Mayor James Howanec, State Senator Dale McCormick, and Portland City Councilor Peter O'Donnell, who proposed the successful ordinance in that city. (*Apex, The Advocate*)

Australia Lifts Defense Ban

Sydney, Australia - Despite a year long effort by defense chiefs and Defense Minister Robert Bray to keep the ban on gays and lesbians in the defense force, the Australian cabinet lifted it in December 1992. The change took effect immediately. Prime Minister Paul Keating said that the ban breached national human rights obligations not to discriminate on the basis of sexual preference. (*Equal Time*)

**R E D
HOT and
W I L D
VALENTINE'S EVE
QUEER PRIDE DANCE**

**with DJ Craig Mitchell
Saturday, February 13th, 8pm
Contois Auditorium
• Burlington \$5-10 donation
(Wear Socks You Can Hop In)
A benefit for the 1993 Gay, Lesbian
and Bisexual Pride Celebration.**

Vermont's Pride celebration will be Saturday, June 26th, in Burlington. For more info on the developing festivities, call 864-6764. Dance co-sponsored by the Burlington Women's Council.