

'Outing' could backfire

Across the country, some gay activists have been turning increasingly toward a disturbing practice in an attempt to achieve their political goals. They have turned around gays' traditional insistence that their sexual preference is nobody's business but their own, and are making it everyone's business.

The practice is called "outing," short for pulling homosexuals "out of the closet" against their will. It's been used as a weapon by fringe gay groups such as Queer Nation against politicians, public officials, members of the military and other prominent people.

The rationale is political: If you're gay and you don't agree with us — or even if you do agree with us but won't say so publicly — we will get you. It's a mean-spirited and dangerous practice. It plays right into the hands of bigots, since it is based on the assumption that it will be embarrassing or damaging to the individual being outed. It relies on bigots to exact punishment on the offender, by voting him or her out of office, for example.

It might be legitimate to expose someone as a rank hypocrite who was verbally bashing gays while secretly leading a gay lifestyle — if it could be proved. But in many cases of outing to date, the target did no more than disagree with the political goals of those who did the outing; or belong to an organization such as the military that is out of favor with gay activists; or in some cases, not speak out strongly enough in favor of the outers' goals. Clearly this is a tactic of both retaliation and intimidation.

There have been intimations that Madison members of Queer Nation intend to out some prominent local people. Let's hope they think better of it.

No one doubts that there are closeted gays and lesbians in local politics, business, academia and other prominent positions. They have their own reasons for keeping their sexual preference to themselves, and they do not owe anyone an explanation. In any case, it's difficult to discern any justification for outing anyone in Madison. Not all political and other leaders agree with everything in the agendas of gay activists, but there are no Jesse Helmses around here either.

One of the great dangers in outing people — which amounts, at its heart, to an unconscionable invasion of privacy — is that if it becomes acceptable for one group, it becomes acceptable for all. That could include the Jesse Helmses of the world, who would like nothing better than an excuse to peel back the protections of privacy in order to achieve their political goals. We don't need any pogroms in this country, from any political direction.

C-T 11/13/91

'Outing' tack can backfire

Proponents of the tactic called "outing," where militant gays publicly identify men and women who have refused to identify themselves as gay, seem determined to force their victims out of the closet and into the pigeonhole.

The "outers" make a good case when they argue that exposing homosexual preferences in public officials or community leaders who have shown antipathy to gay rights is simply exposing hypocrisy. For example, a preacher who excoriates gays from the pulpit in the morning while hanging out in gay bars at night would seem fair game.

But they lose credibility when they "out" for other reasons. "Outing" a macho movie star on grounds he can then serve as a role model for gay teens is akin to hacking off someone's arm so he can serve as model for disabled people. "Outing" people who

have never publicly hurt the gay community by anything other than their own silence is cruelty that could easily backfire on the gay community.

Most importantly, the "outers" presume that every gay man and woman must act alike, think alike and vote alike. Nothing could be further from the truth. The controversy over Clarence Thomas's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court has shown conclusively that not all black Americans agree on the best way to improve their lot in society. Diverse opinions also exist within the gay community: Exhibit One, as reported last Sunday in the State Journal, is the swirling debate over the "outing" practice itself.

Gay men and women are entitled to their own opinions. Unless those opinions reach rank levels of public hypocrisy, they're also entitled to their own privacy.

WISCONSIN  STATE JOURNAL

Jim Burgess, publisher Frank Denton, editor Tom Still, associate editor Sunny Schubert, editorial writer

State Journal editorials above are the consensus of this editorial board.

'Outing' is in, radical gays argue

By Dee J. Hall

Wisconsin State Journal

In June, a congressman was accosted in a Washington, D.C., bar by a man who threw a drink in his face and claimed the congressman is a homosexual.

Posters of a famous actress were hung around Manhattan and Hollywood this summer, spray-painted with the words "absolutely queer."

And last month, a national publication tried unsuccessfully to take out an advertisement in the New York Times to promote its upcoming blockbuster story, which purported to reveal that a high-ranking Pentagon official is gay.

For years, gays have lived in fear of this kind of harassment.

But these days, homosexuals —

or purported homosexuals — are being yanked out of the closet not by right-wing Moral Majority types but by members of their own community.

"Outing" has become the hallmark of a new, radical fringe of gay activists. Proponents of outing, led by the recently formed group Queer Nation, say they are exposing hypocrisy among high-profile gays.

Closet gays are "guilty of a sort of treason," maintains Tim Campbell, editor of the GLC Voice, a gay newspaper in Minneapolis. "They are dissenters from the army of gay rights."

But many gays disagree with Campbell, saying the tactic is "destructive" and "disturbing."

"It's almost a hostile activity, in

a way, that a certain sect of the gay and lesbian community is perpetrating against the rest of the gay community," said Elaine Herscher, board member of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists' Association based in San Francisco.

The tactic has raised concerns among the press, which activists rely on to spread word of their outings. Newspapers and other media that normally would shy away from whispering campaigns about someone's sexuality are drawn into covering such high-profile events as drink-throwing and hanging posters.

"What I'm concerned about is they (activists) are trying to force (a change) in this newspaper's standards of respecting people's privacy," said Frank Denton, editor

of the Wisconsin State Journal, which reported the drink-throwing episode aimed at U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., only after other newspapers did so.

"We respect people's privacy, including public officials' privacy, with a few exceptions," Denton said.

For gay journalists, the issue is even more vexing, Herscher said.

"There are disagreements within not only the gay community, but also within the community of gay and lesbian journalists," she said.

For her part, Herscher agrees with Denton that it's an invasion of privacy.

"People need to have the right to decide how 'out' they want to be,"

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Outing

Continued from Page 1A

she said. "I don't believe that just because you've run for office, your life is an open book."

Proponents of outing say, however, that high-profile gays need to be exposed to add fuel to the gay-rights movement.

Influential gays who remain in the closet "are enjoying gay liberation and giving nothing in return," said Michael Petrelis, who threw the drink in Gunderson's face in an effort to "out" him. "We need more of these influential people out of the closet and giving leadership."

Petrelis, a founder of Queer Na-

tion's Washington, D.C., chapter, said his targets "contribute" to their own outings by being indiscreet and hypocritical.

"These persons have to do two things to be possible targets for outings: They have to be high profile . . . and they have to exercise a lack of discretion in their gayness," he said.

The Pentagon official and actress both frequented gay bars, Petrelis charges. The Pentagon official was guilty of hypocrisy because the military's official policy continues to be that homosexuality is "incompatible" with membership in the armed services, he said.

And the actress was a target because a recent movie in which she appeared portrays gays in a nega-

tive light, Petrelis said. (The State Journal declines to identify the actress and the Pentagon official who were targets of the outings.)

As for Gunderson, Petrelis said he made himself a target by allegedly going to gay bars and failing to vote for the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Act.

In an interview with the La-Crosse Tribune in July, Gunderson said he had not studied the legislation. He labeled Petrelis and Campbell as "pathological liars," and added that his sexual preference "is not anybody's business."

Denton said a public figure's private life is an issue worthy of discussion in the State Journal only if it affects his or her performance in a "significant way," if the public

figure chooses to talk about it, or it "it's been widely known and widely reported in the media."

"It's the last one that gets us in the most trouble . . . and discomfort," Denton added.

The "widely known" test also is used by Terry Boughner, editor of the biweekly gay newspaper, the Wisconsin Light, published in Milwaukee.

"If I had a hypothetical, original, proof-positive story that someone were gay or lesbian, I would sit on it. I would not run it," Boughner said.

The Light ran the Gunderson story only after the Washington Post and New York Times published it. Said Boughner: "It was a judgment call."

gay-rights movement.

"I think it's taking control of someone else's life from them," said Pharr, a leader of The Women's Project advocacy group in Little Rock, Ark.

"There are those of us that are like, 'Is this the thing we need to be doing, putting (actresses') pictures up all over Manhattan,' or should we be dealing with issues of life and death?" Pharr said, including AIDS and physical abuse of gays.

She added, "To 'out' people is to imply that what they're doing is bad. I don't like that."

Denton put it even more bluntly. "What they're trying to do is provoke the homophobia out in the community. I find that appalling," he said.

Front, believes outing has its role in the gay-rights movement.

"I think it's brought a lot of gay, lesbian and bisexual issues to the front pages — things that weren't written before," Junikka said.

And exposing public officials as gay is not necessarily harmful to their careers, he said, noting that openly gay congressmen Gerry Studds and Barney Frank both have been re-elected in Massachusetts.

"It's not like you're committing political suicide if you come out of the closet," Junikka said.

But Pharr argues that the debate should be taken out of the closet — or the bedroom — and back into the boardroom where it belongs.

"I believe closeted gay and lesbian politicians in office who work against us can be dealt with in

f
Gunderson

CITY PAGES

Wisconsin Congressman Target of 'Outing'

Washington—Eau Claire Republican U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson was doused with a cocktail Sunday in an Alexandria, Va. gay bar by a gay activist who demanded that Gunderson publicly come out of the closet.

Before flinging a full glass of soda, Michael Petrelis, a Queer Nation/D.C. co-founder, shouted that Gunderson has an obligation to the gay community to openly fight for gay and lesbian civil rights.

Witnesses said Gunderson responded, "I am out. I'm in this bar, aren't I?"

Petrelis responded that Gunderson has "a duty to hold a press conference and tell the whole world," and that Gunderson "should not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of gay liberation" such as gay bars, when he does nothing public to help the gay movement.

Gunderson has an 88 percent pro-gay/pro-AIDS community voting record in Congress, but he is not a sponsor of the federal gay/lesbian rights bill and does not publicly speak in favor of pro-gay measures, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

The manager of the 808 King restaurant and nightclub, Richard Molnar, confirmed that the incident took place, but said he was not sure what Gunderson looks like and could not confirm that he was the victim of the attack. Other witnesses, however, said they were certain it was Gunderson.

The incident marked the second time Gunderson has been accosted in a gay bar by an outraged gay activist. Two years ago, a staffer at one of Washington's leading gay-lobbying organizations confronted Gunderson on a dance floor.

Washington journalists, gay activists and

gay Capitol Hill employees said this week that Gunderson has frequented the gay clubs Dakota, Lost and Found and J.R.'s. They also said he and his boyfriend socialize in Washington's gay neighborhood, DuPont Circle, and routinely attend gay- and AIDS-fundraising events.

"In a sense, you can't really say he's in the closet at all," said one gay leader.

Asked if Gunderson is gay, his press secretary, Jennifer Koberstein, said, "Not that I'm aware of."

At press time, Koberstein said Gunderson was traveling in the third district in his mobile van, which, she said, is not equipped with a cellular phone.

Queer Nation is a "direct action" group with chapters nationwide. Petrelis' action was part of the "outing" phenomenon, a two-year-old movement to drag pop-culture stars, professional athletes, politicians and other celebrities out of the closet to show America that gays and lesbians are everywhere.

Outing has been condemned by some major national gay/lesbian organizations as an invasion of privacy. But supporters of the tactic, in addition to Queer Nation chapters, include numerous chapters of ACT UP, or AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, a direct-action group with affiliates across the U.S. and Europe, including Milwaukee.

—REX WOCKNER

County Stall Denied

"The tortuous history of this action is well known to the court," Milwaukee County Corporation Counsel Robert G. Ott wrote to Circuit Judge Francis T. Wasielewski.

That's how Ott led off in asking the judge to reduce by \$100,000 the county's debt to former Sheriff's Captain Robert J. Bialk. A jury last year found the county had violated

Gunderson defends right to privacy

Lifestyle is 'nobody's business'

Associated Press

Rep. Steven Gunderson, R-Wis., insisting his private life is nobody's business, says he feels threatened by a gay rights group that demands a public declaration of his lifestyle.

Gunderson said he has visited gay bars and restaurants in Washington, D.C., and doesn't feel public officials have to divulge their personal orientation.

"It is not anybody's business. Being single, I have been accused of being a womanizer by some, abstinent by others. I can't prove any of them," he said.

Gunderson's comments in a telephone interview were published in the La Crosse Tribune. The newspaper said it was his first extensive reply to stories published recently in Madison, Milwaukee and Washington concerning encounters with Queer Nation, a gay rights organization.

A member of the group tossed a drink on Gunderson at a suburban Washington bar June 30.

Michael Petrellis, a founder of Queer Nation, said he threw the drink, demanding that Gunderson "come out of the closet."

During a July 4 parade in La Crosse, Tim Campbell, of Minneapolis, was taken into custody while distributing an estimated 2,000 leaflets asking the congressman to support gay rights legislation. The leaflets said Gunderson was in gay bars on two occasions.

Gunderson accused the group of "despicable tactics."

"To legitimize this kind of trash is something I want our office to rise above," he said. "I've been threatened as to my personal security. We're dealing with crazy people."

"It is one of many of Tim Campbell's pathological lies," Gunderson said of the leaflet's claim. "Yes, I was in a gay-owned restaurant to get dinner. There are lots of gay-owned businesses in Washington. I would take my parents there; there was nothing wrong with being there."

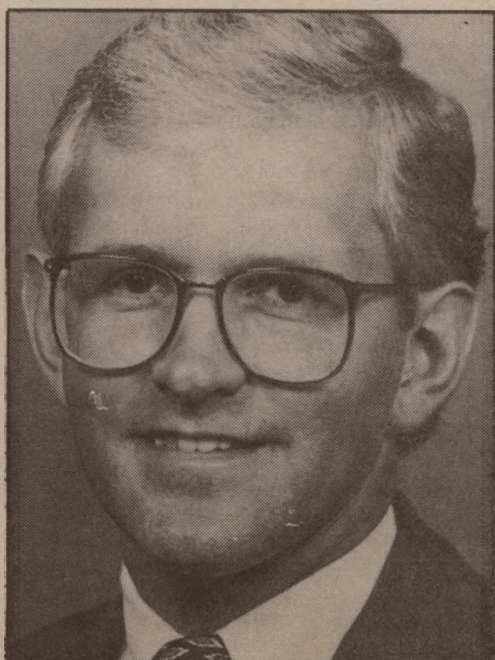
"Yes, I have been in a gay bar. I have gay friends, black friends, women friends, Jews; anyone who knows me knows I am a strong advocate of civil rights for everybody," he said.

Asked if he is homosexual, he replied: "I can't answer that because I can't prove it to you."

Gunderson, 40, was a state legislator for four years before he was elected to the House in 1980 from western Wisconsin's 3rd District.

Gunderson's comments included:

■ "What you need to understand is that



'Nothing in my personal life is legitimate discussion unless I am breaking the law or using my position for it.'

U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson

Queer Nation is apparently a group of radicals 'outed' by even the gay community for their despicable tactics."

■ "These two individuals do not know me, have not visited with me, yet they suggest they know about my personal life."

■ "The key here is, I'm married to my job. I don't really have a personal life. That's it. I'm here at 7 o'clock and here late at night. For better or worse, I've committed my life to public office. The rest is pretty boring."

■ "Nothing in my personal life is legitimate discussion unless I am breaking the law or using my position for it. I have been accused of all of those things, but I can't prove it to you."

Gunderson acknowledged the subject could become an election campaign issue.

"Being in public life, I have learned your detractors will raise any and every detraction. They have done so in past, and they will do so in the future," he said.

"One disappointment of public office is that I have found some people absolutely hate others of different political persuasions."

Media Notes

Gay Activist Seeks Coverage Of an 'Outing'

By Howard Kurtz
Washington Post Staff Writer

When Michael Petrellis, a gay activist with the group Queer Nation, went to an Alexandria gay bar and threw a drink in the face of a prominent Wisconsin politician, he tried his best to generate media coverage of the "outing" incident.

First he called a Milwaukee weekly, the Shepherd Express, that ran a story on how Petrellis had doused the politician and demanded that he "come out of the closet." Then the June 30 incident was picked up by the Capital Times in Madison. The Washington Times carried an item on the incident Monday. All three papers named the politician.

"We have some obligation to tell people that this is the way he passes his time," John Patrick Hunter, associate editor of the Capital Times, says of the politician. "I don't give

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THE WASHINGTON POST

Politician

strong-arm tactics to get what they want and to draw attention to themselves. It's really reminiscent of McCarthy tactics."

MEDIA NOTES, From F1

a darn if he's gay or not, and I don't think my paper does. . . . But in this business you just can't ignore it." Hunter adds, "I feel sorry that we had to run the story."

Francis Coombs, national editor of the Washington Times, says the paper generally doesn't touch outing attempts "with a 10-foot pole," but felt the incident had been widely reported in Wisconsin. "Would we have initiated the story on the basis of Petrellis throwing a drink in the face of this guy in an Alexandria bar? No way," he says.

Outing remains controversial within the gay community. Lisa Keen, senior editor of the gay-oriented Washington Blade, says her paper almost never reports such incidents because, among other things, "we respect people's right to privacy." But Petrellis says, "What is the threshold for newsworthiness? A run-in with a gay activist in a gay bar with a closeted [politician] is news."

Leonard Downie Jr., managing editor of The Washington Post, likened the incident to the Palm Beach rape case, in which the alleged victim was named first by the Globe supermarket tabloid and then by NBC and the New York Times. "There's no reason to follow the pack," he says.

Downie says allegations of homosexuality are difficult to prove and that such information "needs to be relevant. How often do we write that such-and-such [politician] is a very active heterosexual?"

Most Wisconsin newspapers have not reported the incident. Howard Fibich, the Milwaukee Journal's deputy managing editor, says: "We've known about [the politician's] sexual orientation for a long time but have not seen it appropriate to report it."

The politician's press secretary says Petrellis "created the incident and pushed the story in our district. . . . This is a group that is using

Report Brings Repercussions

Gunderson outing story has press asking questions

By SCOTT KERR

The publisher of a gay newspaper says Congressman Steven Gunderson's staff tried to intimidate him, then set the stage for a police arrest to squelch questions about the prominent Republican's sexual orientation and gay-rights voting record.

Gunderson, of Osseo, has been Wisconsin's 3rd District U.S. representative since 1980. He was the target of a June 30 incident provoked by a gay activist in a bar near Washington, D.C. Debate over reporting the "outing" has reverberated between Wisconsin and Washington since.

Timothy Campbell, publisher of the Minneapolis *GLC Voice*, said the incident spurred his decision to try to interview Gunderson. Instead, Campbell was arrested at a Fourth of July parade in La Crosse while passing out flyers demanding Gunderson, the parade marshal that day, "come out for gay rights." Campbell was charged with littering and placing flyers on car windshields.

But Campbell contends the bust followed, and may be linked with, efforts to intimidate him by Gunderson's Washington press secretary, Jennifer Koberstein. Campbell said he had asked as a reporter for Gunderson's public schedule, but Koberstein refused to provide it. Campbell believes he was denied the information out of fear of the questions a reporter for a gay newspaper might ask.

"It's public information. They were giving out his schedule to the straight press all week." It was discrimination not to provide it to a gay publication, Campbell said in a phone interview.

In light of Gunderson's purported sexual orientation, Campbell found Koberstein's rebuff hypocritical. The publisher of the 12-year-old, 10,000 circulation *GLC Voice* promised to Koberstein a "political action" in Gunderson's home district.

Campbell said Det. Lt. Karen Luteran of the Washington, D.C. Capitol Police called him July 3 and said Gunderson's office had complained that Campbell had made a threat against the congressman. Luteran referred a reporter's questions about the complaint against Campbell to Gunderson's office.

"It was an attempt to intimidate me. I had promised a political action, but no threat of harm was made," Campbell said. The action took the form of 2,000 flyers which spotlighted Gunderson's recent gay bar confrontation, and called on him to "come out for gay rights now" by joining congressional sponsors of the gay and lesbian civil rights bill. The hot-pink flyers also proclaimed, "No Votie! No Nookie!" which Campbell said indicated that Gunderson "should be ashamed to show his face in gay pick-up bars if he doesn't support gay rights."

Campbell said that while he was in a squad car after his arrest, he heard the police radio dispatcher comment, "It looks like they made good on their threat." The dispatcher then asked arresting officer Sgt. R.L. Bott, "Did you get the flyers?" Bott answered yes, according to Campbell.

"It is a freedom of speech issue. But you know, if I had been burning a flag at that parade, they would have thought twice about arresting me," Campbell said. He has sought help from the Wisconsin American Civil

Thursday, July 4, 1991

D.C. gay activist douses Gunderson

By John Patrick Hunter
Associate Editor, The Capital Times
U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, of Osseo, one of the leading Republicans, was doused with a cocktail by a gay activist Sunday.

Critic tosses drink on Gunderson

U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Osseo) was doused with a drink at a restaurant by a gay activist Sunday.

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The Capital Times

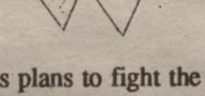


Gay rights protester arrested

Flier targets Gunderson

QUEER NATION
Madison (608)263-2433

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!



Liberties Union with his plans to fight the charges.

Koberstein did not return repeated phone calls. Gunderson's Wisconsin office referred all questions to Koberstein.

Gunderson has been mum since June 30, when Michael Petrelis, a Queer Nation activist, chanted "Come out, Gunderson, come out," then flung a drink at the congressman at the gay-owned 808 King Street Bar, also

known as the French Quarter Cafe, in Alexandria, Virginia. Police questioned Petrelis at the bar, but not Gunderson, who did not want to press charges. Petrelis said Alexandria City Police Officer J. Munero told him no official incident report would be filed.

But Capitol Police Sergeant-At-Arms Jack Russ called Petrelis July 5 and advised him that Gunderson's office had complained of concerns about the congressman's well-being. "In my book, it was pure political intimidation," Petrelis said Monday of the call. If Gunderson were concerned about safety, Petrelis could have been arrested June 30, Petrelis said.

OUTING REPORT MUTATES

As Petrelis intended, the incident has sparked controversy. The July 4 *Shepherd Express* account was followed the next day by a story in *The Capital Times* in Madison. The *Washington Times* reported the incident July 8.

"All three papers named the politician," stated a July 10 column in *The Washington Post*, which did not. But the *Post* did name Petrelis and detailed the incident in the guise of questioning the propriety of reporting it.

Post managing editor Leonard Downie "likened the incident to the Palm Beach rape case, in which the alleged victim was named first by the *Globe* supermarket tabloid and then by NBC and *The New York Times*. There's no reason to follow the pack, he says," said the *Post*, which noted that most Wisconsin papers did not name "the politician."

"We've known about [the politician's] sexual orientation for a long time but have not seen it appropriate to report it," *Milwaukee Journal* deputy managing editor Howard Fibich told the *Post*. The *Journal* did run a circumspect account of the incident, complete with Gunderson's name and photo, in

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its late metro edition on July 3; the story did not appear in the edition sold in Gunderson's district.

"I've been surprised not by how far it has traveled but by how little attention it's received in the Wisconsin press," said John Patrick Hunter, associate editor of *The Capital Times*. "We don't have an obligation to keep secrets, we have an obligation to inform people."

The Associated Press office in Milwaukee confirmed that the story was not put out on the wire. *La Crosse Tribune* reporter Chris Hardie said his paper hopes to run a follow-up to its July 5 report on

Campbell's leafletting arrest. That story did not mention the gay bar "outing," the basis for the demands and allegations on Campbell's flyer.

"We don't feel we have enough information to run a story on it with a legitimate angle without talking to the congressman himself," Hardie said.

But the congressman is not talking. His press secretary Koberstein does not return phone calls to some; to others, she makes clear that questions related to her boss's sexual orientation are off limits.

Contacted after the outing, Koberstein confirmed the incident, but when asked if Gunderson is gay replied, "Not that I'm aware of." Yet in the *Post* story, the unnamed Koberstein said the named Petrelis "created the incident and pushed the story in our district. This is a group that is using strong-arm tactics to get what they want and draw attention to themselves. It's really reminiscent of McCarthy tactics." Under the cover of anonymity, Koberstein did not dispute the allegations, only the tactic.

Disagreement on the tactic is sharp even within gay activist circles.

Milwaukee Queer Nation member Stan Straka said he thinks all gays should be "out" of the closet, but he would never participate in an outing attempt. Because it violates a person's right to privacy, Straka said he generally disapproves of the tactic.

"But when it comes to a politician who is voting against gay rights and AIDS funding, that is different," Straka added.

Campbell said the privacy issue cannot pertain when a public official "frequents public places known for cruising." He also dismisses comparisons of outing with gay-baiting.

"This is not the McCarthy tactic of [Sen.] Jessie Helms saying Steve Gunderson is a fag, this is fags saying he's a fag. It's not even about sexual orientation, it's about hypocrisy. One of the most standard ploys in politics is to draw attention to the discrepancies between a politician's actions and his [voting] record," Campbell said.

For Campbell, the outing raised the issue of a politician's double standards; it then became a freedom of speech battle. But in most of the press, the story triggered the defensive reflex of silence.

"No one relishes doing a story like this," said *The Capital Times* Hunter on his decision to run the story. "He's been a decent representative for the district."

"I'm an old expert in covering things like this. I covered Joe McCarthy when he was running around the country telling lies about people, but we never reported that he was drunk all the time. [We later] realized that we never wrote about things that happened after 8 p.m."

"That's changed, and I think it's for the better," Hunter said.



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CITY PAGES

Wisconsin Congressman Target of 'Outing'

Washington—Eau Claire Republican U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson was doused with a cocktail Sunday in an Alexandria, Va. gay bar by a gay activist who demanded that Gunderson publicly come out of the closet.

Before flinging a full glass of soda, Michael Petrelis, a Queer Nation/D.C. co-founder, shouted that Gunderson has an obligation to the gay community to openly fight for gay and lesbian civil rights.

Witnesses said Gunderson responded, "I am out. I'm in this bar, aren't I?"

Petrelis responded that Gunderson has "a duty to hold a press conference and tell the whole world," and that Gunderson "should not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of gay liberation" such as gay bars, when he does nothing public to help the gay movement.

Gunderson has an 88 percent pro-gay/pro-AIDS community voting record in Congress, but he is not a sponsor of the federal gay/lesbian rights bill and does not publicly speak in favor of pro-gay measures, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

The manager of the 808 King restaurant and nightclub, Richard Molnar, confirmed that the incident took place, but said he was not sure what Gunderson looks like and could not confirm that he was the victim of the attack. Other witnesses, however, said they were certain it was Gunderson.

The incident marked the second time Gunderson has been accosted in a gay bar by an outraged gay activist. Two years ago, a staffer at one of Washington's leading gay-lobbying organizations confronted Gunderson on a dance floor.

Washington journalists, gay activists and

gay Capitol Hill employees said this week that Gunderson has frequented the gay clubs Dakota, Lost and Found and J.R.'s. They also said he and his boyfriend socialize in Washington's gay neighborhood, DuPont Circle, and routinely attend gay- and AIDS-fundraising events.

"In a sense, you can't really say he's in the closet at all," said one gay leader.

Asked if Gunderson is gay, his press secretary, Jennifer Koberstein, said, "Not that I'm aware of."

At press time, Koberstein said Gunderson was traveling in the third district in his mobile van, which, she said, is not equipped with a cellular phone.

Queer Nation is a "direct action" group with chapters nationwide. Petrelis' action was part of the "outing" phenomenon, a two-year-old movement to drag pop-culture stars, professional athletes, politicians and other celebrities out of the closet to show America that gays and lesbians are everywhere.

Outing has been condemned by some major national gay/lesbian organizations as an invasion of privacy. But supporters of the tactic, in addition to Queer Nation chapters, include numerous chapters of ACT UP, or AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, a direct-action group with affiliates across the U.S. and Europe, including Milwaukee.

—REX WOCKNER

County Stall Denied

"The tortuous history of this action is well known to the court," Milwaukee County Corporation Counsel Robert G. Ott wrote to Circuit Judge Francis T. Wasielewski.

That's how Ott led off in asking the judge to reduce by \$100,000 the county's debt to former Sheriff's Captain Robert J. Bialk. A jury last year found the county had violated

Bialk's rights when forcing him from his 32-year law enforcement career. Wasielewski threw out the verdict, but reinstated it under order from the State Supreme Court.

This time, Wasielewski did not bend over backwards for the county, and Ott's motion was denied.

Ott argued on Monday that the county should not have to pay the \$100,000 the jury awarded to Bialk for damage caused by the acts of then-special prosecutor Theodore Hodan.

"Inclusion of that sum in the judgment constitutes a mistake, a mistake which one might charitably assume was due to inadvertence," Ott argued. Yet under questioning Nov. 12, 1990 by Wasielewski soon after the Supreme Court order, Ott's assistant said the county would pay the verdict, including the \$100,000, if the county lost the case.

After the State Supreme Court refused to hear the case, the county quietly wrote Bialk a \$443,719 check, withholding on Ott's advice \$100,000 plus interest.

Bialk's attorney Walter Kelly pointed out to Wasielewski that the county had never questioned the judgment amount until Ott threatened to reopen the judgment as a bargaining chip in settlement negotiations.

The judgment will continue at 12 percent interest if the county appeals the ruling. Ott could not be reached for comment.

—SCOTT KERR

Oiling Up Tourism

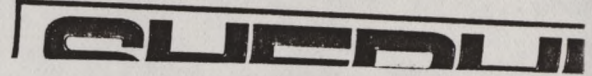
It's a toll-free call, and environmental activists are hoping for a barrelful of them.

The Chequamegon Alliance, a social and environmental justice organization opposing proposed exploratory oil well drilling in Wisconsin, is urging calls to the Bayfield County Department of Tourism.

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Thursday, July 4, 1991

The Capital Times

D.C. gay activist douses Gunderson

By John Patrick Hunter

Associate Editor, The Capital Times

U.S. Rep. Steve Gunderson, of Osseo, one of the leading House Republicans, was doused with a cocktail by a gay activist in a suburban Washington restaurant Sunday night, according to a report published Wednesday by the Milwaukee weekly Shepherd Express.

The weekly said Gunderson was splashed with a full glass of soda by Michael Petrellis, a Queer Nation/D.C. co-founder, who demanded that the veteran 3rd District congressman "publicly come out of the closet."

The Capital Times was unable to speak directly to Gunderson. His press secretary, Jennifer Koberstein, said Gunderson was traveling in western Wisconsin. She acknowledged that Gunderson had been doused at a restaurant, but she said that "as far as I know he is not" gay.

The Milwaukee publication

said the scene of the "incident" was the 808 King restaurant-bar located in downtown Alexandria, Va.

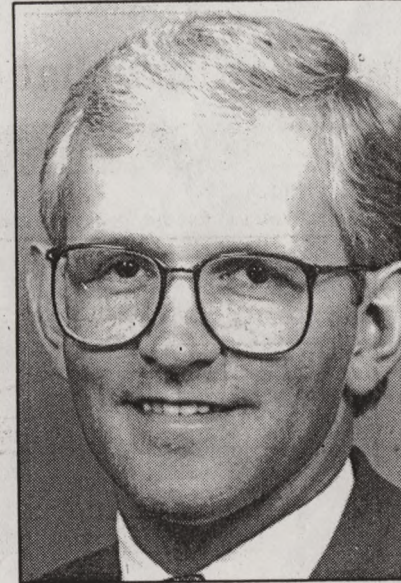
Petrellis, in a telephone interview with The Capital Times, said the establishment opened three weeks ago.

He said the restaurant-bar ran a full-page ad in this week's Washington Blade, an alternative publication, describing the establishment as "gay-owned and operated for the gay and lesbian community."

Petrellis said he had decided to confront Gunderson because the congressman is "the third or fourth in command of the usually anti-gay" House Republican minority delegation.

"It is one thing to see him in gay bars on Sunday night and then on Monday move with bills against us," Petrellis said.

According to the Milwaukee weekly, "Queer Nation is a direct action group with chapters nationwide."



Steve Gunderson

The weekly said: "Petrellis' action was part of the 'outing' phenomenon, a 2-year-old movement to drag pop-culture stars, professional athletes, politicians and other celebrities out of the closet to show that gays and lesbians are everywhere."

Outings have been condemned by some major national gay/lesbian organizations as an invasion of privacy, while other support groups favor the tactic, Shepherd Express reported.

Youth won't stand in new congressman's way

By Nancy Conner
Correspondent

OSSEO, Wis. — Steve Gunderson was sweeping the snow off his grandmother's sidewalk one day last week, looking at first glance more like a high school kid than the congressman-elect from Wisconsin's 3rd District.

But up close, it became apparent that his blond hair has gone gray at the temples, so that he looks older than his 29 years.

GUNDERSON ATTRIBUTED the gray hairs to the strenuous past year, spent campaigning against two other solid Republican primary candidates and then against incumbent Rep. Alvin Baldus in the Nov. 4 election.

Since winning what is considered an upset victory, Gunderson has spent almost all his time in Washington, D.C., attending orientation sessions for freshman congressmen and lining up his office staff.

He had come home last week to relax, buy Christmas presents and enjoy the traditional Christmas dinner with about 60 relatives at his grandmother's house in Osseo.

Campaign staff at the Osseo headquarters jokingly referred to her home as "the Grandmother Gunderson Hilton." At times, Esther Gunderson said, she had as many as six or seven campaign workers sleeping in the basement, where the candidate also lived for the duration of the campaign.

"WE SURE HAD a lot of people staying here," Mrs. Gunderson said, smiling. Like other volunteers, she also spent time ad-dressing and stuffing envelopes in the headquarters office.

That kind of family involvement and hospitality probably was one of the secrets of success in the congressional election, and in Gunderson's previous three successful state assembly races as well.

The articulate, clean-cut and politically experienced young man seemed to have a huge bank of supporters. Friends and neighbors in Osseo, population 1,500, and the surrounding towns pitched in to help elect Gunderson.

"THE PEOPLE around here really worked for Steve — it made a big difference," Esther Gunderson said. "They put in long hours. If you had to hire

His senior year, he was elected student body president. Together with two close friends, he talked the school board into lifting a ban on senior class trips to Washington, D.C. "It was a real lobby job," he said.

The three friends have remained close, and one of them, Jim Reck, has been named Gunderson's press aide. "We were joking the other day, 'Who would have thought we would come back to Washington and try to run this town,'" Gunderson said.

HE WENT ON to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, graduating in 1973 with a degree in political science and an interest in sports journalism.

"I was always interested in sports and played a lot of football in high school, but I didn't want to be in coaching," he said. "I worried about my ability to go out and motivate young kids in athletics."

So, he entered Brown School of Broadcasting in Minneapolis with the idea of pursuing a sports-broadcasting career. His special interest had become hockey, and later, when he was representing the 91st state Assembly District, he told a local reporter jokingly that he'd grab at the chance to become a play-by-play hockey announcer in a warm climate.

"I got some grief from that interview — some people thought I was an arrogant s.o.b. and said, 'Well, maybe you don't want to serve the people of the district,'" Gunderson said.

"Really, what I'd like is at age 55 or 60 to do that (hockey announcing) for a year or so."

HE SAID he made his first decision to run for Assembly at the urging of a woman he was dating and her father, Arthur Shannon, then treasurer of the state Republican Party. The daughter, Susan Shannon, and Gunderson each ran in their home districts, and each was elected.

"Then she'd go home to her district every weekend and I'd go home to mine, and it became a joke that I gained a job and lost a girlfriend," Gunderson said. She is now Susan Engleleiter, and is serving in the state Senate.

Gunderson isn't married, although he said he has been dating steadily.

yet," he said, laughing. "1980 was an economic disaster for me. I didn't have any income and I went into personal debt to campaign."

GUNDERSON SAID he could see himself serving as many as six terms in Congress if he can get re-elected. "That's a good length to serve, and it may take 12 years to get done what I want to do," he said.

The new representative of the sprawling, 15-county 3rd District

will be the youngest member of the Wisconsin congressional delegation, and one of the youngest ever to get elected to Congress from the state.

"I really look forward to this as an opportunity and a privilege," he said, "but it is a very sobering thing when you consider the great problems and situations, such as the economy, that Congress will be facing. Some important decisions will have to be made."



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Nancy Conner/For the Pioneer Press

Newly-elected Wisconsin Rep. Steve Gunderson expects up to 90 people from the 3rd District to attend the swearing-in ceremonies Jan. 5 in Washington.

parents, Adeline and Arthur, who own a Chevrolet dealership, and some of his four brothers and three sisters still live there. They range in age from 13 to 31.

"WE'RE SORT OF spread out in age, but our family is very close — my brothers and sisters always do everything together," Gunderson said. "With the campaign, it was amazing the amount of family participation there was, but this is the way we do everything."

The closeness extends to his Uncle Ray Gunderson's family as well, and Steve said he

HIS MOTHER recalled, "In grade school, even, he was very much interested in politics and he'd sit there and listen to the radio and television on election night to see how they came out."

Ernie Brickner, principal of Whitehall High School when Gunderson was a student there, recalls him as a good speaker, outstanding in forensics.

"He was just an outstanding student all around, personable and courteous to everyone," Brickner said. "You just knew he was a young man who was going somewhere, he was so mature

THE PEOPLE around here really worked for Steve — it made a big difference," Esther Gunderson said. "They put in long hours. If you had to hire that, I don't know how you'd be able to afford a campaign."

Looking back, Gunderson said he finds it a "humbling experience" that so many had volunteered their time and efforts.

Now that he has been elected, his supporters are following him to Washington, too. Gunderson expects as many as 90 persons from the district to attend the congressional swearing-in ceremonies Jan. 5. Most close Gunderson relatives will be among those attending.

Gunderson comes from a large family and grew up in a small town — "37 people if you count the cats and dogs," he quipped. That town is Pleasantville, about 10 miles southwest of Osseo. His

there was, but this is the way we do everything.

The closeness extends to his Uncle Ray Gunderson's family as well, and Steve said he felt a great loss when Ray's wife, Shari, and one of their children were killed in an automobile accident last month.

"We were very close, and it's so clearly taught me you can win anything you want in the world, but people are so much more important," Gunderson said. "It's going to be a very sad Christmas for us," he said during an interview a few days before the holidays.

Some people have wondered what makes Steve Gunderson tick, why he would want to start a political career at the age of 23. But those who knew him as a youngster already could see some of the signs.

is now Susan Engerich, and is serving in the state Senate.

Gunderson isn't married, although he said he has been dating steadily a woman he met in Washington while working on Rep. Toby Roth's staff for a few months last year.

"I can't afford to get married

Gunderson's first elected office was freshman class treasurer in high school. He recalls that term with amusement.

"AT THE END of that year, the class adviser called me in and said the books didn't balance, and there were connotations that I had made off with the money," he said.

"It went on for a week — they pulled me out of class several times and questioned me. Finally the office staff discovered they had made the mistake.

"But I should have read the sign and never run for office again," he added, laughing.

Diverse base needed

Utility board seeks citizens

MADISON, Wis. — The operation of the Wisconsin Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) will be a major step forward in representing utility customer interests if the group can attract a broad base of support, says a University of Wisconsin-Madison political scientist.

Professor William T. Gormley, who has studied regulatory agency policies in all 50 states, says the board must avoid appealing only to a narrow range of citizens.

"DIVERSITY IS critical to public discourse. If CUB is accountable to diverse interests, it will be a terrific success. But if it is accountable to narrower interests, it will discredit this approach," he said.

A test of CUB's support may be the current elections to the board of directors. CUB, established in 1979 by the Legislature, relies on a \$3 membership fee for its financial support. Mem-

bers then vote by congressional district for representatives on the board, which oversees staff researchers and decides which issues CUB will represent at Public Service Commission hearings.

Ballots are mailed to members, and voting will start Monday and continue through Jan. 15. About 25,000 people have paid the \$3 fee for CUB membership.

Though consumer interests have traditionally been underrepresented at regulatory agencies, the climate has changed in recent years, Gormley said.

"There is now substantial public advocacy in three-fourths of the states," he said. "That is an enormous change from 10 years ago. The key question, though, is whether or not a public advocate can make a difference."

PUBLIC ADVOCACY in most states, Gormley said, consists of grass-roots representation by citizens groups or proxy repre-

sentation by designated public officials, in some cases the attorney general. While both provide a measure of support for consumer interests, each has drawbacks.

"The problem with grass-roots advocates," he said, "is that they lack expertise to seriously address complex technical issues." Citizen groups seldom have sufficient funds to compete with well-financed utilities in preparing a convincing case before the regulatory agencies, he added.

Proxy advocates, while well-financed, tend to shy away from divisive issues and are not directly accountable to consumers, the political scientist said.

CUB COMBINES the best element of grass-roots advocacy — accountability — with the best of proxy advocacy — expertise, he said.

State residents who wish to vote for directors must mail \$3 to the CUB office, P.O. Box 8003, Madison, Wis. 53708, by Jan. 15.

PSC makeup changes proposed

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Plans to introduce legislation that would change the makeup of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in an effort to make it "more effective and increase its credibility" were announced Saturday by a pair of Democratic legislators from Milwaukee.

Sen. Warren Braun and Rep. Mordecai Lee proposed that the size of the panel be increased from three to five persons, the terms be reduced from six years to four years and that the commissioners elect the head of the panel, beginning in 1982.

The bill would also limit to two the number of commissioners from any political party who could serve at the same time, and would rename the panel the Utilities Regulatory Commission.

"We think the commission's workload has become too large and complex to be fairly and thoroughly dealt with by just three persons," Braun and Lee said in a letter to their legislative colleagues.

"Utility issues are among the most serious problems facing the state. Two additional members would allow the commissioners to develop areas of expertise, especially as it relates to the state's large gas, electric and telephone utilities."

Lee and Braun noted that only nine of the 34 PSC members appointed since 1930 had served their full six-year terms, and said their proposal to make one appointment in each of three years and two every fourth year to shorter terms would increase legislative review of the panel.

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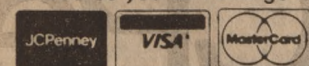
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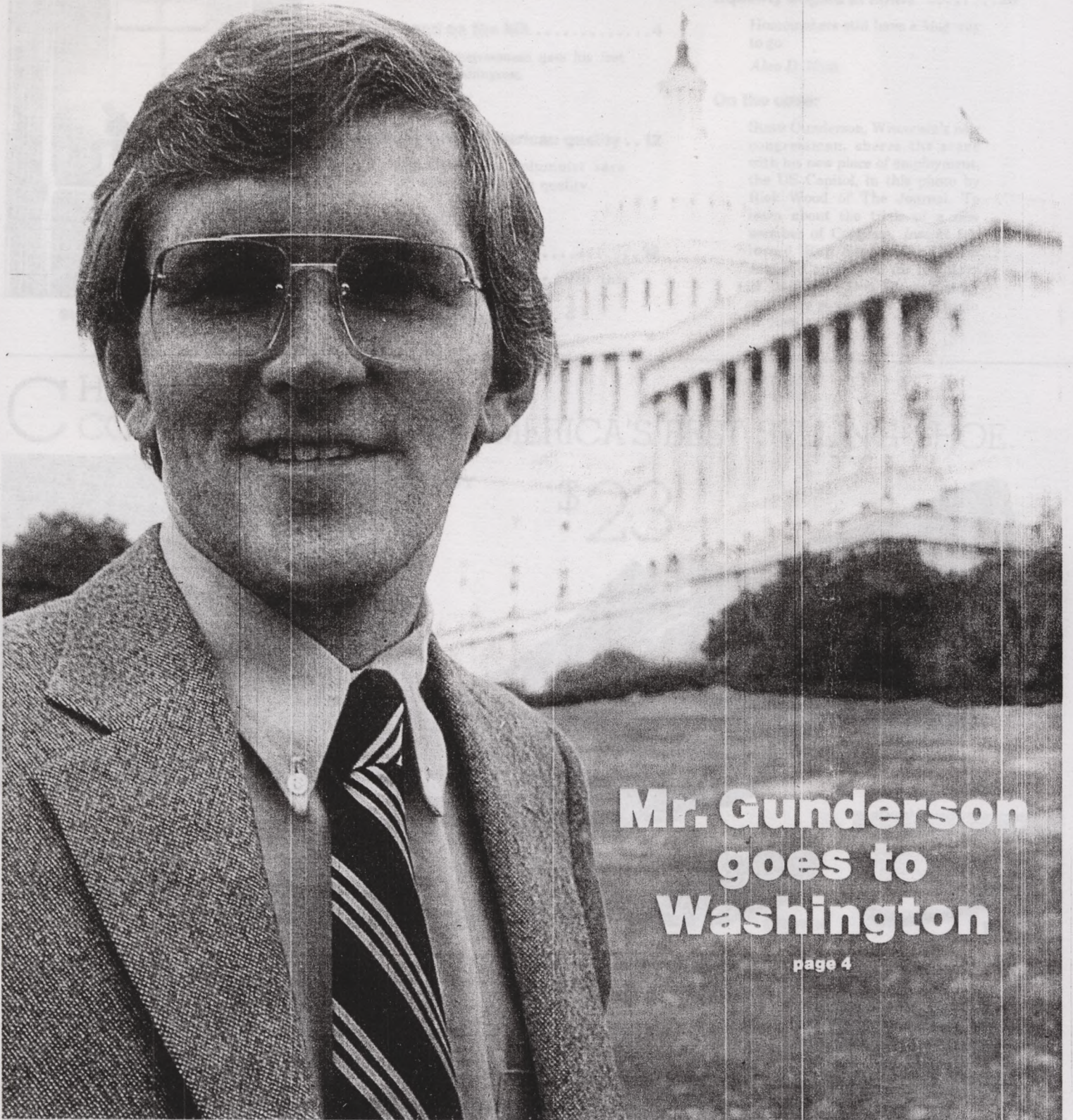
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THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

INSIGHT

Sunday February 1, 1981



Mr. Gunderson goes to Washington

page 4

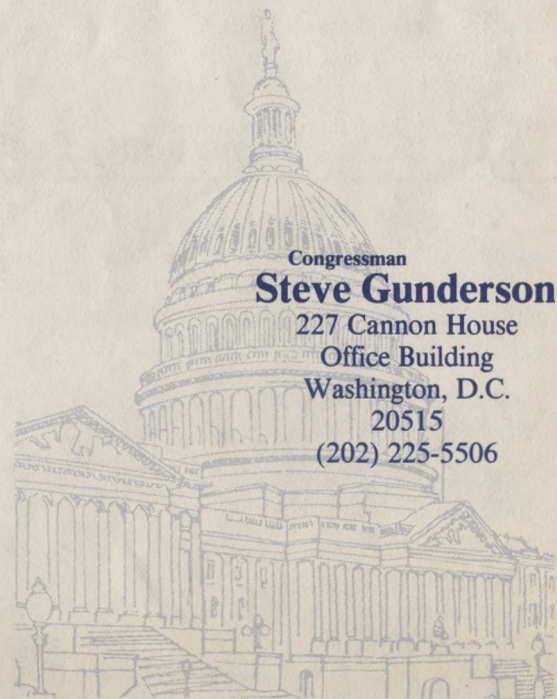
Where Do You Stand?

My vote in the U.S. House of Representatives is your vote. That's why I need to hear your views and opinions on legislative issues. If you have an opinion about a particular issue, I encourage you to let me know about it. I am happy to respond to your concerns and let you know what's happening with the issue.

Contact me about a legislative issue by **writing** to me at the Washington address listed below.

Your Congressional Office

In Washington . . .



HELPING YOU

Dear Friend:

The Constitution says the job of a Member of Congress is to make laws—nothing less, nothing more. But with the growth of government in our everyday lives, the job today is quite different.

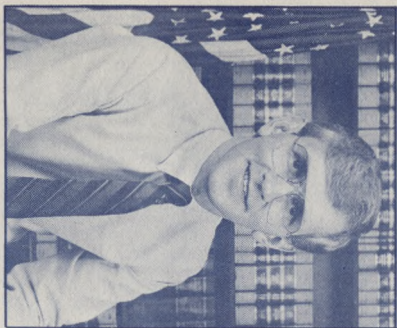
We receive almost as many requests for help in dealing with a government agency as we do for support or opposition to a particular piece of legislation. And yet surveys show that requests from the Third District for such help are low compared to many of my colleagues.

The purpose of this newsletter is two-fold. First, we want to encourage you to seek our assistance if you are having problems with the federal government. My Wisconsin staff specializes in constituent service and is as good as any in the nation. Second, we want to suggest ways in which our help can be most productive. We have included guidelines that you can use when contacting us—the guidelines will help us help you.

We hope you don't have problems with the federal government, but if you do please don't hesitate to contact us. We won't ask any agency to "bend the rules," but we will make sure you receive every possible consideration.

Best regards,

Congressman
Steve Gunderson
Welcomes You To
Utilize His Office
Services.



Congressman
Steve Gunderson

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



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- Government Loan Programs
- Farm Programs
- Mail Service
- Veterans Programs
- Unemployment Compensation
- Workers Compensation
- Education Assistance
- OSHA Problems
- Small Business Programs
- Military Problems
- Consumer Complaints
- Internal Revenue Service
- Energy Regulation and Tax Credits
- Housing

- Immigration and Naturalization Service
- Civil Service

Personal Requests:

- Group and Individual Visits to Washington
- White House Tours (30 day advance notice, please)
- Info on Legislation
- Government Publication Requests
- Military Academy Appointments
- Request for testimony from Congressional Committees

Community Problems:

We may be able to help your community with a number of federal programs, ranging from grant assistance to flood plain zoning. I have three staff members specializing in economic development and service to local communities—two of them are local elected officials. Contact us if you or your city officials would like to meet with them.

- Sewage Treatment Plants
- Airports
- Recreation Facilities
- Industrial Development
- Waste Treatment
- Community Development Grants
- Housing
- Education
- Federal Regulation Compliance
- Health Care
- Roads and Bridges

Help Us Help You

When contacting us for help:

- **Use identification numbers.**
(social security, document numbers, etc.)
- **Explain the problem's history.**
When did it start?
At what government level?
Who have you contacted?
- **Share copies of any documents you have.**
You may need to sign a "release of information" form obtained from our office.
- **Tell us if other legislators are working with you.**
We will work with them, not separately.
- **Tell us if you have time constraints.**
Because we can't extend passed deadlines, we must know if an appeal is needed within a certain time period.
- **Tell us if you have filed suit in court.**
We cannot practice law and our help is very limited if you have chosen a legal recourse.

How to contact us

Telephone: Call toll-free, 1-800-472-6612

Mobile Office Van: Stop by when our office van is in your area.

Write: Congressman Steve Gunderson
P.O. Box 247
Black River Falls, WI 54615

Call us — 1-800-472-6612 — We're ready to help!

House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

ASH/IN

Steve

won

Dear Dave

A delayed, but deeply sincere thanks for the letter. I've been working the District hard + seem to be getting a good response. We haven't had 10 negative letters! But it is Friends like you that mean the most.

Thanks

Steve Anderson