

Laws, policies needed to protect homosexuals

American society needs laws, policies and practices which protect people who are gay or lesbian, said a recently elected National Gay Task Force board member.

Marleen Howell, director of the Women's Center at WSU and an active member of the gay lesbian task force for three years has been elected to the group's board of directors.

Howell said the task force, which has about 8,000 members throughout the nation, is a comprehensive organization in that it deals with political issues, education and health care for gay and lesbian people.

She said the group will continue to help educate the public about gay and lesbian people, as well as AIDS and will document violence against people for being gay or lesbian.

Although membership in the task force has declined in recent years, Howell remains optimistic. "Most members are active and

are leaders in their own right," Howell said. "Some people decline membership because of the political climate. They don't feel comfortable being involved in issues that can be problematic."

She described the "political climate" as one which tends to be unconcerned with the treatment of gays and lesbians.

"This (Reagan) administration is not really centered on people issues," she said. "To be any kind of minority is awkward right now — and to be a sexual minority is even worse."

Determined that sexual discrimination (against gays and lesbians) as a societal problem, Howell said such treatment is not a problem on the personal level.

She also said "Laws are getting better. Just recently state employees were given legal protection against sexual discrimination."

Howell referred to an Executive Order signed by Washington Governor Booth Garner which makes it

illegal for state employers to discriminate for sexual reasons.

This is a step in the right direction, says Howell.

"Whether I am a lesbian or not has nothing to do with what I'm allowed to do (on the job)," she said. "All that matters is what kind of person I am."

"When I meet someone I don't say 'Hi I'm a lesbian...I'm Marleen.' It's just not necessary."

Howell said the achievements of the task force could be noticed here at WSU.

"We'll be involved in ongoing efforts about raising awareness about gays and lesbians," she said. "I'm concerned that students are getting the kind of information they need."

"I heard that someone on the WSU Board of Regents was talking about gays and said 'we don't have those kind of people around here,'" Howell said. "Obviously that person was not very well educated."

She said "I'd like to see this campus become more informed about gays and lesbians — they shouldn't be afraid to say they're gay or lesbian."

Other task force activities which could become noticeable at WSU include efforts to "provide adequate protection for faculty and staff here who are gay" and to provide both faculty and students with information that could alleviate misconceptions about AIDS.

"The issue of AIDS got very politicized when it should have been strictly a health issue, Howell maintained. "People shouldn't be afraid to support AIDS prevention research just because they'll be associated with gays and lesbians."

"All that should matter is that many people are dying from the disease."

Howell said she was not worried that her job as director of the Women's Center at WSU will be neglected due to duties performed



Marlene Howell

as a task force leader.

"This (the task force) is completely separate from the Women's Center," said Howell. The Women's Center doesn't stand for lesbian rights — it stands for racism, sexism and other problems women must face."

The National Gay Task Force, soon to be renamed the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, operates under a \$200,000 a year budget

Greeks to raise money for Ronald McDonald House

Saturday begins a week-long competition between Greeks at Washington State University to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House of the Inland Empire in Spokane.

The Greek philanthropy, whose slogan is "The House That Love Will Build," is a home away from home for the 2,000 seriously ill children and their families who come to Spokane for medical treatment.

Last year WSU Greeks raised \$7,600, the fourth largest contributor in 1985. As of July last year, \$650,000 had been donated, with

\$750,000 still needed to complete their goal of \$1.4 million.

The 13,000-square-foot structure will house families who otherwise would have to pay to stay in motels or stay nights in the hospital. The Ronald McDonald House will charge these families \$5 per night.

For over two months the Greeks have been collecting cans and newspapers for recycling to raise money for the House. They also have been collecting canned food, which will be given to the Pullman Food Bank.

The competition will start off

with members from the 37 chapters participating in various community projects on Saturday and will continue with the annual Superstars games on Wednesday in Bohler gym. The games place sororities and fraternities battling against each other in Tug-o-war, an obstacle course and pyramid building.

A new event, the College Bowl,

will be held Thursday at 7 p.m. in the CUB auditorium. The contest is designed much like the high school trivia bowls. Fraternities and sororities are teamed up to compete against other teams. There will be 10 questions per round — only one round per game. The questions will include WSU and Greek trivia.

The combined points for all of these competitions will determine a fraternity and a sorority winner, which will be announced at the closing ceremonies on Friday. This and the annual Wheel Exchange, which follows the closing ceremonies, will conclude Greek Week '86.

REWARD

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