

Recall petitions sweep campus!

by brent siewert

The number of petitions to recall ASWSU representatives stands at 13, as both sides of the controversial issue of the Gay Awareness Committee last week stormed ASWSU with a flurry of activity.

As the dust began to clear, two more assemblymembers were the subject of recall petitions filed on Monday. Named are assemblymembers Dan Pierce, and Ginger Williams.

Friday, in reaction to the recalling of ASWSU Vice President Vann Snyder, ASWSU assemblymembers Karen Sticklin (District 8), Colleen Johnson (at large), Larry Beck, Kim Deering and Jay Matsen (off campus) for voting in favor of GAC funding, five more petitions of recall were filed by those favoring committee funding.

Neil Rasmussen, assembly chairman pro tem, was named in a recall petition filed by John Meglen. Meglen charged Rasmussen was guilty of disrupting assembly meetings with "trivial motions on trivial matters."

From District 6 (Stimson, Waller, Kruegel and McAllister), 167 signatures must be obtained for a student

vote on ousting Meyer. Opponents of Sticklin, District 8 (Streit-Perham), must gather 204 signatures. Figures on the other assemblymembers had not been computed on Monday.

Twenty percent of the district must vote in the special election to validate the election, Pursley added.

The recall procedures were adopted last year at the general election, but were inadvertently left off the present copies of the ASWSU Constitution, he said.

Should all members with petitions filed against them be recalled? Pursley said the general election for ASWSU offices may have to be moved up to fill the posts. Presently, the Election Board does not have enough money to run two special elections a year, despite savings made by adopting a computerized ballot voting system.

A special election was held earlier in the year to fill assembly posts vacated by resignations.

Another ironic sidelight to the recall issue is that the ASWSU President may have to approve the recall election, if the assembly, which normally handles that bit of business, lacks a quorum after the recall election.

When questioned by Bill Vadino at yesterday's press conference Robert Booth, who organized the recall of Snyder, Beck, Deering, Johnson, Matsen and Sticklin, remained unwavering in the recall effort.

Petitions for the recall of assemblymembers Dan Boring, Maureen Monaghan (off campus), Larry Anderson and Mike Bernard (at large) were also filed Friday. Spokesman Leonard Wolf said the petitions were filed because the assemblymembers did not follow ASWSU policy by voting against allocating money for a GAC telephone.

"It has been policy for ASWSU to pay for telephones for committees with offices," he said.

Assemblymember Susan Meyer (District 6), has also been named in recall petitions because she voted in favor of GAC funding.

At a press conference Monday morning, Chris Pursley, ASWSU Election Board chairman, said 20 percent of the persons in the various districts must sign the petitions before the question of recall is put before the students in a special election in January.

The deadline for signatures is Dec.

18. The petitions will be released on Wednesday, Pursley said.

For the off-campus and at large representatives, 2,926 signatures must be gathered and 51 percent of the signatures must come from off-campus students.

"Wouldn't the referendum (against GAC funding and committee status for one year) accomplish what you want without disrupting the assembly?" asked Vadino.

"Yes," Booth said, "but I'm still resolute in my decision to recall. It's well within my rights to do so."

The recall effort has "an air of a witchhunt," according to ASWSU President Tom Pirie. "I'm appalled and embarrassed that this is happening at this university."

ASWSU would not be disrupted, but "devastated," Pirie said.

The petition for recall campaign of 13 ASWSU Assembly members and ASWSU Vice President Vann Snyder will be the topic of a brown bag lunch and discussion this Thursday at noon on the CUB third floor.

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Fired custodian

Fighting for job

editor's note: This is the first in a series of four articles examining the dismissal of Deana Rigney, a former employee of the university's Physical Plant, and her 15 month effort to regain her job at WSU.

by tim connor

The bizarre case of Deana Rigney goes on.

Rigney is the former WSU Physical Plant Custodian who was fired last September. Since that time she has tried, without success, to get her job back.

What she has done, however, is raise several questions about state and university practices in the handling of employee grievances.

Rigney was dismissed from her job after she complained to Physical Plant management that the supervisor of her custodial crew was harassing her.

She was still in her six month probationary period when she made the complaint. As a result, she was dismissed under a state regulation which permits the dismissal of employees during a probationary period without cause, provided they receive eight hours notice.

Rigney, however, did receive a "cause" from Physical Plant management. Her Sept. 15, 1977 letter of dismissal, signed by Physical Plant Director H. Stuart Litzsinger, told her she was being dismissed on the grounds that her complaint against her supervisor was "false" therefore constituting "mistreatment and abuse" of a fellow worker.

Rigney, by her own admission, did not know where to go after her dismissal. In the past 13 months she has appealed to the university's Office of Affirmative Action, the Ombudsman, the Discriminatory Practices Committee and the Washington Federation of State Employees.

She has received one informal hearing from a hearing panel of the Discriminatory Practices Committee (DPC) on Oct. 24.

The panel, after hearing Rigney, the complainant, Litzsinger and Office of Staff Personnel Director Barry Whelchel, the co-respondents; decided that Physical Plant and Whelchel's office had shown "a lack of sensitivity and a tendency to overreact throughout the entire episode."

The panel's opinion was included in a statement by the DPC which is now on the desk of Executive Vice-President Wallis Beasley.

The statement to Beasley from DPC does not advocate that Rigney be given

her job back outright. It merely asks that her name be put on an eligible list for similar positions with WSU.

Rigney attempted to show she had been retaliated against by Physical Plant for making a legitimate complaint. Litzsinger and Whelchel attempted to show Rigney's dismissal was for valid reasons.

The hearing panel ruled that Rigney was unable to prove she was retaliated against. At the same time, the panel said the university was unable to prove Rigney had lied in making her complaint, the reason given for her dismissal.

"There is no doubt in my mind," Liddell said, "she (Rigney) would win in a fair hearing."

However, the panel and DPC conceded that the university had followed state regulations to the letter in dismissing Rigney. The regulations (WAC 251-10-190) states: "an appointing authority may reject an employee who has not completed a probationary period."

When the committee met to discuss its report to Beasley Nov. 8, the consensus was that they could not recommend Rigney be reinstated. The opinion was that the university acted in accordance with the regulations and Rigney could not prove her dismissal was retaliatory.

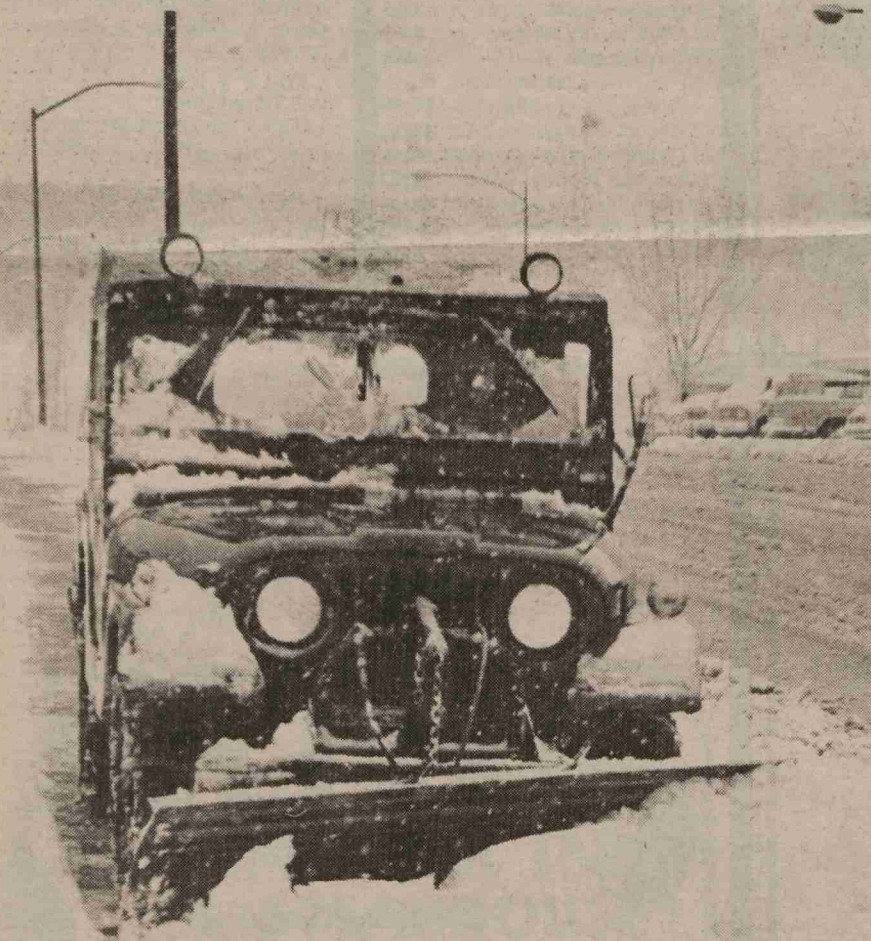
There are several issues which Rigney's case has raised thus far.

The DPC is looking into at least two. One is the question of fairness surrounding the outright dismissals of probationary employees. The other is the concern whereby the university has access to "all the resources the university provides" while the complainant has whatever he or she can afford.

There are other issues. The committee's hearing was of an "informal" nature. No subpoenas were issued, several witnesses did not show up. In fact, the confusion surrounding the hearing panel was so great it led to the resignation of the chairman of the first panel assigned to hear Rigney's grievance last spring.

Another issue is the charge by former Affirmative Action Director Phyllis Liddell that her investigation into Rigney's grievance was "obstructed" by the Physical Plant.

"There is no doubt in my mind," Liddell said, "she (Rigney) would win in a fair hearing."



Those who left their houses yesterday morning rejoicing because the snow was disappearing so rapidly may have gotten a surprise. It started snowing about 9 a.m. and by noon the local media were informed that the public schools were being dismissed early and that Stadium Way was classified as treacherous by the law. It might be a long time until spring!

—chris irwin photo