

Area's gays fear homophobia

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*Claim organized
efforts trying to
shut them out*

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What started as a "joke" against Ames' gays is evolving into what one lesbian leader calls a chance for Iowa State students to shut off money for a homosexual students' organization.

First, the *Campus Review*, a conservative student publication based in Iowa City that is trying to get a foothold at ISU, published an edition early last week that included a back-page ad depicting two stick figures engaged in anal intercourse with the internation-

ally recognized symbol of a red circle with a diagonal line through it. The ad reads, "Stop AIDS."

Then came explicit anti-gay retorts circulated to a column written in the student *Iowa State Daily* last week by Claire Hueholt, a former *Daily* editor and admitted lesbian who vented her anger with the *Campus Review* ad. Even the *Campus Review's* editor, who said the ad in his paper was designed to "poke fun" at homosexuals, called the fliers about Hueholt "sick."

NOW, GAYS AND lesbians are fighting conservative-student efforts at ISU to put funding for their support group on a referendum in May, where they're sure students from traditionally

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conservative Iowa will cut them off from the quasi-public trough.

"We face homophobia every day," said Heather Thompson, the president of the Gay-Lesbian Student Outreach at ISU. "This has given them (ISU students) the chance to vote their homophobia."

"They're unhappy with the extremism" represented by the *Campus Review* ad and the rebuttal to Hueholt, said Andy Bock, the GLSO's advisor, of student reaction to the past week's events. "But people are still not ready to welcome with open arms and affirm gay and lesbian lifestyles because it's still an unfamiliar and volatile topic."

The recent incidents are the latest chapters in the story of gays in Ames who say they, at best, feel unwelcome in the city and, at worst, fear for their physical safety.

FIVE YEARS AGO, the Ames City Council refused to include homo-

sexuals in the list of classes that are specifically protected from discrimination by the city's human relations ordinance, producing wide-ranging local debate at the time. Later efforts by the Ames Human Relations Commission to get the issue back before the council have languished.

Local homosexuals also say they are the butt of jokes throughout the campus and the city. The harassment, they say, can take more violent turns.

The GLSO office and the meeting hall where local homosexuals meet have received bomb threats in the past. According to Bock, a caller warned that a homosexual dance in Ames would be turned "into a blood bath." No specific anti-homosexual violence in Ames has materialized, however.

But the *Campus Review* incident has led off the latest round of what homosexuals say is blatant homophobia. The newspaper's editor, Jeff Renander of Iowa City, doesn't see what the trouble is.

"We did it because we knew it

would be popular," said Renander, adding that a similar issue printed in Iowa City last year prompted some complaints from gays and lesbians but not the firestorm that has followed in Ames. That's surprised Renander, given the relatively liberal reputation of students at Iowa City when compared with Ames.

"WE'RE NOT ANTI-gay," he said. "This is our reaction to the outrage that gays get tens of thousands of students' tuition dollars to fund their activities (at the University of Iowa). The conservative student groups don't get any money here."

Renander admitted that the ad in his paper is "controversial" but is also "factual in part." "If gays would stop engaging in anal sex, it would cut down on AIDS," he said.

The *Campus Review* edition came out just before members of the ISU student body government were to debate a measure to put funding for the GLSO on the ballot. The student senate

could put the issue on the ballot as early as tonight, and homosexuals planned to rally against the move today.

The referendum asks students whether they want to ban funding for several political groups on campus, such as a Socialist collective, a Latin American group and the gay-lesbian organization.

BOCK SAYS THE referendum is worded to encourage an anti-homosexual vote. Efforts to contact the Committee on Common Sense, a conservative group promoting the referendum, were unsuccessful.

Thompson says the goal of the anti-homosexual forces is to force gays and lesbians back into the closet. This comes during Gay Pride Week on campus, a time Thompson says is designed as "a celebration of ourselves."

"If anyone is blatant about it, then they're harassed," she said. "So they're asking us to be quiet about it."