

# Lesbian activity accused at Girl Scout camp

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SANTA CRUZ — A north county Girl Scout camp was home to a group of lesbian counselors who openly engaged in fondling, kissing and nudity, according to a lawsuit filed by a camp ranger Thursday in Santa Clara County Superior Court.

The lawsuit asks for \$1.5 million in damages.

The ranger, Christopher Morgan, 31, alleges sexual harassment and sexual discrimination. He lives at the camp, which is run by Santa Clara County Girl Scouts, with his wife, Shirley. He has been a ranger there since 1981.

The lawsuit does not specify acts

or name names of the women alleged to have committed them, but according to Morgan's attorney, Rita Risser of Employment Rights Attorneys of San Jose, there are witnesses who will substantiate the claims. She said Morgan will hold a press conference next week in which he will provide details of what occurred at Skylark Camp.

Risser was asked this morning why the lawsuit alleges sexual harassment when the complaint is about lesbian activity.

"Sexual harassment is defined as 'bringing sex into the workplace,'" the attorney replied. "It is not necessarily something directed against an employee. It's like hanging nude pin-ups at work."

Morgan has been quoted as saying that nudity and public displays of women fondling, stroking and kissing one another have been common among a group of seven or eight female counselors at the camp. There are 30 female counselors at Skylark Camp.

A volunteer at the camp last summer, Elizabeth Aydtlett of San Jose,

described comments made by female counselors about nights spent together and about trips to gay bars.

Aydtlett said in an interview that she was "very intimidated" and slept with her clothes on all summer.

Morgan has been quoted as saying he witnessed two female counselors fondling each other's crotches while seated in a dining room where over 100 Girl Scouts were present. He also alleged that it was "common" for six or so women at a time to sunbathe in the nude or be naked from the waist up in areas where others could see them.

Skylark Camp takes in over 800 Girl Scouts, mostly from Northern California and between the ages of 6 and 16, every summer. A training program for teen-age girls from around the state wishing to become counselors also is operated there.

Risser said she first talked to Morgan last September about the lesbian activity at the camp. Since then, she says she has had "numerous discussions" with Girl Scout officials about Morgan's allegations, including a list of 17 demands her

client was making about the situation at Skylark Camp.

The Acting Executive Director of the Santa Clara County Council of the Girl Scouts, Anne Weaver, said Thursday she was "stunned" by Morgan's lawsuit. Weaver corroborated Risser's statement about repeated meetings with the attorney and her client over the allegations, but said the organization had been unsuccessful in obtaining details from Morgan about the acts.

Risser said this morning, "Apparently they didn't think it was a problem. They do now."

Brenda Whitset, executive director of the Monterey Bay Council of the Girl Scouts, emphasized that Skylark Camp is not a Santa Cruz County-sponsored camp, that Skylark merely is located in this county.

In addition, Whitset said, "We do not condone or permit displays of homosexuality in connection with any Girl Scout activity or occasion."

She said that she believed the Santa Clara County Council has "always adhered" to safe standards and offered quality programs.