

LET AMERICA BE

There have been so many letters to the DTH lately about the funding of the CGLA. No other group's funding is being questioned. Therefore, the petition that is being circulated will have no comparative value. Why is the CGLA being singled out? Is it because of hatred?

I find myself wanting to write something important that has been suppressed in me for a long time. I have grown so sick and tired of all of the hatred. I look back to my childhood and see all of the hate that surrounded the adults around me. It is still alive today but in new ways. Maybe we should take a closer look at the hard-fought rights that blacks won in the 1960's and the 1970's and are still fighting for. It was not so long ago. I remember it well.

I remember growing up in an all white trailer park. Blacks were not allowed to walk the streets or visit their white friends. I remember being in the park office and seeing the manager pick up his shotgun and load it. He received a telephone call that a "nigger" was in the park. He was going hunting for the man and said he was going "to kill himself a nigger."

I'll never forget that day or the fear I had for that black man. I wanted to run out and try to find the man to warn him, but my mother had a firm grasp on me. She wouldn't let me go and she said the man deserved to get what was coming to him. I ask, what does a man deserve for walking on a street in our "free" America? Death? What do two gay men or two lesbians

deserve for holding hands or kissing on a street corner in free America? Are we not all created equal? Do we not all have the same rights to life, liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness?

I was one of the 500,000 people who marched on Washington last October 11th. The crowd was so large that I had to wait four hours after the march began before our contingency even began to move. I missed the entire rally at the end of the march, but that was okay. I had come to our nation's capital to march for my freedom, to say, "I am a gay person and I will not be silenced."

On that day in Washington, while waiting to march, I turned on my radio to try to listen to the rally. It was not broadcast. No one even mentioned that the rally was going on. Why would a city ignore some 500,000 people? Is it fear? I do not know.

I heard no mention of the rally, but I heard something else that stirred me very much. A public station was broadcasting some of Martin Luther King's speeches that he gave before and at the 1963 march on Washington for Civil Rights. Dr. King said that the march was to bring about "social change." The March was to bring about "the advancement of justice, freedom, and human dignity."

He said that America had defaulted on its promissory note to guarantee all men the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is ironic that 24 years later, the fight is still raging on. These rights are inalienable he said. They may not be taken away. The only thing lesbians, gay men and all other minorities ask for is that their rights not be taken away.

I remember a Langston Hughes poem I love dearly. It is titled "Let America Be America Again." I hope everyone will read this poem in its entirety. Hughes speaks for all minorities:

Let it be the dream it used
to be...
It never was America to me...
There's never been equality
for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland
of the free"
I am the poor white, fooled and
pushed apart,
I am the redman driven from
the land.
I am the refugee clutching to
the hope I seek...
I am the Negro, "problem" to
you all...

(see AMERICA page 6)



LGHP

North Carolina Lesbian & Gay Health Project

Post Office Box 3203
Durham, North Carolina 27705-1203
919/683-2182

24 hour
answering
machine

Confidential Information & Assistance

"Healthline" - Medical referrals
Social info

Staffed Mon-Thurs. 6:30-9:30pm

AIDS Project - Support of PWAs
Support group monthly
Education program

Community Education
Lesbian Health Committee

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME