

The News & Entertainment Paper for N.C.'s Gay Community

GAY PRIDE!



by Michael Baker

For the past eleven years, in various cities throughout the United States, all or part of the last two weeks in June have been reserved for the commemoration and celebration of "Gay Pride." What on earth is this quality known as "Gay Pride?" What does the phrase mean? Why is it celebrated at this time of year? And, since here in North Carolina we have no such celebration, can the idea of "Gay Pride" have any meaning for us?

It is these questions that this essay, in its own modest, rambling way, hopes to answer. The best way to start is to touch lightly on the beginnings of the contemporary gay rights movement, and the struggles that preceded it.

The custom of celebrating "Gay Pride" day/week/or what have you in the last weeks of June began in New York City, where in 1970 the first annual Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade was held on the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

The Stonewall Riots, for those few left who don't know, began on June 28, 1969 in New York's Greenwich Village, and lasted the better part of a week. A routine raid on the Stonewall Inn did not proceed as the city's police had planned.

In past raids, the patrons of Stonewall has submitted to the NYPD without a word of protest. According to Lige Clark and Jack Nichols, "The Stonewall was a dingy-Mafia-run club which had been operating without proper licensing for more than three years, without police interference and with full official knowledge. Payoffs by underworld figures kept cops from conducting such raids, but on this glorious occasion, payoffs or no, the boys in blue chose the wrong evening."

For the first time in (known) history, the patrons of a gay bar reacted with anger and rebelled against a police raid. Puerto Rican drag queens, gay youth and street people fought back, with beer cans and bottles, with sticks, with

continued on page 11

Response Wanted!

Many of you may disagree with some of the ideas expressed in articles contained in this issue. Please let us hear from you. Let us know your thoughts on these subjects!

White House Conference Acknowledges 'Alternatives'

BALTIMORE, MD (Blade/NGTF) — A proposal calling for the elimination of all discrimination based on sexual preference was passed by the first of three regional conferences of the White House Conference on Families. The final vote was close, but was a particularly significant victory in that pre-conference publicity had suggested a very conservative outcome.

The conference, held June 5-7 in Baltimore, Maryland, was composed of over 700 delegates from 18 Eastern and Southern states and territories. Two other regional conferences will take place in the next month, in Minneapolis and Los Angeles.

The gay rights proposal was part of a larger policy recommendation, which also included support for the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion, and was the most controversial proposal made at the conference. The proposal passed by a narrow, one-vote margin, 292-291.

The proposal called for "policies which preserve and protect basic legal and human rights of all family members," and included ratification of the ERA, "elimination of discrimination and encouragement of respect for differences based on sex, race, ethnic origin, creed, socio-economic status, age, disability, diversity of family type and size, sexual preference or biological ties," protection from violence and abuse, and the "right to decide whether or not to bear a child," including the right to choose abortion.

Gay delegates and other liberal forces were surprised that the feared conservative take-over of the June 5-7 conference in Baltimore did not materialize. Aided by a walk-out of extreme, uncompromising conservatives, *Blade* correspondent Don Leavitt reported, the remainder of the delegates made efforts to work with each other. The result was sixty resolutions, ranging from proposed social security changes, to asking for government help in combatting teenage alcoholism, to non-discrimination of Gays. These resolutions will be incorporated with those emerging from the Minneapolis and Los Angeles conferences and passed onto the White House for implementation.

The Coalition for the White House Conference on Families, made up of moderate to liberal organizations including the National Gay Task Force, had expected a tough fight at Baltimore. "We were prepared for the worst," says Tom Burrows, an NGTF observer.

While anti-abortion, anti-ERA, and anti-Gay "pro-family" delegates had swept many of the state elections,

continued on page 2