

# The FRONT PAGE

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## Millennium March "Town Meeting" Held in Chicago

**Critics attack organizers,  
supporters give input.**

**By Tracy Baim**  
Contributing Writer

More than 60 Chicago activists turned out for the recent March on Washington Town Meeting held in the Windy City. It was the first opportunity for local input in the controversial March, planned for next April, and it was clear that March organizers have a long way to go in confronting the rumors and anger from grassroots activists.

Both supporters of the March and

those opposed to it asked questions of the four March board members at the meeting. There were also two East Coast members of the Ad Hoc Committee for an Open Process, a group opposed to how the March was first started and how it is currently progressing.

Members of Queer to the Left, a new Chicago group<sup>1</sup>, were out in force, bringing up some of the same questions that the Ad Hoc group has raised for more than a year.

But the bottom line was that the anger and frustration among Chicago's few remaining grassroots activists could cause a further rift in the local community, one that might last beyond the Millennium March on Washington. The primary goals of a national March (which may turn out to be just a rally) may be too much in conflict with what grassroots activists say is needed to bring gays into the next century — activism in local communities.

At this point, the anger and distrust from both sides is so strong, it may be

too late to work together. The March organizers say they have done many of the things the Ad Hoc committee asked for (the March board is 50% people of color, is co-gender, and they are holding public Town Meetings across the country), but that they can't take back how it was first created from the leadership of the nation's top gay and lesbian groups.

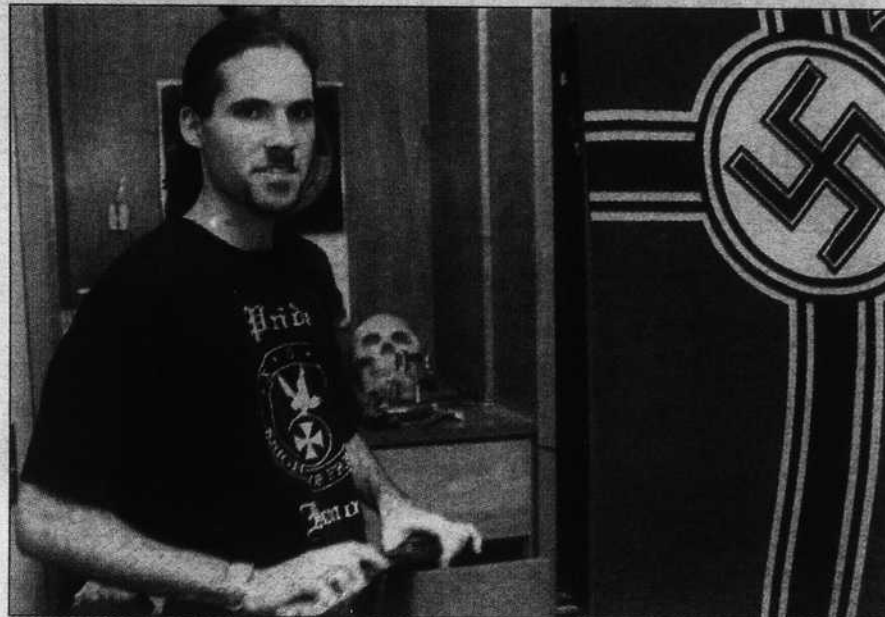
In fact, the role played by the Human Rights Campaign and the Metropolitan Community Church in first calling for a national March seems to be one of the primary problems facing organizers. Although a meeting was held with national organizations in the fall of 1987, and a national march was discussed, HRC and MCC may have jumped the gun in the spring of 1998 by picking a date and not allowing for nationwide input on whether a march was necessary. Initially, the theme of "Faith and Family" was also applied to the March, although current organizers say that was never the name of the March.

Local MCC members, along with gays and lesbians from a wide variety of Chicago groups, attended the Aug. 2 Town Meeting in Chicago. Robin Tyler, executive producer of the March, and Rev. Troy Perry, head of the MCC worldwide, were also in the audience, along with other March board members, who were in town for a national board meeting. Tyler and other March individuals did speak up at times, but mostly the four board members at the front of the room addressed the questions and concerns of the audience.

Those board members were: Ann DeGroot of Minnesota, Donna Red Wing of HRC (and soon to be of the Gill Foundation in Colorado), Latino trans

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*"The Aug. 2 Town Hall meeting on the Millennium March on Washington was a powerful example of the destructive force of divisive politics... The division itself is not the problem... The problem arises in how the division is played out. Too often we are not involved in informative debate."*



Davis Wolfgang Hawk, head of the American Nationalist Party, poses in his dorm on the campus of Wofford University, in Spartanburg, S.C. The nation's extreme right wing in becoming better organized and more vocal about its hatred toward racial minorities, Jews and gay men and lesbians.

## More U.S. Violence Heightens Concerns About Extreme Right

**Anti-Semitic shootings and  
anti-gay killings focus  
attention on neo-Nazi and  
Klan groups nationwide.**

**By Beth Berlo**  
Contributing Writer

Since the recent shootings at a Los Angeles Jewish community center, there's been an outpour of attention focusing on hate groups who embrace the Christian Identity movement — the nucleus in a string of recent deadly hate crimes.

Buford O. Furrow Jr., the man charged with shooting six people at the center and killing Joseph Ito, a Filipino-American postman, was a member of this movement whose adherents are generally Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nation, Nazi Party, and White Separatists groups.

Subscribers to Christian Identity operate on the "millennial myth" that the end of human history is near and certain "sinners," including gays, abortion providers, Jews, and blacks must be annihilated.

"It's very plausible to suggest that it's being heated up by the approach of the millennium," Chip Berlet, senior analyst with

the non-profit Political Research Associates in Somerville, said last week.

"Christian Identity is a merger of a theory of which white Christian men are seen as God's chosen people... It is a theory that is being adopted by a number of hate groups," Berlet added.

Christian Identity is estimated to have between 35,000 and 50,000 followers across the country. Mark Potok, from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Alabama reportedly called the group, "the glue that binds the radical Right together."

Organizations such as The Order, Aryan Nations, and Courting Skinheads have violent track records and twisted religious beliefs, observers say. Timothy McVeigh, the man convicted in the Oklahoma City bombing, reportedly placed two calls to Elohim City, a 22-year-old highly armed Identity enclave.

The SPLC maintains that Richard Butler, a subscriber to Christian Identity, preached this hateful doctrine at his Church of Jesus Christ Christian at the Aryan Nations compound, telling his followers that Identity gave whites, "divine permission to hate." In doing so, Butler managed to lure some of the hate movement's most radical members.

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