The March on Washington that dare not speak its name

By Tom Flint

The headline above is courtesy of Marsha Johnson, who in the late 1960s took up the enormous debate for a name for the National March on Washington.

The MOW planning meeting was held in Los Angeles the weekend of January 18-19. About 25 delegates from the various regions of the country decided on an official name and elected a steering committee.

Ruminant of Seattle's own long Pride march monitor, the new name is the "1993 March on Washington for Lesbian-Gay Bi Equal Rights and Liberation." The activists spent hours in contentious deliberations trying to settle upon a name. The main point of debate was over the question of whether to include the word "Bisexual" in the title. Bisexuals came to the meeting very organized to advocate for the name change. They had received dozens of endorsements from major national leaders and organizations in support.

The delegates at the Los Angeles meeting were deeply divided over the issue. One reason for opposition to the change of the march name was that it would change the identity of the movement and the delegates weren't sure they had the right to do that.

Several people were opposed to the word "sexual," saying that it defined people too narrowly by their sexuality.

Others voiced objections saying the inclusion of "Bisexual" would be divisive and alienate Lesbian and Gay folks from Midwestern and Southern regions. Still others felt that for the sake of continuity with the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and to simplify publicity sound bites, the name should stay the same.

The Bisexual contingent fought aggressively for their position. Rebecca Hensler, a self-described "Bisexual dyke" from San Francisco, was a leading proponent of the name change. "In 1987 I marched in Washington. I engaged in civil disobedience at the Supreme Court," she said. "We're not talking about including Gay people here. This is not a question of whether Lesbians and Gays are going to accept Bisexuals into their movement. We are in the movement: the room isn't full of just Lesbians and Gays."

Freda Howard, a Bisexual New York activist, said, "We've heard all your arguments before. I wasn't always Bisexual. I used to be a Lesbian. I remember when it was not the Lesbian and Gay movement. It was the Gay movement and we fought to add the word Lesbian. It will make the name too long. And it will be divisive. It will confuse people. And besides the word Gay includes Lesbians," she said.

Several Seattle groups sent endorsements for the inclusion of Bisexuals in the title, including Lambert House, Queer Nation, Seattle Bisexual Men's Union, Lesbian Mothers National Defense Fund, People of Color Against AIDS Network, American Friends Service Committee, Beyond the Closet Bookstore, University of Washington Lesbian and Gay Community, Seattle Municipal Elections Committee, Paget Sound Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Veterans of America, and Seattle Bisexual Women's Network.

To make all this debate even more interesting, the Seattle delegation led a discussion on the inclusion of transsexuals and transgender people in the title. Seattle has a large transgender community largely due to the presence of the Ingersol Institute. Two Seattle trans- gender activist groups were present at the Los Angeles meeting, Princess LaRouge and Kaz.

Seattle delegates felt it was going to be changed on the principle of "inclusion," transgender people should then be named as well.

Several people were opposed to the name including transgender activists who felt it would play into the hands of opponents of the Gay and Lesbian community.

Several other discussions went on simultaneously. Queer Nationalists threw out the idea of a March on Washington for Queer Liberation. Most of those delegates recognized that "Queer" was a word that many Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and transgendered people are not able to identify with.

Others tried to reach compromise names. One suggestion was "The Lone March." A humorous suggestion from one Lesbian activist was "Dyke Suits from Hell March on Washington, Fags Can Come Too! Fuck Me Silly in the Nation's Capitol."

ACT UP disrupts Goodloe meeting, meets with force

By Tom Flint

ACT UP Seattle Youth Caucus confronted former Washington State Supreme Court Justice William Goodloe at a meeting on January 17 at the Museum's Club.

Goodloe called the meeting in an attempt to organize a campaign to bar condom distribution to teenagers in high schools and prohibit safer sex education in the schools. He has also called for a recall of Seattle School Board members who voted for the condom distribution.

Goodloe has an extensive record of reactionary politics. He was involved in the failed campaign to repeal domestic partnership legislation in Seattle in 1990. He also has connections with the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, which is anti-Gay, among other things.

About 50 supporters of Goodloe attended the meeting, and about 50 ACT UP youth and supporters also arrived. Three ACT UP youth were arrested during the meeting: Joyce Stuart, Angela Sigal, and Wendy Reiman.

Eyewitnesses, many of whom are not members of ACT UP, told the SGN that police used excessive force during the arrests. Wendy Reiman was stopped across the face by one officer who knocked a whiff out of her mouth, busting two teeth in the process and causing it to bleed.

One witness, who asked not to be identified, said the police twisted the young woman's arms as they screamed, "You're hurting me." The witness said a police officer pushed one woman's face into a police car.

The women were charged with multiple charges ranging from trespassing, resisting arrest, assaulting a police officer.