

LESBIANS

We are everywhere.



THE LESBIAN COMMUNITY PROJECT

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Oct. 20, 7pm (doors 6:30)
Pride Bingo!
 NW Service Center, NW 18th & Everett
 FFI:CP Office 223-0071
Bring your friends to win cash prizes

Saturday, Oct. 21, 6 pm
SW Wash. Lesbian Potluck
 Janelle & Joyce's, FFI: 360-694-3740

Sunday, Oct. 29, 11 am-1 pm
Jewish Lesbian & Bisexual Brunch
 At Julie's, call for location: 281-4543

Sunday, Oct. 29, 2-6 pm
Lesbians of Color Gathering
 Call for location: 223-0071

A membership organization...join today!

(503) 223-0071/TDD
 Fax 242-1967
 P.O. Box 5931
 Portland, OR 97228

Anti-Violence Project
 796-1703/1-800-796-1703

**PRIVATE
PET
CREMATION**

FAMILY ANIMAL SERVICES

Transportation provided

503.236.7521

Emily Simon

620 SW Fifth Ave., Ste. 1204
 Portland, Oregon 97204
 (503) 241-1553
 (503) 241-2587 FAX

Emphasizing representation of the accused in all misdemeanor, felony, traffic and DUI actions in state, federal, juvenile courts and administrative actions

CARNIVAL

7 night Caribbean cruise
 San Juan • St. Thomas • St. Martin
 On the "Funship" celebration

FROM \$727 ppdo
 Plus air and port charges
 Book early for free outside cabin upgrade

MAUI
 Deluxe Fall Package

RT First class air—7 nights Kea Lani
 1 bedroom, ocean view, Mustang convertible for total stay—taxes and service charge

\$1900 ppdo
 Restrictions apply—subject to change

FINLAND

Christmas train to Lapland
 Dec. 20-29 includes RT air
 Helsinki - train to Salla - Raindeer Park - stay in cottage with sauna Pohjanhovi Artikum - Husky Driving and snowmobile safari
 Daily breakfast - hotel and taxes
 English speaking guide

\$2745 ppdo

Children's fares available. Stop over in New York required; We will add you favorite hotel. Other extensions and itineraries available. Restrictions apply—subject to change.

Call for brochure

Wayne Boulette

Pick up
Just out
here!

**PARKING
VALIDATED**

"always park smartly"

Michael Scott

**One SW Columbia
Suite 1010
Portland,
OR 97258**

(503) 227-3639

**FAX
(503) 227-0602**

1-800-248-0624

David Tarver

All fares & rates subject to change • Some restrictions apply.

**MIKUNI
TRAVEL SERVICE**

national news

Part of a million

The National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum sent a proud and loud contingent to the Million Man March

▼
by Bob Roehr

Black by Birth, Gay by God, Proud by Choice," read placards carried by a group of a hundred gay men in the Million Man March. The Oct. 16 march, held in Washington, D.C., was called by the controversial Rev. Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam.

The National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum organized the contingent after much soul-searching and with some trepidation. But their participation matched the warmly positive experience that permeated the event.

Pride, determination and a tinge of apprehension shone on the faces of those gay men who gathered at a pre-march rally a half-dozen blocks off the Capitol Mall. They girded themselves for the unknown challenge of marching openly into an event orchestrated by the Nation of Islam, a group known to be vocally homophobic.

"I pour a libation to remember our ancestors and to remind us that we didn't get here by ourselves. That someone made a path before us. And that we have an obligation to lay a path for those who are coming behind us," offered the Rev. Rainey Cheeks in his opening prayer.

"I'm not here because of Farrakhan, or despite Farrakhan, or to spite Farrakhan," said Derek Livingston, a co-chair of the 1993 Lesbian and Gay March on Washington. "I'm here because we are family and we are in crisis."

Leadership Forum co-founder Phill Wilson was the inspiration behind this rally. He recited a list of friends and leaders lost "from AIDS and other illnesses" as his reason for marching. "Black men loving black men is a revolutionary act. I say, let the revolution begin."

Another seemingly straight observer commented to his friend, "Well, if you have a million men they say you'll have 100,000 faggots." There was no malice in his tone, it was a simple acknowledgment of fact.

On the Mall itself, as the group worked its way into a more thickly settled patch of grass, their rhythmic chant of "Gay men of African descent" seemed to clear a way through the crowd. One marcher laughingly called it "a parting of the Red Sea." For Boykin it was "the most moving part of the day." It encapsulated the growing sense of empowerment within the group.

A mile away at midday, with sirens wailing, the police escorted a three-car convoy of Farrakhan and his party through the business district of Washington. The K Street canyon of lawyers and lobbyists had the deserted air of a Sunday.

The crowd on the Mall had a festive atmosphere: celebratory, warm and congenial. Every third person seemed to hold a camera or video cam. It was 99 percent black men, and most of the remaining 1 percent seemed to be with the media.

"What was going on [at] the Mall among the participants was so unrelated to what was happening on stage," said Alexander Robinson, president of the black-oriented National Task Force on AIDS Prevention. He called the speakers "background noise" to the main event.

On the stage at the foot of the Capitol the program droned on. Boykin had been told that an openly gay man would speak from the podium, but nobody so identified themselves.

The principle mention of AIDS was by Dr. Alim Muhammad, minister of health for the Nation of Islam, who runs an HIV clinic in Washington, D.C. He



Keith Boykin

PHOTO BY KRISTI K. GASAWAY

"What we are talking about today is a revolution in our thinking, a revolution in our way of seeing ourselves and our relationship to our community at large," said Leadership Forum executive director Keith Boykin.

"You are the vanguard. You send the message of courage and hope to all those who cannot be here. We represent the tens of thousands of black gay men who are assembled on the Mall today and cannot be there openly. We represent them.

"By wearing your African rainbows, by showing your pride, you will send a signal today to those who cannot yet be there but will be there in the future."

The marchers were advised of security precautions, to stay together for protection. "Do not respond to verbal outbursts from others," offered one parade marshal. "They are not our enemies, they are just ignorant." And with that the group exuberantly stepped off for the Mall.

The men's chants and placards drew a few rounds of applause but mainly looks of surprise and bemusement from those they passed. At the National Archives on Pennsylvania Avenue, a lone man reacted by tracking them for half a block with harangues that they were "unnatural" and "immoral," pointing his thumbs down. He seemed to protest too much.

spoke of people who seem to have purged HIV from their bodies and attributed it to Kemron, a form of alpha interferon, which his clinic peddles.

AIDS activists say there is no scientific evidence that Kemron works. Boykin said it held out "false hope" to people living with AIDS.

Speakers claimed that one and a half, perhaps two million black men attended the march. Later the official Park Police estimates, based on a series of aerial photographs and their grid system, placed the number at 400,000. The controversy is standard with these events. The 1993 Lesbian and Gay March on Washington claimed a million participants; the Park Police said 300,000.

But the peak numbers had already passed when the Rev. Farrakhan took to the stage. Some marchers left to make their scheduled bus departures back home. Some were perhaps simply tired. But others no doubt left in disagreement with the speaker. The Mall cleared considerably during the two and a half hours of his rambling speech. Television coverage showed broad expanses of grass where bodies once stood. And by the time he finished, only a third of the marchers remained.

The organizers from the Leadership Forum stayed for the entire program, then returned to Boykin's home for a well-deserved celebration. They had made history.