

REACHING THE SUMMIT

Hundreds gather in the nation's capital to ponder lesbian rights at an event sponsored by the National Organization for Women by Bob Roehr

An estimated 800 people, including a handful of Oregonians, recently gathered in Washington, D.C., for the Lesbian Rights Summit sponsored by the National Organization for Women.

Workshops addressed an array of issues, including anti-gay military policies, health care, the politics of aging, and the trans and bisexual communities.

Strategy working groups discussed possible lesbian-related resolutions to be considered by NOW members slated to attend the organization's national conference in Los Angeles in July.

"Given that we are at the Lesbian Rights Summit, and that the foundation of the struggle for lesbian rights is a struggle for sexual liberation and freedom, it is stunning that there were no workshops on, about, or primarily dealing with sex at this summit," said Deke Law of the Portland-based Lesbian Community Project. "It marginalizes all who advocate for it and work to create a pro-sex culture in an anti-sex country."

presentation of the Women of Courage awards to Del Martin, 77, and Phyllis Lyon, 74.

The San Francisco couple have been together for 46 years, and in 1955 founded the lesbian organization Daughters of Bilitis.

Martin recalled how the duo's "couple's membership" to NOW was rejected in 1967.

"We were told that lesbians would destroy the organization," she noted.

At the first meeting of NOW's San Francisco chapter, Martin said, heterosexual women "vented their anger against men so vehemently and so visibly" that she and Lyon found themselves defending men.

"And we were supposed to be the man-haters. But then, we didn't have to live with them," she quipped.

Patricia Ireland, NOW's president, introduced U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, an openly lesbian Democrat from Wisconsin.

"She takes something from her life and uses it to help people understand issues. She talks about her family, she talks about herself, and in that way, I think, brings the notion of Congress



Law called for the inclusion of sex workshops at the NOW national conference.

Meanwhile, Ruth Harlow of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund said the community needs to make explicit the connections among sex discrimination, sexual orientation discrimination and discrimination against trans people.

Offering her analysis, Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said: "The best kept secret of the queer movement is that it is led by lesbian feminists—and the best kept secret of the feminist movement is that it is led by queers."

She believes the queer movement is leading the pack "on pushing the limits of gender identity and gender expression [and] the feminist movement has to catch up."

Lobel also urged for greater acknowledgment of bisexuality.

"We don't have a good sense of history and passing it on," said Willa Taylor, chair of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum. "And we continually reinvent the wheel because we don't know how it was done to begin with."

Taylor added she was pleased to see many generations participating in the summit.

The sentimental high point came with the

to people in a way that they can see how it touches their lives," said Ireland.

Baldwin said her openness debunks the widely held notion that politicians are cowards.

"By being out, we clearly demonstrate our integrity. We prove that we make decisions based on what is right and what is honest. We shatter the cynicism that people hold of politicians," she said.

Baldwin added: "There are two things that keep us oppressed: them and us. We are half of the equation. There will not be a magic day when we wake up and it is suddenly OK to express ourselves publicly. We make that day. So if you dream of a world in which you can put your partner's photograph on your desk at work, then put her photo on your desk and you will live in such a world."

"If you dream of a world where you walk down the street holding your lover's hand, then hold her hand and you will live in such a world. If you dream of a world where there are more openly gay and lesbian people in public office, then run for office and you will live in such a world."

The event, held in late-April, concluded with a march around the Capitol and a rally in front of the Supreme Court.

VANCOUVER HOMES

Great opportunity for:
Homes below \$145,000
Duplexes
New Construction
Homes on Acreage
FREE buyer consultation and \$75 home inspection discount.

KEN SPURLOCK, GRI



360-901-4944
503-240-8753, ext. 116
Houseken@aol.com

John L. Scott Real Estate Vancouver West

The Carpet Cleaning Experts

◆ Carpet ◆ Upholstery ◆ Oriental Rugs

- We vacuum
- We move your furniture
- Dry foam cleaning

772-1594

Welcome to Church as it was meant to be!

- Ordinary people, **GAY AND STRAIGHT TOGETHER.**
- gathering in the name of Christ;
 - challenging the political and social currents of the dominant culture, which exalt militarism and the accumulation of private wealth and property;
 - seeking first the Kingdom of God as a "contrast society," without class discrimination, racism, sexism, heterosexism and narrow religion.

Metanoia Peace Community
 A Reconciling Congregation of the United Methodist Church
 2116 N.E. 18th Avenue Portland, Oregon 97212
 Call for information: 503 281-3697

Use Your Completed Tax Forms To Start A Solid Financial Plan.

Chances are you've already done the majority of the work needed to start a sound financial plan for the future. I can help you do the rest. Simply provide me with your financial goals, along with your current tax information, and we'll create a plan to help you get there. Whether it's planing for college, retirement savings, investments, life insurance or IRAs, I'll explain all the options. Don't let another year go by. Call today, and make an appointment to invest in your future.



The people with a plan for you.

For a personal financial plan, call:
FLOREID WALKER
Senior Financial Advisor
503.238.6036
800.487.6626
Voicemail: 503.291.7713
500 N.E. Multnomah, Suite 278
Portland, OR 97232
www.waddell.com Member SIPC



"1999 President's Council Member"

Retirement Plans • Mutual Funds • College Planning