

Give the People Light and they will find their own way.



The Wisconsin Light

A GRAND AND GLORIOUS DAY

Over One Million March In Nation's Capitol



John Quinlan

FREEDOM MARCHES FORWARD—With the White House in the background, Miss Liberty helped to capture the spirit of the day at the April 25 March on Washington.

One Man's Impressions Of The Great March On Washington

By Terry Boughner

[Milwaukee]—One of my main impressions of the March On Washington is that it was pretty much a young people's affair. Roughly half women, half men, most were in their teens to 30-something with the 20's predominating.

It was an up-beat crowd, mellow, but celebratory, self-confident, not diffident nor shy, not angry but, I would say, definitely assertive and intensely determined to have our long denied

rights. "We're here! We're Queer! We're fabulous! Don't fuck with us!", a chant that was often heard throughout March weekend, captures the feeling well.

Another and even stronger impression that I have is that of a great, an almost overriding sense of community. Never in my life have I felt it so strongly that we have a Gay community in the truest sense of the word.

One night, near midnight, I stood in the Metro station, a vast place. Across from me, on the other side there were hundreds of people waiting for their train. Suddenly, spontaneously, everyone

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News Analysis By John Quinlan

[Washington, D.C.] - How do you measure the power of a day like April 25, 1993?

You can measure it in sheer numbers — despite an initial controversy, it's now clear that the March on Washington was the largest civil rights rally in our country's history. As of press time, the U.S. Park Service was expected to revise its infamously low crowd estimate upward toward that of the District of Columbia's: over 1.1 million people.

The enormous Mall that stretches from the Capitol to the Washington Monument was filled to overflowing. Hotel rooms were filled up in a hundred mile radius around the city. In a pleasantly refreshing reversal of the usual reality, nine out of ten of the people you met on the subways, in restaurants and on the streets were Gay and Lesbian.

Everyone was in agreement. No matter how you counted it, said Republican leader Sen. Robert Dole in the Washington Post, it was "a fairly substantial number of people." But ironically, at a time when the media is obsessing over how many of us there are or aren't, our power that day lay not in our sheer numbers, but elsewhere.

As the cameras panned the crowds that day, Americans saw people more or less like them, from all over, with and without children, of all ages, and cultural backgrounds. These people were not a threat, they were well-behaved, and obviously, having a roaring good time.

For Congresspeople and their staffers who received hundreds of visits from people advocating for Lesbian and Gay rights, there was a sense of sudden relief that we weren't as bad as they might have thought after all. And suddenly doors that had long been shut to us were now open.

"I never would have expected it," a staffer to a moderate Republican Senator from the Midwest told the Light, "but you guys are all right."

"We get so many calls here from the NRA and Operation Rescue types, people who are obviously being coached, or who seem totally consumed by hatred. And we just stop listening to them after a while,"

she said. "The Gay and Lesbian people I've met this week are just so ordinary, so reasonable as they talk about their lives... Not what I expected at all. If first impressions are any indication, you guys are on the right track."

It was a time to put our best foot forward, to show America and our government who we are. But just as importantly, it was also a time to rediscover a sense of our "community."

You could feel an extremely tangible sense of that "community" anywhere you went in Washington last weekend. You could strike up a conversation instantly with any stranger that you would meet. There was a sense of gentility and camaraderie that pervaded the air. You felt it among the throngs at DuPont Circle, in the Mall, in the ballrooms, in the bars.

To call ourselves a "community" is in some sense laughable. If being a community solely means being a group of people defined by our common goals and characteristics, then we seem just the opposite. Not only are we as diverse as the general population, but our movement is built on our right to be different. If anything, we are a group that revels in our individuality — something that on the face of it seems directly opposed to a sense of community.

Our movement, like many movements, has often seemed to be held together by

And yet this past week, there seemed an added dimension. We shared something. We felt something together. We are something together...

That sense of shared community lies more basically with the phenomenon that is the very foundation of our movement — the power inherent in our "coming out" as individuals, of simply being who we are in the face of enormous odds.

The power of the march lay not so much in the overwhelming strength of our numbers, but in the bonds that we share with each other, the integrity that lies within each of us as individuals. And when measured that way, what a powerful day it was.

Send Us Your Stories, Photos of The Great March

This edition of the Wisconsin Light is going to press just hours after our staff returned from covering April 25th's historic March on Washington.

An event this profound, with as many meanings as there were individuals in attendance, cannot possibly be described adequately in the pages of this issue. So we're asking for your help.

We are asking you, our readers, to submit "vignette-length" (short) articles on your experiences at the March, and its meaning for your life and the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual civil rights movement. Please try to limit yourself to several short, anecdotal paragraphs. Longer essays will be considered, but space is limited. Photos that show unusual or especially evocative aspects of the March weekend's experience would also be welcomed. Photographs can not be returned. Do not send negatives or color slides.

Even if you weren't able to attend, we're also hoping to hear your thoughts about "Where We're Going" as a community, a feature we'd like to continue on an ongoing basis. Submissions can be sent to the Light at the address listed on the paper's masthead on page 4. Deadline is Friday, May 7. Questions can be directed to the Light office or project director John Quinlan of the Light's Madison bureau at (608) 256-8100.



Jerry Johnson

ON, WISCONSIN— Approximately one thousand Wisconsinites journeyed to Washington to March on April 25.