



Western PA Freedom to Marry Coalition

Marriage Announcements

January/February, 1997

Volume 2 Issue 1

National Day of Action for Marriage Planned

Have a Heart Rally Planned to Support Marriage Rights

The Western Pennsylvania Freedom to Marry Coalition and Greater Pittsburgh chapters of the National Organization for Women will stage a rally at the State Office Building, 300 Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh PA at 5PM on February 14 as part of a National Day of Action in support of same-sex marriage, according to Scott Safier, Organizer with the Western PA Freedom to Marry Coalition. The rally is part of a national campaign coordinated by NOW.

"We stand united to challenge the discrimination faced by loving, committed couples who are denied the rights and responsibilities of marriage," said Mary Litman, chapter President of Squirrel Hill NOW. "We're asking legislators to have a heart this Valentine's Day and support their many lesbian and gay constituents, as well as their allies."

"Religious political extremists unsuccessfully tried to use same-sex marriage as a wedge issue during the last elec-

Belated Thank You

THANK YOU to Stacey Eisner and Pat Liddy for organizing our successful fund-raiser on December 10. *You are wonderful!* Thanks also to 239 Atwood Street for hosting the fund-raiser. Special thanks to the Inn on the Mexican War Streets and everyone else who donated prizes for our fund-raiser, and COPA for their participation in the event.

Thank you to the Lambda Foundation for their generous grant for our newsletter! Thank you to Terry McIntyre and Duane Williams for their generous gifts.

Thank you to Chris Biancheria and

tion. Fair minded voters re-elected every single courageous Congressman who voted in favor of same-sex marriage and was up for re-election, including Pittsburgh Congressman William Coyne." said Scott Safier, a representative of the Marriage Coalition.

"This national campaign is an opportunity for all community activists to speak out publicly and act together to show support for lesbians and gay men and to oppose sex-based discrimination," added Safier. "We are organizing this rally to highlight the injustice of anti-marriage laws like Pennsylvania's, and the need forequal marriage rights for lesbians and gay men in loving, committed relationships."

WHAT: Rally in Support of Marriage for Same-sex Couples

WHERE: State Office Building, 300 Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh PA

WHEN: Friday, February 14, 1997 - 5 to 6 pm

Michael Rizza for their help with the Valentine's Day rally and dealing with the City's Bureaucracy. Thank you to Squirrel Hill NOW for helping with the PA system for the Rally.

Thank you to Bob Arlia and Harry Logan for speaking publicly many times in support of marriage rights. We can always count on them.

Thank you to Cindy Klink and Rita Drapkin for being interviewed by City Paper in their January 30 edition.

It was the help of these people and many more that made 1996 a successful year for our marriage coalition.

Electronic Activism

Using the Internet to Support Marriage Rights

With the growing popularity of the internet, many people now have access to a valuable resource in the fight for equality in gay and lesbian relationships. Unfortunately, being able to tell a bulletin board from a mailing list from a newsgroup can be a daunting task. There are many gay and lesbian resources available once you get past the jargon.

Usenet is a collection of sites which allow users to share ideas with many readers. Like a library, it provides topic-specific information for anyone to access. Unlike a library, anyone can be an author and post information. Usenet is like a community forum where many readers can share and exchange ideas with many writers. Each forum on usenet is called a **newsgroup**. One of the principal gay and lesbian newsgroups is soc.motss, where *motss* stands for *members of the same sex*. Soc.motss, like all of usenet, is international, and has an estimated 100,000 readers, although only a few hundred people post. Two regional motss newsgroups exist: pa.motss for all of Pennsylvania, and pgh.motss for Pittsburgh. The motss groups are primarily social, although news about marriage rights is often posted there.

Similar to usenet is **altnet**. Altnet has less stringent rules about what forums exist than usenet, although this distinc-

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Electronic Activism

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tion is irrelevant to the casual user. [Alt.politics.homosexuality](#) is the forum on altnet where the politics surrounding the marriage issue is discussed.

To read altnet and usenet, you need newsreading software like *newswatcher*, or an integrated world wide web browser like *netscape*.

Electronic mail, or **e-mail**, is a more personal way to exchange information about the issue of marriage for same-sex couples. By subscribing to a **mailing list**, many writers can exchange information with many readers, similar to a newsgroup. However, unlike a newsgroup, messages sent to a mailing list are not as public and can only be seen by other people on that mailing list. Numerous gay rights mailing lists exist, and several discuss the issue of marriage for same-sex couples. First and foremost is the [marriage](#) mailing list. Two other lists, [queerlaw](#) and [queerpolitics](#) also discuss marriage, but discuss other topics as well.

Membership on mailing lists can be controlled, and users who violate the etiquette of the list can be removed, unlike a newsgroup. Most mailing lists only

have several hundred subscribers. You subscribe to the marriage list, queerlaw or queerpolitics, or any mailing list, by sending an e-mail message to an automated program called **majordomo**. The address of the majordomo server for these three lists is majordomo@qrd.org. Each of these lists has several hundred mail messages each week. Lists with a smaller volume of mail that is filtered to be topic specific exist for the three lists, and an example of how to subscribe to those is provided below.

The last major set of resources for same-sex marriage are private **web sites**. Like either mailing lists or newsgroups, large numbers of people can read a site on the **world wide web** (or www for short). Unlike newsgroups or mailing lists, only one person or a small group of people maintain what is available at any site. A web browser like *netscape* is necessary to view websites. The Western Pennsylvania Freedom to Marry Coalition maintains a website and links to other marriage information. Our address is <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/user/scotts/ftp/wpaf2mc/>. Type this in for the location, and begin to surf the net.

Western PA Freedom to Marry Coalition Homepage

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/user/scotts/ftp/wpaf2mc> is the address on the world wide web for the Western PA Freedom to Marry Coalition. This site provides a large number of resources to the marriage activist, and chronicles the history of the freedom to marry in Pennsylvania. The page links to the other PA Freedom to Marry Coalitions, which also have homepages, as well as the National Freedom to Marry Coalition homepage.

Other resources include the transcripts of the state house debate on PA's recently enacted anti-marriage law, and the US House of Representative's and US Senate's debate on the Defense of Marriage Act.

For a historical religious view of marriage, John Boswell's translation of [The Passion of Saints Serge and Baccus](#) is linked to the page.

Of course, a user can also access information about the coalition, including organizational members of the coalition, all our newsletters and all our brochures.

The next time you are cruising the internet, stop by our site!

Important Dates

February 11 Coalition meeting and rally preparation: Gay and Lesbian Community Center, Forward Ave, Squirrel Hill 7PM

February 14 RALLY for the Freedom to Marry, 5PM State Office Building, 300 Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh

February 27 Lecture: Same-Sex Marriage from the Jewish Perspective, featuring Rabbi James Gibson. Carnegie Mellon University 7:30 PM (call cmuOUT at 268-8794 for more info)

March 11 Coalition Meeting, Gay and Lesbian Community Center, Forward Ave, Squirrel Hill 7PM

To: majordomo@qrd.org

From: user@telerama.lm.com

Subject:

subscribe marriage-edit user@telerama.lm.com

subscribe queerlaw user@telerama.lm.com

Example: *How to subscribe to two mailing lists*

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<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/user/scotts/wpaf2mc>

Edited by Scott Safier

Subscribing to a mailing list: send an e-mail message to the automated subscription program *majordomo*. This program ignores the subject line of the mail message. The body of the mail message should contain the word **subscribe** followed by the name of the list and your e-mail address.