

# FREEDOM PARADE

# looks good

by Angela Keyes Douglas

Preparations are underway to celebrate the third anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion-Christopher Street Riots with marches and parades similar to those held in several cities in 1970 and 1971.

Becoming a traditional outpouring and affirmation of gay pride and gay militance, the celebrations observe the first act of violent gay militance.

This happened at the Stonewall bar in Greenwich Village in the last week of June in 1969, when gays fought back against a police raid and locked the police inside the bar.

The Stonewall Rebellion (repeated by the second Christopher Street riots in August of 1971) lasted for over a week, and within a few days after the Stonewall exploded, Gay Liberation Fronts began to form throughout the USA

and the words gay power and gay liberation became familiar to millions of people.

The Stonewall bar was more or less a sleazy hang out for hookers, street transvestites and younger gays, a social center more than a gay bar.

San Francisco will hold its first parade this year and may have from "2000 to 10,000 participants" according to Robert Humphries, co-chairperson on the Christopher Street West parade committee. "Due to the unique nature of the parade, we expect around a quarter of a million people to observe it", said Humphries. He said that it was quite possible that the parade will be televised and filmed, also.

Scheduled to begin on the afternoon of June 25, it will start at Pine and Montgomery streets and follow a 22-block long route, wind-

ing up in front of City Hall, where reviewing stands will have been set up.

"We hope that many of our gay sisters will participate," said Humphries. "The parade would be far more relevant if it represents all gay people. We hope that gay women will work with us on the committee."

According to statements appearing recently in the gay press, gay women have generally denounced the parade as being "male-oriented" and are not in support of it. Opposition to the parades is also coming from some elements of gay liberation, who feel that the parades this year co-opt the "spirit" of the Stonewall Rebellion, and are being commercialized.

Other opposition is coming from gays who feel that the parades give gay people a bad image, or will set back attempts at law reform.

However, the San Francisco and Los Angeles parades have the support of dozens of gay organizations, including those which are generally viewed as most conservative.

Theoretically, the parades are all-inclusive, and open to any and everyone—all types of gays.

In the earlier parades, both in New York and in LA, many gays demanded that transvestites and transsexuals not be permitted to participate, and led to the forma-



tion of transvestite and transexual militant groups. In New York, although TVs/TSSs were NOT permitted to march by parade organizers, Lee Brewster's Queens Liberation Front marched anyway.

Ironically, the Stonewall riots were fought mostly by transvestites and transsexuals—the "effeminate" types. At one point, queens wrote "butches, where are you now that we need you?" on the sidewalks during the riots. (They come out once a year, on June 25...)

In Los Angeles, criticism of the attire worn by gays in last year's parade led to the defection of Morris Kight, an associate founder of the Gay Liberation Front LA, who will participate in the San Francisco parade instead. Kight was largely responsible for the '70 and '71 parades in LA.

Kight said that some gays object to the "dirty shirts" worn by gays, although the shirts were actually tie-dyes. The conservative gays in LA have expressed hopes that gays participating in it

would be well-dressed, march in neat rows, and carry American flags.

The LA parade will be led this year by the Reverend Troy D. Perry, homosexual minister and founder of the gay-oriented Metropolitan Community Church. A dedicated gay activist, Perry has organized and led dozens of marches and demonstrations in the past.

San Francisco is going all-out to show up LA this year, and floats, limos, marchers and a lot of surprises are planned.

New York has optimistically predicted as many as 50,000 participants in its demonstration.

Gay groups from Canada, and other states of the USA, plan to participate in both the LA and San Francisco demos. Some demos may happen in foreign nations also.

Police permits for the parades were obtained without any difficulty whatsoever by gay groups in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

## GAY FREEDOM DAY

A resolution will be presented to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Monday calling on the mayor to proclaim Sunday, June 25, "Gay Freedom Day" in the City.

Ray Broshears, president of the Gay Activists Alliance and official for the Christopher Street West parade June 25, said that he has been promised personally by Sup-

ervisor John Molinari that he will bring up the resolution.

The resolution has sat on the mayor's desk all the past week without being signed, Broshears said. "Hell, the mayor has signed resolutions calling for begonia days, and snapping turtle days. I suppose he doesn't think gay people are as significant as begonias or snapping turtles!"