



EDITORIAL CARTOON

Editorial SAVE Dade's Bold Move



A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The South Florida Boy Scouts Council and SAVE Dade began that march last week when they civilly reached an accord on certain issues. They found common ground. Broward ought to work towards a similar partnership.

Unfortunately, the national Boy Scouts policy continue to discriminate against gay men and boys in Miami-Dade County. They still will treat gay boys and men as a threat, and heterosexual boys and men as safe companions for other scouts. That is a tragic error of stereotyping.

The local resolution insures the Boy Scouts won't seek public funding but will have the same access to schools as other nonprofit groups. But all parties will cooperate in offering diversity training to scouting staff. SAVE Dade will acknowledge the Boy Scouts' right of association. But the Scouts' leadership will work to remove the phony 'linking literature' used by outside groups seeking to overturn anti-discrimination protections for gays and lesbians. This is critical.

Last week, in the Sun-Sentinel, Jeffrie Herrmann, the local Boy Scouts representative courageously editorialized against the false associations generated by those seeking to repeal equal rights protections in Broward County. They call themselves 'Special Rights, Not Equal Rights' but in truth, they would prefer our community have no rights.

Fortunately, the public sees through their lies, so they now falsely rush to shopping centers to garner petitions which read 'Save Our Scouts.' And the Broward County Human Rights Ordinance has nothing at all to do with scouts. We already know that, and congratulations are due to the local Boy Scouts for disassociating themselves from those liars.

Were the Scouts national policies only so enlightened when it comes to homosexual issues!

It is unfortunate that Americans who cherish their scouting experiences now find themselves at odds with homosexual lobbies who never intended to make Boy Scouts a target. The goal was always to

insure inclusion, not to secure exclusion.

It is worse that religious zealots are trying to link their opposition to civil rights laws to the Boy Scouts/gay debate.

It is good that Dade's gay leadership has joined in a dialogue. It is a start in overcoming prejudices that are unjust.

AFE/Empower Broward Mobilized and Motivated

Americans For Equality/Empower Broward is trying to frustrate the attempt of these Neanderthal rights repealers by educating the public, sharing the truth, and pointing out the fundamental justice of equal rights legislation. They are now working hard at it, and should prevail. Their initiatives and fund raisers have begun to gather community attention and credibility.

But AFE is also trying to stop these religious zealots from soliciting the petitions in private shopping malls and other public gathering spots. We do not endorse restricting anyone's liberties. As a civil rights group, they would be better advised to continue to beat down the message and not the messenger. Win on the merits and not on maneuvers.

AFE's noble struggle should prevail because their cause is just, not because they frustrated their opponents ability to earnestly gather signators.

The bottom line is that all petition drives and signature initiatives are historically and fundamentally American. They represent the pure will of the public in its ongoing battle with a government that is often too intrusive.

And while we should always insure the integrity and validity of the petitions, we ought to facilitate the ease with which they can be gathered, rather than devise ways in which they can be restricted. You never know which day on what side of the issue you are going to be on; when you are going to be out on the street seeking someone else's signature.

The essence of a democracy is like a rubber band- stretch it to include all. Tighten it and you limit everyone.

THE EXPRESS CHAT ROOM

Letters to the Editor

GLCC is a Mess

Dear Editor:

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding recent developments around the GLCC restructuring process. To my knowledge the "Community Partners" came forward voicing concerns about how the GLCC was being run by the Board of Directors. Firstly, I am not sure what community or partners they are representing. My friends and I were never informed or asked, nor did we ever read in the press of any of their meetings. Nor, to my knowledge were these meetings open to the public. It concerns me that this is some "smoke filled, closed door group" making decisions for me without asking me.

My second concern comes from what I read in *The Express*. The "Community Partners" and the GLCC came together and agreed to a restructuring process. Everyone at the townhall meetings agreed that this was necessary due to the serious financial situation that the GLCC was/is in. I have now learned that some members of the "Community Partners", namely: Jim Stork, John Graves and Jacqueline Tuchler have been telling donors to withhold money from the GLCC and put it into escrow. Knowing the financial state that the GLCC is in, why would they do this? This information apparently came out during one of the committee meetings and was admitted to. I'm not a lawyer, but this seems to be very underhanded and unfair to everyone who is trying to make this process work in good faith.

My third concern is about how the process is being handled. At the townhall meetings it was agreed that the restructuring committees would brainstorm to come up with ideas to help the GLCC. The committee heads would then present the ideas to the Board of Directors. Now it seem that this agreed upon process does not fit into the program of everyone involved in the restructuring program and they are trying to circumvent the process. I am speaking of Greg Scott trying to submit his ideas and his own report without meeting with his committee to get their opinions. Why wouldn't someone want to get input from other people on such an important issues? Isn't everyone supposed to be working together?

I think these things need to be reviewed. Who is this group and what are their motives? Do they want to see the GLCC fail? Are they really committed to working together? And more importantly, what is the "Community Partners" organization and why aren't their meetings open? If they say that they are speaking for the "community" shouldn't they be asking for our input and opinions?

Sincerely,
Thomas Brant

Dykesville

by Tami Friday



Editorial Rebuttal:

Dolphin President Says "Democrats Do Not Take Gays For Granted"

Regarding your editorial in the July 9 issue of the *Express*, your Publisher is wrong. Democrats don't take gays for granted.

At the Stonewall Street Parade, the Dolphin Democratic Club was honored to be visited by House Representatives Jack P. Seiler and Tim Ryan, Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner Tim Smith, Gubernatorial candidate Lois Frankel, Florida House seat candidate Larry Kaplan and many others who came by to wish us well.

These politicians are all Democrats and we are very proud of them and their families for attending the Stonewall festival and representing the Democratic Party. For your information, Democrats have been at the forefront this year fighting for the GLBT community at all levels of government. Florida House Delegate Kenneth Gottlieb has proposed a bill, "Dignity For All Students," which will be introduced this Fall, insuring respect and safety for GLBT public school students throughout the state of Florida. This is in direct response to Representative Trovillian's hateful remarks a couple of months ago.

Many people have erroneously stated that there was a lack of politicians at this year's event. Frankly, I just don't agree. The weekend of the Festival coincided with the State Democratic Party's annual convention. To their credit, the people mentioned above and many others took time out from their busy schedules to come celebrate with our community.

What needs to be pointed out, however, is that they came because they were invited by us. How many politicians - Democrat, Republican, Independent - were invited to attend the festival by the festival's promoters?

The two Gay & Lesbian Pride organizations should have made every effort to make contact with all of the politicians who serve Broward County and make them aware of these events in a timely manner. The results might be surprising. What should be asked is, "Where was all the media?" They're omnipresent when something goes wrong. Why aren't they there when our community is showcased in a positive light?

So, Democrats do not and did not take our community for granted. More than any other party, Democrats continue to fight for equality and fairness for all citizens, and continue to take stands on the issues that matter to us when others just stand on the sidelines and watch.

The GLBT vote and influence will be a major factor in the upcoming Governor's race as well as the contests for other state and local offices. Anyone who has attended meetings of the Dolphin Democratic Club knows this fact. On this note, let me say that we all need to make sure the GLCC's doors remain open so we can continue to provide a venue for dialog between our community and the people we elect to represent us.

Percy L. Johnson, President
Dolphin Democratic
Club of Broward County

The Express Chat Room
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This Above All...
To Thine Own Self Be True.

EXPRESS YOURSELF!

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