

Stonewall Library Prepares for New Year

New Board of Directors Set Series of Goals

By Michael James

The Stonewall Library and Archives in Fort Lauderdale held their 2001 annual meeting on Saturday, December 8. At that meeting, five new board members were elected along with a new executive board. The new board members are Paul Fasana, Ted Emery, Mark Eagle, Bill Beaton and William Dalrymple.

The new executive board consists of Rob Nathans, President; Jacqueline Harrington, Vice President; Fred Searcy, Treasurer; Mark Eagle, Secretary and Steve Kerr, Chief Librarian. Plaques of appreciation were presented to Anne Atwell, Bob Ewart and Margo Poulson for their service during the year.

Nathans, who moved to Fort Lauderdale from New Jersey 12 years ago, became active with Stonewall two years ago assisting them with the grant writing process. With a fine arts background, he is now a professor of art history at Broward Community College.

The goals the board has set for themselves include building committees, interfacing with the community, developing more programs and increasing their membership. He also stated that one of the benefits of membership is being able to vote

for the board of directors.

The library is also now engaged in a promotional campaign to clarify that membership with the Gay and Lesbian Community Center (GLCC) and Stonewall are not the one in the same.

Nathan says, "We saw advantages of being part of the GLCC, but lost a lot of our membership as a result of it. We are creating a separate membership database and the community needs to be aware that we are a separate entity."

During the meeting, it was announced that the date of next year's Heritage Forum would be February 2. The program will be a retrospective on gay and lesbian legal and political activities from Anita Bryant to the present.

Nathan says, "We will bring prominent figures together to present an interchange with the community and to present an oral history."

As a part of the 2002 Stonewall Author's Series, Dr. John C. Graves will read from his book, *Many Roads Traveled* on January 25 at 7 pm in the Library.

The volunteer-based nonprofit organization's mission is "to preserve gay, lesbian and transgender culture" and as been in existence since 1973.



Rob Nathans, Fred Searcy, Steven Kerr and Jacqueline Harrington

The Library is now open on Saturdays from 12 to 3pm, in conjunction with its weekly schedule of Monday through Friday from 11am to 10pm. It will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Stonewall Library and Archive memberships are now available at the front desk at a cost of \$25 for individuals and \$40 for households. Members of the GLCC will receive a \$5 discount.

A year's membership entitles members to a Stonewall Library Card, all mailings from

the Library and Archives, which include their newsletter and announcements to all events, volunteer opportunities and voting privileges.

For more information about the Library, visit them at 1717 North Andrews Avenue inside the GLCC or go to their website at www.stonewall-library.org.

Those interested in volunteering should contact Ron DeShon, the Library Team Coordinator at rdeshon@mediaone.net or by calling 954.784.8048.

Gay Rights Vote In Miami-Dade Certified For 2002 Ballot

SAVE Dade Challenges Decision in Circuit Court

By Ron Gunzburger

Voters in Miami-Dade County will vote in September 2002 on a ballot question intended to repeal the county's gay rights ordinance. The county ordinance prohibits employment and housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Religious Right activists apparently collected a sufficient number of signatures to force the vote. "The petitions have met the requirements set by the County Charter and are officially certified," said Miami-Dade County Elections Supervisor David Leahy.

Leahy's initial review had led to the disqualification of numerous petitions. Based on that review, Leahy earlier had announced that the anti-gay Take Back Miami-Dade group had not submitted a sufficient amount of valid signatures. The gay rights opponents successfully challenged Leahy's decision in court, forcing him to certify the matter.

"This is a victory for the community, democracy and for the people of Miami-Dade, who will finally get to vote on the issue," said Miami-Dade Christian Coalition Chairman Tony Verdugo to the *Miami*

Herald.

The 2002 battle is a virtual repeat of the bitter 1977 vote in Dade, when former beauty queen Anita Bryant and the "Save Our Children" group persuaded voters to repeal a similar law. In that campaign, anti-gay activists relied on nasty ads that stereotyped homosexuals as potential child molesters and sexual deviants. Bryant's web site still describes the campaign as "a dramatic and emotional struggle with militant homosexuals." That gay rights battle — among the first in the US — received national headlines.

Much has changed, however, since 1977. Then, the gay rights issue was rarely discussed and harsh stereotypes were readily believed. Now, 25 years later, gay people live more openly, violent anti-gay hate crimes led to a change of opinions, and friendly gay characters populate numerous movies and TV shows. And Bryant — who touted "family values" in 1977 — divorced in 1980 and moved to Tennessee.

Still, Miami-Dade will become a major

battleground. Gay rights activist Jorge Marsuli, State Director of the liberal People for the American Way advocacy group, predicts that the 2002 campaign will be "a national battle ... I think you'll see national organizations on either side come to the table" with large amounts of money.

SAVE Dade chair Hedly Pena believes the gay rights ordinance will prevail in 2002. "This community is not the same as it was in 1977. It has evolved. We're confident that when people are educated on what the issue is — and the issue is discrimination — that they will go to the polls to vote their conscience. They will vote to protect everyone's rights," said Pena.

Late News: On December 28, Friday afternoon, SAVE Dade filed a suit in Circuit Court alleging legal challenges to the certification based on "irregularities and fraud."

If the challenge succeeds, the question could be knocked off the ballot. Previous SAVE Dade complaints led to Florida Department of Law Enforcement agents seizing the petitions for review as part of a criminal investigation.

SAVE Dade has been preparing for this fight for three years, said Pena, and claims to have an army of 4,000 volunteers ready to help fight against the repeal campaign.

Local Catholic Church officials have stated that they have no opposition to the current county ordinance on moral grounds and the Archdiocese of Miami did not allow signature collection on church property.

Among those on record opposing repeal of the gay rights ordinance are Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas, the AFL-CIO, NOW, the American Jewish Congress, the United Teachers of Dade, the NAACP, the Chamber of Commerce and the city commissions in nine Miami-Dade municipalities.

A similar repeal attempt of Broward County's gay rights ordinance failed in October 2001 when the Take Back Broward group failed to submit the requisite amount of signatures.

Several leaders of the Take Bake Broward group are currently under investigation by the Florida Elections Commission and the Broward County State Attorney's Office for campaign-related money laundering allegations.



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