

## CONVENTION Continued from page 2.

Register for the convention using PayPal on the Philadelphia chapter's new website, [www.mact-phila.org](http://www.mact-phila.org), between now and February 28 and receive the special rate of \$150. Otherwise, if paying by mail, the price is \$175, good until May 1 when the registration rate will increase to \$180. Checks should be sent to NABWMT Convention 2009, P.O. Box 686, West Chester, PA 19381.

The 2009 convention hotel is the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1800 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19103. Mention NABWMT and received the special convention rate of \$129 per night. The Crowne Plaza can be reached at (215) 561-7500.

Look for more detailed information about Convention 2009 in the spring issue of The Quarterly. In the mean-

# NABWMT Convention 2009 Philadelphia A Blueprint for Change

*Yes we can, together*

We helped close out the last millennium with our well received 1999 convention (and what great memories). We're now preparing to close the first decade of the new millennium with what we think will be an even more exciting, dynamic, and fulfilling experience.

Get ready to shake it up, talk it out, and lay it all down. In addition to our exciting entertainment schedule, we're planning engaging workshops, controversial debates, and informative panel discussions.

**WON'T YOU JOIN US ??**

time, for the latest updates, please visit [www.mact-phila.org](http://www.mact-phila.org), or send us your email address for the latest information, even if you do not register at this time.

Write to...

[cpcphila2009@aol.com](mailto:cpcphila2009@aol.com)

and we'll be more than happy to keep you informed about progress on Convention 2009.

We hope to see you in the summer of 2009!

**Editors note: Look for mail REGISTRATION form and details on Page 17**

## Editorial Prop- 8 and Beyond

### Ralph Ewers, Editor

As the rancor following the Prop-8 vote escalated, this editor received a virtual avalanche of e-mail from NABWMT members around the country. All manner of opinion and outrage was expressed and our chapters (see Pages 4, 6, and 8) and NABWMT leaders (see Page 10) attempted to bring some sense of sanity to this issue. Here are some of the highlights of this debate, filtered by a little passage of time and some sober reflection.

Clearly, one of the most extreme perspectives was that expressed by Pat Boone, who likened the reaction of the gay community to the defeat of Prop-8 to the recent and horrific jihadist savagery in Mumbai India!

*"Are you aware of the demonstrations in our streets... Have you not seen the angry distorted faces of the rioters, seen their derogatory and threatening placards and signs, heard their vows to overturn the democratically expressed views of voters, no matter what it costs, no matter what was expressed at the poles? Twice?"*

Apparently, Mr. Boone believes that majority opinion and the will of the voting majority is unerringly right. If so, perhaps we should abolish the Supreme Court, revisit matters of civil rights gains, reinstitute slavery, return to all the voter approved and government sanctioned oppressions of minorities in our past. Mr. Boone should remember that people like Adolf Hitler and George Wallace were elected by a majority of voters and voters approved the Jim Crow Laws that created one of the most regrettable periods in our history. The tyranny of the majority will be just that, TYRANNY.

At the other extreme were the vitriolic outbursts of some white gays, accusing black gays of not bringing their people into line, pointing out that African Americans voted overwhelmingly for Prop-8. It is unclear that black voters made the difference between passage and defeat. In any case, this deplorable conduct on the part of white gays caused Dan Savage to observe: "...the handful of racist gay white men... are a bigger problem for African Americans, gay and straight, than the... homo-

phobic African Americans are for gay Americans, whatever their color. National Black Justice Coalition CEO, H. Alexander Robinson observed:

*"...we fully reject the racially biased musings that African-Americans were the deciding vote or that the presence of a black man at the top of the ticket led to this disappointing defeat. Moreover, we believe that it is far too simplistic to label all who voted against marriage for same-sex couples as homophobic. We would do well to remember that African-American opinions and attitudes about marriage are shaped by religious beliefs and a tortured history, which includes the sanctity of our families not being honored in the context of slavery. For many black Americans, the Obamas' intact and loving family is as significant as his presidency."*

Joe Solmonese of the Human Rights Campaign observed: "We obviously failed to communicate to African Americans the interdependence of our struggles."

A voice of reason in this debate came from what might seem an unlikely source, someone who has, by his own admission, no "personal investment in this", MSNBC Anchor, Keith Olberman.

*"If you voted for this Proposition or support those who did or the sentiment they expressed, I have some questions, because, truly, I do not understand. Why does this matter to you? What is it to you? In a time of impermanence and fly-by-night relationships, these people over here want the same chance at permanence and happiness that is your option. They don't want to deny you yours. They don't want to take anything away from you. They want what you want—a chance to be a little less alone in the world."*

It seems this redounds to definition for some. They say gays want to redefine marriage. If we had not redefined marriage black people could not marry white people in sixteen states as recently as 1967. Olberman observed that:

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### Prop 8 and Beyond CONTINUED

*"The parents of the (then) President-Elect of the United States couldn't have married in nearly one third of the states of the country their son grew up to lead... But it's worse than that. If this country had not "re-defined" marriage, some black people still couldn't marry black people. It is one of the most overlooked and cruelest parts of our sad story of slavery. Marriages were not legally recognized, if the people were slaves. ...just like marriages today in California are not legally recognized, if the people are gay."*

For others it is simply a matter of religion, and it may be truly said that the concept of marriage is firmly rooted there. Many of the religious arguments stem from so-called natural law which asserts that marriage is for the propagation of the species, something we have proven much too good at. Clearly, many marriages are not entered into for the production of children and there is no cry for the dissolution of unions which do not produce them. It may be argued that mutual support and love are a sufficient reason for such unions. Olberman put it this way:

*"You are asked now... to stand, not on a question of politics, not on a question of religion, not on a question of gay or straight. You are asked now to stand, on a question of love. All you need do is stand, and let the tiny ember of love meet its own fate.*

*You don't have to help it, you don't have it applaud it, you don't have to fight for it. Just don't put it out. Just don't extinguish it. Because while it may at first look like that love is between two people you don't know and you don't understand and maybe you don't even want to know. It is, in fact, the ember of your love, for your fellow person just because this is the only world we have. And the other guy counts, too."*

Perhaps it is past time, in this editor's opinion, to observe that, in deference to our constitutions' establishment clause, the state should be out of the marriage business entirely, providing only Civil union licenses in all cases, leaving marriage to the churches where it belongs.

What do you think ?

Ralph Ewers, Co-Editor

## MACT Philadelphia Protests Proposition 8

By Regis D'Angiolini, MACT Philadelphia

Members of MACT Philadelphia joined 5,000 others Nov. 15 in a massive yet peaceful protest of California's recent passage of a law banning gay marriage.

Organized by the "Philly 8," the demonstration was part of simultaneous protests in cities across the country in objection to Proposition 8, which voters in California passed on Election Day making gay marriages illegal in that state. The Philadelphia demonstration included speeches by local activists as well as two marches around Philadelphia's City Hall.

MACT Philadelphia played a critical role in the demonstration as one of its co-sponsors along with such groups as Act Up Philadelphia, GALAEI, Independent Catholic Church, Metropolitan Community Church, the Reformed Catholic Church, the Philadelphia chapter of PFLAG, Queer Philadelphia Asians, the Philadelphia Gay News and the William Way LGBT Community Center.

Speakers included the mayor's liaison to the LGBT community, Gloria Casarez, local Metropolitan Community Church minister Jeffrey Jordan and local activist Brandi Fitzgerald. The event featured a moment of silence in honor of those who lost their right to marry.

"To see that many people show up spontaneously made it all come together," said rally participant and MACT Philadelphia member John Speer. "We were hoping we would get 100, maybe 500, but we got 5,000."

**"We formed a barrier to create an isle about 10 feet wide so the police could usher the people from Repent America off the premises," Speer said. "It was pretty dramatic."**

Signs at the demonstration displayed such statements as "14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: No state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws," "Str8 Against H8," "Your Rights Are Next," "Equal Rights for All" and "No More Mr. Nice Gay."



Despite the large number of people present and the appearance of a small handful of anti-gay protestors from Repent America, all remained peaceful and no arrests were made during the two-hour demonstration.

"We formed a barrier to create an isle about 10 feet wide so the police could usher the people from Repent America off the premises," Speer said. "It was pretty dramatic."

With adoption of Proposition 8, more than 40 states now have bans on gay marriage. Only Massachusetts and Connecticut permit gay marriage, with Vermont offering civil unions, which include a majority of the legal benefits of marriage.

*Regis D'Angiolini is a member of MACT Philadelphia and the 2009 Convention Planning Committee. He is also a former corresponding secretary for NABWMT and a past editor of The Quarterly.*