

# GAYS LIBERATE MASON ST.

Gay people "liberated" Mason Street in downtown San Francisco during the noon hour Wednesday in a spontaneous, unscheduled march in from a rally at St. Mary's Square.

Three dozen gays changed plans at their Gay Unity rally, and instead of joining the National Peace Action Coalition anti-war rally at the Embarcadero, chose "to claim their own turf."

Marching to the 100 block of Mason Street, they stopped noon hour traffic by parading with flags, banners and streamers for 10 minutes in the middle of the block. Gays in the area joined the demonstration, swelling its numbers to over 150 before it dispersed to the sidewalks.

While in the middle of the street, in an impromptu hand count they voted their endorsement of Scott Newhall for mayor in the upcoming election, and added endorsement of Noah Griffen and Yvonne Westbrook for supervisors.

"The 100 block of Mason Street is the front porch of gay people--transvestites and transsexuals--in the Tenderloin of SF," claimed Ray Broshears, president of the Gay Activists Alliance.

The spontaneous decision to march to Mason Street came after speakers Beth Elliot and Mike Itkin denounced efforts of the anti-war rally organizers to co-opt both the women's and gay men's movements. Broshears then denounced Tac Squad harassment of gay people on Mason Street, saying that gay people were "fed up" and have reached the point of "returning violence for violence."

The march began as planned with a stop-off at the Pacific Telephone Company, 444 Bush Street, where a brief demonstration protested the war tax and the refusal of the phone company to hire known homosexuals.

Then the marchers took off for Mason Street. "There won't be anyone at the peace rally, anyway," one person shouted. "It is time we free our own turf, and have an anti-war demonstration against the war we have to fight with police here every day," yelled another.

Police did not interfere with the demonstration at any point. Broshears told BARB that a significant breakthrough came when Captain Flynn of the Police Department's Central Station came and listened as gay and transvestites poured out their grievances of police harassment to him.

"We got results," Broshears said. "Flynn said he was unaware that there had been a problem and that he would speak to his evening and night commanders about it."

"We reminded him that it was the Crime Prevention Unit that has been creating most of the problems," he added. He said that GAA has sent a letter to new police

chief Scott calling for a meeting with the head of the Crime Prevention Unit, and added that GAA

members voted to attend the November 1 meeting of the SF Board of Supervisors.

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