## Local News

# Montgomery County Gays 'celebrate victory'

by Wendy Johnson

Montgomery County Gays had a spe-Lesbian Interests Consortium (GLIC).

"We're here to celebrate victory," said Sue Zloth, chair of Montgomery Pride 1996, held at Lake Needwood Park in transgender people mingled throughout Rockville, Md. GLIC this year honored the shady picnic area on Sunday, trans-Montgomery County activists Bonnie J. forming the wooded area into a safe Gay Berger and Larry Jacobs, co-founders of space where folks cuddled with their the Coalition to End Prejudice in Our lovers, their children, and in some cases, Schools, which worked over the past year their dogs. to secure civil rights protections for Gays within the Montgomery County public days!" said Kay Haga, 31, of Germanschools.

convincing state lawmakers to add sexual orientation to the state's civil rights laws, did succeed in Montgomery County, where the Montgomery County Board of Education on March 25 voted unanimously to add sexual orientation to the D.C. Lesbian and Gay Freedom Festischools' 27-year-old human relations policy.

said Berger, accepting her award. Berger high number of women milling about, warned there are still "folks opposed [to the pro-Gay policy] who are running ket "in the best possible place to 'babetheir mouths off" in the media and said that some anti-Gay activists continue to Zloth said 1,000 people attended this hand out anti-Gay literature at Metro stations.

a permit," she said. "If they don't, report said. "That really helped. I think it drew a them to the Metro police. And remember to support the school board people when they are running in elections."

Jacobs was not present to receive his

award but later told a reporter, "It's time we become willing to stand up for young cial reason for rejoicing at last weekend's Gays and Lesbians, and say, 'Hey, we fourth annual Pride Day celebration, went through this when we were young, sponsored by the county-based Gay and and it wasn't right.' [Young Gays] shouldn't have to endure the same hardships."

Gay men, Lesbians, bisexuals, and

"I love days like this! I love Pride town. Working on her summer tan, Haga Gay activists, though unsuccessful in lay sprawled on a cream-colored blanket near the front gate of the Pride ground. "I was in there earlier listening to music and walking around," she said. Haga, like many others at the event, said she regards Montgomery Pride as "an appetizer" to val, scheduled for Sunday, June 9. "If D.C. Pride is Christmas, then this is "There is much to celebrate this year," Thanksgiving," she said. Pointing out the Haga said she carefully situated her blan-

year, 250 more than last year.

"A lot of mainstream newspapers men-"If you see them, ask them if they have tioned us in their calendar sections," she lot of people who had never come be-

> Although the day attracted mostly women, the event attracted "a whole al-



Three women enjoy Montgomery Pride.

phabet soup" of people, said Zloth, including Gay and bisexual men, transgenders, heterosexuals, children, and a smattering of dogs (complete with rainbow collars).

"I've seen a few teachers here today," teachers are still fearful for their job. Many still don't know that the schools' [human relations] policy protects them,

ry, the event also featured food, non-al- it.

coholic drinks, and a color TV raffle.

"I've never had such a good time in my life!" said Helen, who staffed an information table for the transgender groups Washington/Baltimore Alliance and the Transgender Educational Associsaid Jill Karpf, who staffed a table for the ation. "I've been made to feel very wel-Gay, Lesbian, Straight Teachers Net- come. A little 6-year-old came by and work: "That's pretty good, because most wanted to know whether I'm male or female. I said, 'I'm a little bit of both.' I said, 'We may know how we start out, but we don't know how we end up'."

The event cost GLIC about \$10,000 to In addition to vendor tables that sold produce, and though organizers by mideverything from rainbow candles and week had not finished tallying the refreedom rings to baseball hats and jewel- ceipts, Zloth said they likely made a prof-

# One in Ten 'miscommunication' angers Latinos

by Wendy Johnson

A "miscommunication" that led to heated exchanges between members of the Latino Gay community and organizers of D.C.'s Lesbian and Gay Freedom Festival has prompted festival organizers One in Ten to purchase advertising space in this week's Blade to print an apology

Written by One in Ten President Lois Wesly, the letter [on page 26 of this issue] alludes to "racist" actions, "poor internal communications," and a "lack of sensitivity" on the part of One in Ten, and refers to a mixup that occurred in April, when festival co-chair Brent Beemer provided the Blade with an incomplete list of honorary parade marshals.

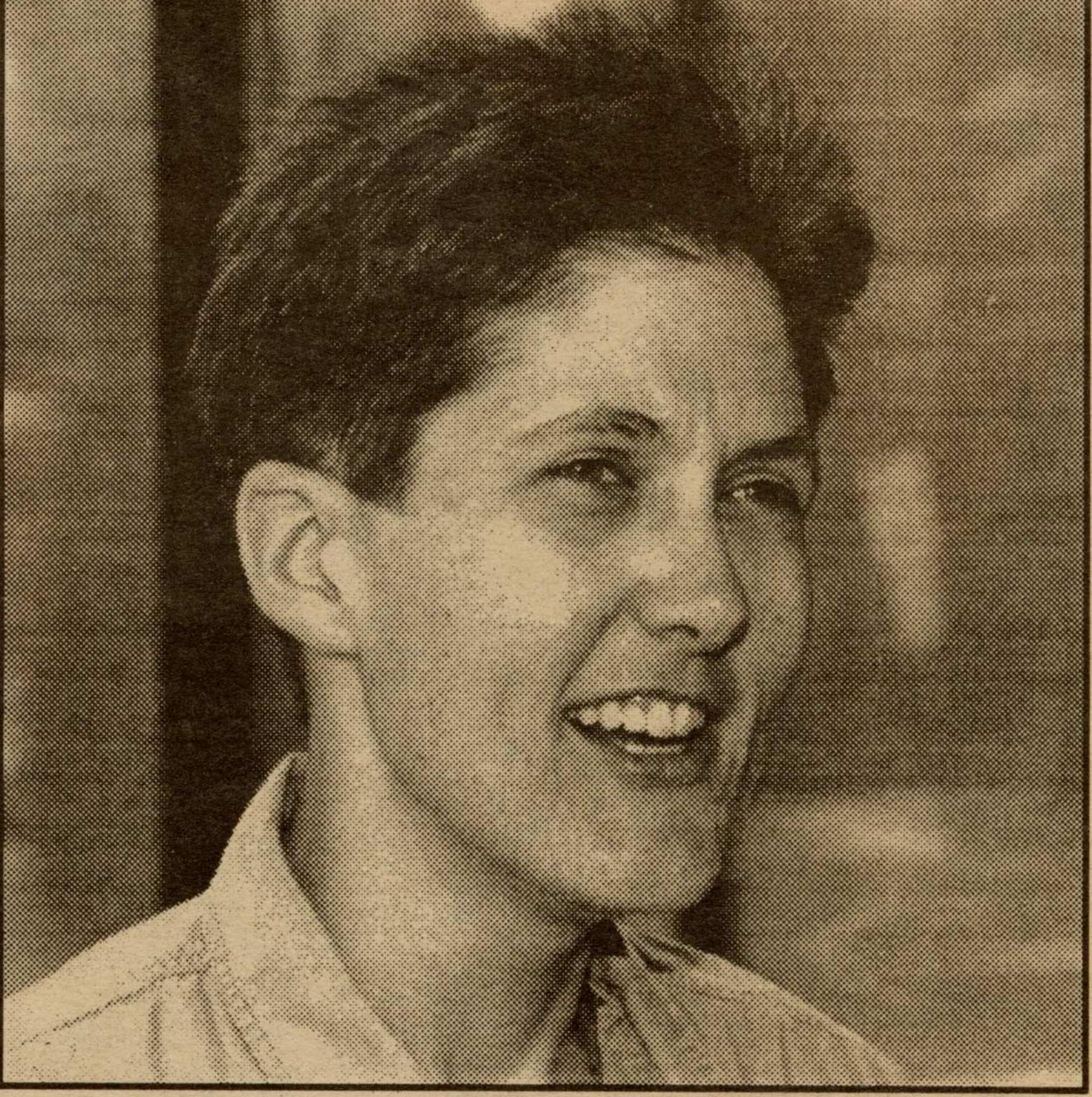
Latino Gays were outraged when they saw that the list, published in Blade on April 26, did not include Letitia Gomez or Tomas Gomez. Both had been told by two different festival committee members that they would be marshals, said Ruben Rivera, One in Ten board member.

"It was a mistake," said Rivera. "At no time did we not want to include the Latino community."

Information regarding the appointment of parade marshals was not communicated clearly among board members, Rivera said. The situation worsened May 3, when the Blade reported that Letitia Gomez had been appointed as an honorary parade marshal. Tomas Gomez was still not mentioned in any of the literature which One in Ten provided to the Blade.

"It was miscommunication," said Rivera. "One board member went back to Letitia and said she would be a marshal, and another one went back to Tomas."

Rivera said this information was not effectively communicated to press liaison Beemer. Beemer did not return a Blade reporter's phone call.



One in Ten President Lois Wesly blamed the misunderstanding to 'poor internal communications."

"It looked really bad," said Lois Wesly. "Somebody told [Tomas Gomez] that he was confirmed as a marshal when they didn't have the authority to do that."

Board members for One in Ten swiftly apologized to Tomas Gomez and explained that Letitia Gomez had actually been chosen to be an honorary marshal.

This infuriated Latino Gays, however, who viewed it as a sudden "change of mind" by One in Ten to nix Tomas Gomez as a marshal. At a passionate May meeting, Latino Gays accused festival organizers of sloppy

management, said Martin Ornelas, acting executive director of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO).

"There was a lack of regard for Gay and Lesbian Latinos during the nomination process and in how they contacted people for nominations," said Ornelas, who attended the May 7 meeting. "If they tell someone they're going to be a marshal, then they should stick with that. They added people later on, and that appeared like [they were] adding for gaps."

Tomas Gomez has since been added to the list of honorary marshals, which also includes Letitia Gomez, Dee Mosbacher, Susan Hester, Tom Swann, Ella Fitzgerald, and Honorary Grand Marshal Candace Gingrich.

Orlando F. Reyes-Aponte, a member of Comite Carroza Latina, which designs a parade float on behalf of the Gay Latino community each year, said most Latino Gays are now satisfied and said that festival organizers have agreed to plan a future event that will call attention to the work of Latino Gays within the Gay community, and that they will publicize future board openings.

"[One in Ten] acknowledged their errors," Reyes-Aponte said. "We feel satisfied with the steps that they've taken, especially in agreeing to put the apology letter in the Blade."

This incident marks the second time One in Ten has come under fire while planning this year's Lesbian and Gay Freedom Festival. Bisexual and transgender activists were outraged when festival organizers in March voted not to add the words "bisexual and transgender" to the festival name. As a result, the group Bicentrist Alliance has decided to host a competing "Diversity Pride" picnic in Rock Creek Park on June 9 — the day of the Freedom Parade and Festival.

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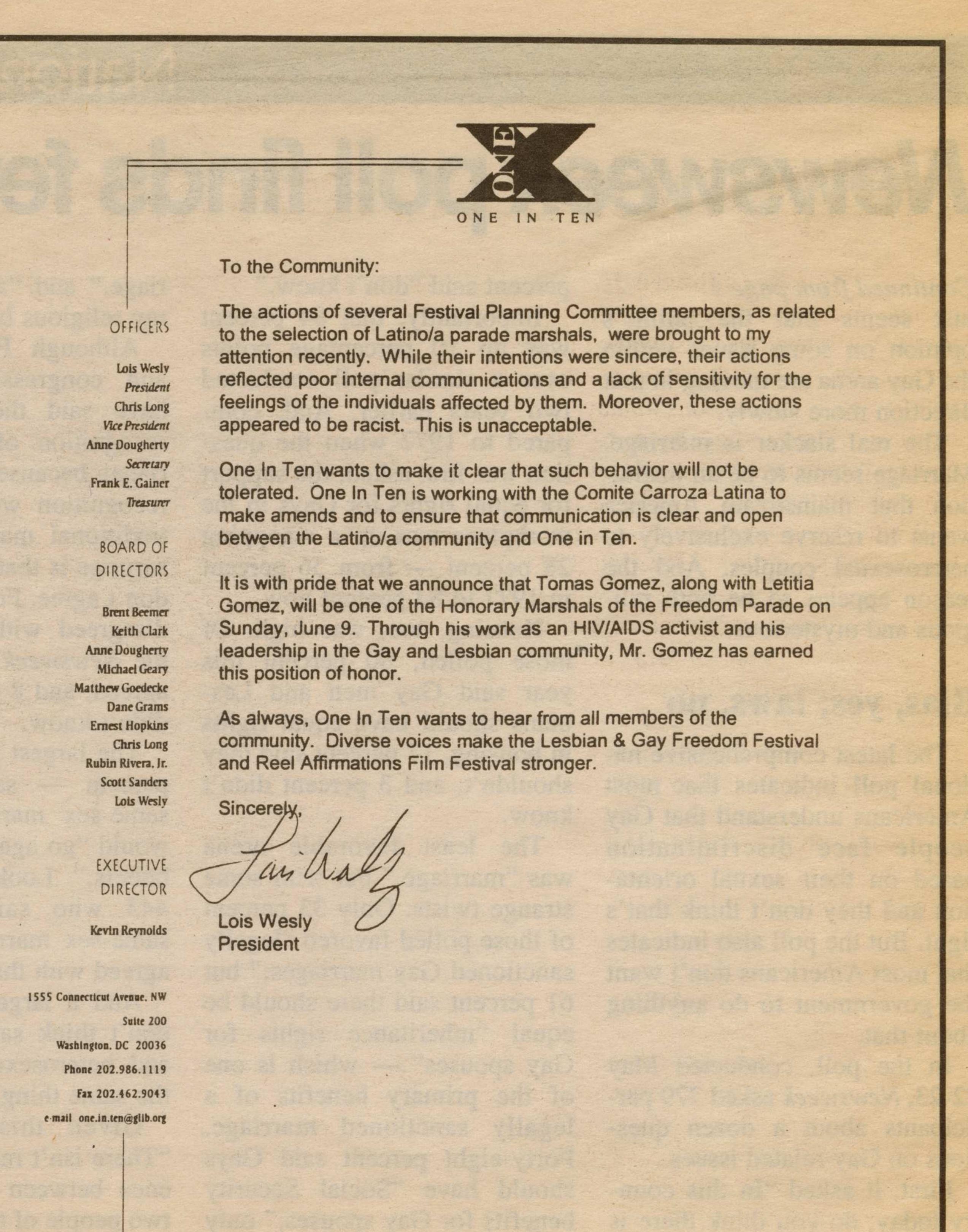
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