

This is the 23rd Vermont Pride March. Some of you aren't even that old and some of us were part of starting that first pride in 1983. Looking at where we've come from then I find a mixed bag.

We have made a lot of progress.

We are visible as we were not when this movement started: we have won rights in many states.

In 1983 we hadn't even heard of Civil Unions but we knew we were going to make Vermont understand we were part of the citizenry.

We are now on television and very visible. Young folks today do not seem to feel their heterosexuality is threatened by the existence of queers in their midst. However for every step forward the reactionary forces in this country work to push us back. For every state going ahead with marriage another is passing laws to prevent it.

Pat

Robertson has said we are more of a threat than Al Qaeda or Osama bin Laden.

And perhaps we are to the world view of a Robertson or Falwell. We do stand for everything they hate: a liberated sexuality, freedom from enforced gender roles, equality for women, relationships based on love and pleasure not property rights.

We also embody a spirit of openness and free inquiry that fundamen-

things including their ignorance.

They always oppress women.

They always hate homosexuals.

They believe there is only one

way, the way of their religion. And all others are infidels or going to hell, and violence can be used against them with the blessing of their Lord. Whether it is Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or Hindu, the religion of the fundamentalists seems to be always the religion of a warlike, egomaniacal, misogynist patriarchy always oppressing homosexuals and women to shore up the authority of authoritarian men.

Charlotte Bunch has rightly said the all fundamentalisms are violence-producing ideologies. And all fundamentalists are more alike than not, even if they are mortal enemies.

Queerer Than Ever!!

The bullhorn was balky, and even those of us in attendance didn't get to hear much of the now traditional address to Pride by Peggy Luhrs, one of the Vermont Pride celebration's founders. We received several requests to publish it and we're glad to oblige!

talists would like to abolish for their patriarchal certainty of father knows best and gets to beat up anybody who disagrees.

Those of us who pay attention to history know that in times of upheaval, scapegoats are created to take the brunt of the population's fear and hatred. *In this country, the religious right wing wants to make us that scapegoat.* They raise great amounts of money by demonizing us and blaming us for the ills of this country, ills which are in reality the product of unfettered and unethical capitalism and a patriarchy that is always concerned with displays of dominance.

As early as 1980 during the Lebanon hostage crisis, I photographed graffiti in Los Angeles that said "Kill Iranian Fags." Obviously the writer was ignorant of the fact that the Iranians were in fact crucifying homosexuals. Or that he and the fundamentalists in Iran and fundamentalists everywhere shared many

We refuse to be their scapegoats.

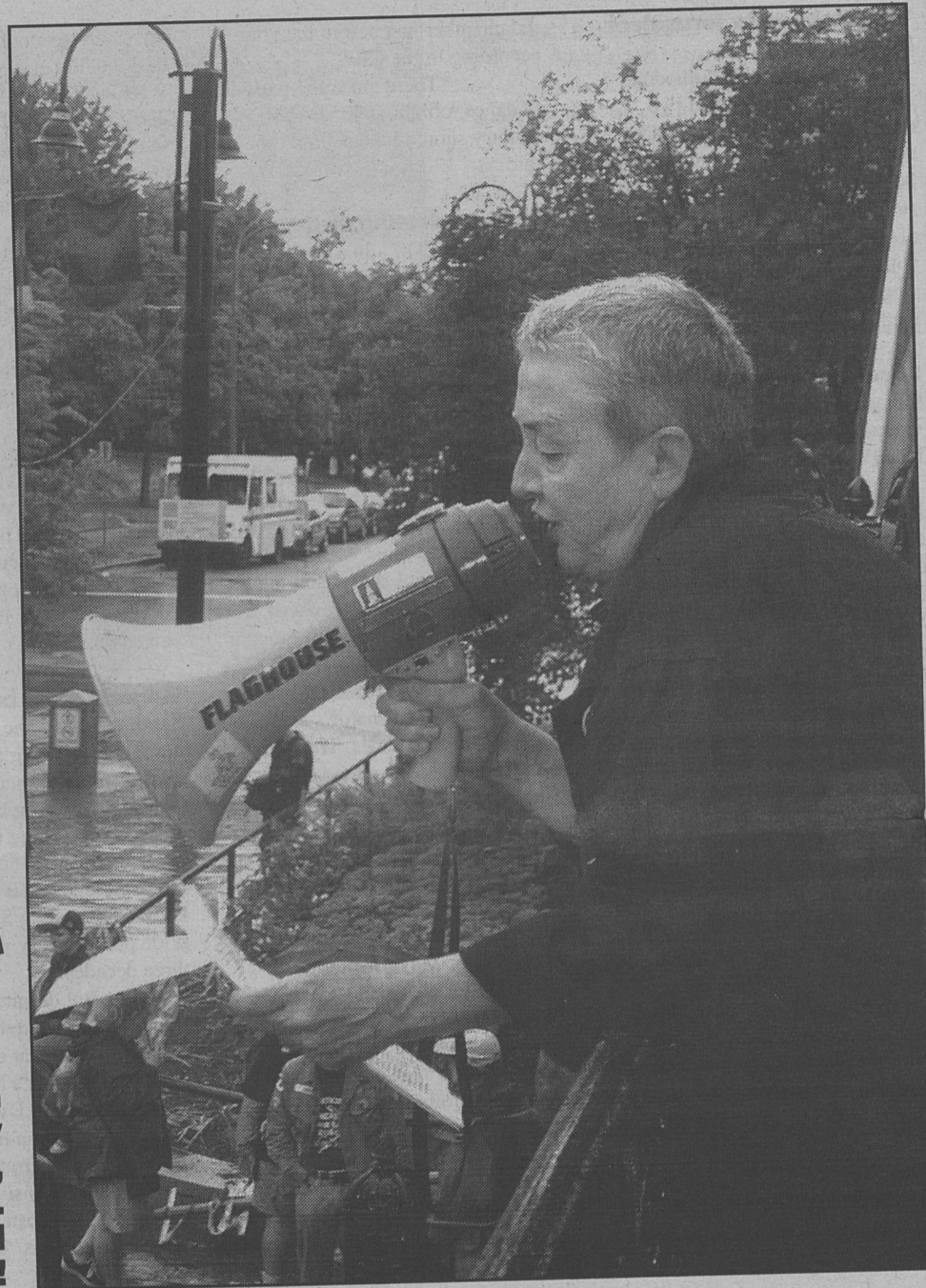
We know that we are the children, the mothers, brothers, sisters of everybody in this country. We will not go quietly. We'll be cheering with the QLA against the crypto-fascist regime.

We must now have courage in a regime that means to rule and control by fear.

A regime that thinks it can use us to further its hideous agenda of permanent war that so benefits the likes of Halliburton and Bechtel and the political fortunes of Bush and Co.

We have a role to play in deconstructing the militarism that has infected this country with its manifesting destiny since its inception as a Republic. We more than any other group should recognize the ways gender is used to produce soldiers and sacrificing mothers and wives of soldiers.

We can recognize that homophobia makes you stupid. Part of the reason



given that our intelligence services did not warn us about 9/11 was that we did not have enough translators who spoke Arabic and Farsi. Yet the military discharged several translators, who did speak those languages, because they were gay.

So in this dangerous time when civil liberties are being taken away, when the National Guard is spying on the Raging Grannies, wait till they find out about the raging trannies! In this time when we are supposed to be ruled by fear and when our community is so targeted, I think of the folks at the Creating Change Conference singing "queerer than ever, queerer than ever."

Because if we are the antithesis to the lying, murderous, war-profiteering, tyrannical regime of hatred ruling the U.S. at this moment then surely we are doing something right.

And those who hate us, fight us, work to keep us from having human rights...well it seems they are secretly attracted to us.

Here is Dr. Paul Cameron, who in the 1980s called for quarantining gays to prevent the spread of AIDS, and has called for detention camps for gays and for exterminating gays:

"Untrammelled homosexuality can take over and destroy a social system," says Cameron. "If you isolate sexuality as something solely for one's own personal amusement, and all you want is the most satisfying orgasm you can get - and that is what homosexuality seems to be - then homosexuality seems too powerful to resist. The evidence is that men do a better job on men and women on women, if all you are looking for is orgasm."

So powerful is the allure of gays, Cameron believes, that if society approves of gay people, more and more heterosexuals will be inexorably drawn into homosexuality. "I'm convinced that lesbians are particularly good seducers," says Cameron. "People in homosexuality are incredibly evangelical," he adds,