

a protest that was both Faerie and specific. The result was a sandwich-board sign made out of cardboard and muslin trimmed with pinking shears. On the front of what appeared almost to be a Donna Reed apron he wrote "Valerie Terrigno Walks With Me." Choosing another gay cause that had been cast out over contested morality, he added to the back, "NAMBLA Walks With Me," thus bringing into the parade another taboo entity: the North American Man/Boy Love Association. NAMBLA, of which Hay has never been a member, advocates eliminating age-of-consent laws and has been barred from marching in the gay parades of several cities. When he learned that CSW refused to allow them to march, Harry was appalled by the hypocrisy of a self-appointed gay establishment that would declare a section of the gay community unrespectable. He could not contain his outrage.

The resulting confrontation resembled something out of a Frank Capra movie, gay-community style. The septuagenarian gay movement founder was addressed by a policeman who informed him that CSW had to approve all signs in the parade, and threatened to escort Hay out of the parade unless he removed his unauthorized messages. Hay refused to back down. When it was apparent that he intended to keep his sign and to march, he found himself surrounded by four mounted policemen. CSW public-relations officers wrung their hands. The cops glared from their horses. Harry held his ground. The impasse was broken only when an impassioned Radical Faerie, who feared that Harry would be jailed, ripped the contested sign from his neck, shredded it, and stomped on the pieces. Signless, Harry Hay marched. This episode however, was photographed and widely reported in the gay media, both locally and nationally.

CSW voted to reprimand Hay and accused him of cooking up the whole incident just to give them bad press. They shrilly (and unfathomably) compared Harry Hay to Jerry Falwell. Hay's response to CSW, in his letter published in a local lesbian and gay paper called *The News*, was equally sharp: "Gay pride is long out of date. How long are we going to go around saying, 'I'm proud I have blue eyes'?" San Francisco and Boston have been calling it Gay Freedom Day for years: maybe it's time we had a Gay Freedom Day here too." To those who self-righteously condemned his support of NAMBLA, he told the story of Matt, his 25-year-old first love when he was only fourteen, and pointed out that "having molested an adult when I was a child until I found out what I needed to know," he had a different perspective on the issue.

The incident provides a quintessential glimpse into Hay's character. The new gay establishment was rarely challenged at that time, but with

his instinct to push the agenda and stretch the status quo, Harry double-dared the gay powers that be. On sheer principle, and with a strong reminder that he was not yet through kicking, he took on the most feared and despised issues within the community, issues no one else would touch.

Whatever crossed his path was subject to that change. When Harry was asked once to speak on a panel titled "Growing Old and Gay," he refused to appear unless the name was changed. The panel in which Harry Hay participated was called "Growing Older and Gayer."