

World and Nation

Gay activists demand increase in AIDS research funds at rally

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of homosexual activists, led by AIDS victims in wheelchairs and bearing signs carrying messages like, "Thank God I'm Gay," marched Sunday to demand protection from discrimination and more federal money for AIDS research and treatment.

U.S. Park Police estimated that 200,000 people participated in the march past the White House and rally near the Capitol. The crowd heard from speakers including Democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson and former National Organization for Women President Eleanor Smeal.

Jackson addressed the rally late in the afternoon. "Let's find a common ground of humanity," he said. "We share the desire for life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, equal protection under the law. Let's not dwell on distinctions."

He brought the crowd to its feet when he called for an end to the AIDS crisis.

"We can fight AIDS and every form of death," he said. "Let's give life a chance."

After his speech, Jackson spoke to

"The Reagan administration is allowing millions to die. . . . (Its) response has been an ineffective, insincere commission on AIDS."

Jim Merriam, AIDS victim

a number of AIDS victims in wheelchairs near the stage. He shook their hands and said, "God bless you."

The rally stretched along the mall for more than a dozen blocks.

Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women told the crowd, "Here we are from California, Alabama, Florida, Arizona, Alaska, Seattle and Delaware — east, west, north and south — in numbers too large to ever be denied again."

She told the crowd they num-

bered 500,000 and yelled, "Look at you!"

"Feel the political power of the moment," she said. "Spread love and

fight hate."

Under skies threatening rain, the rally began with music and a poignant statement from Dan Bradley, a White House aide in the Carter administration, who is suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Bradley said the thing he is proudest of is that "after a lifetime of struggle (and) fear . . . I had the courage (in 1982) to say, loud and clear, 'I'm gay and I'm proud.'"

Activists say the AIDS crisis, which has hit the homosexual community in the United States especially hard, has spurred an increase in violence and discrimination against the nation's lesbians and homosexual men, who number about 25 million, the activists estimate.

Organizers were hoping to use the march and rally Sunday and a planned non-violent protest in front of the Supreme Court building Tuesday to dramatize their calls for more federal assistance.

One of the marchers, Jim Merriam, who is an AIDS victim from Miami, said, "The Reagan administration is allowing millions to die. . . . (Its) response has been an ineffective, insincere commission on AIDS."

Activists began their day Sunday at sunrise on the mall, with the unfurling of a 7,000-pound quilt bearing the names, personal effects and, in some cases, the ashes of victims of AIDS.

Loch Ness search ends with legend of monster intact

DRUMNADROCHIT, Scotland (AP) — The biggest scientific search for the Loch Ness monster ended Sunday with one purported monster picture debunked, three sonar contacts showing something big in the murky waters and the elusive Nessie still a legend.

The three-day expedition proved to be a mix of serious scientific investigation along with the biggest media extravaganza ever to hit the tranquil shores of Loch Ness. About \$1.6 million was spent on the expedition.

The hunt ended up focusing on three sonar blips that showed objects in the middle of the 754-foot-deep loch. The most significant blip depicted an object at a depth of about 620 feet, looking like an inverted V.

Video film taken by the team meanwhile showed that the

famed "gargoyle head" photo of Nessie taken in 1975 by The Academy of Applied Science in Concord, N.H., was really a rotting tree stump about 20 feet below the surface. Expedition leader Adrian Shine, 38, said he couldn't deliver "the media monster" that the more than 300 journalists who flocked to the loch wanted.

Nessie is believed by many to be a prehistoric reptile.

Shine, a London salesman who has conducted research on the loch for 14 years, said he was pleased by the results and encouraged that there was something large, possibly alive and moving in the waters.

"We still think there are some strong sonar contacts on Loch Ness," he said.

"A large fish would satisfy me very much — perhaps a very, very large fish," he said.

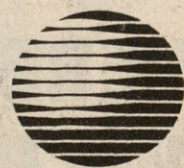
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