



Capital Pride gets around the block

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June 14, 2017

“Get off the phone!” a friend in the crowd called out, smiling, as I live-tweeted the [Capital Pride](#) parade on June 10 from atop an open-air car passing the Argentine Embassy on New Hampshire Avenue. The network was overloaded, so I took pictures to post later ([@RickRosendall](#)).

Few places are lovelier than Washington on a sunny June day. Being in the parade, swanning about and waving a rainbow flag from my perch (I was honored as one of this year’s Pride Heroes), I saw the efficient and gracious efforts of countless volunteers, in addition to the many law enforcement officers who guarded us and facilitated rerouting us when the official route was [blocked by protesters](#) from No Justice No Pride and GetEqual. This was matched by large, festive, supportive crowds. At one point some people worked up a chant for me.

As we waited at 16th and P NW to be [rerouted](#) around Scott Circle, volunteers from Foundry United Methodist Church, an affirming congregation where the Clintons worship when they are in town, brought us trays of water and lemonade. As we turned south onto 16th Street, shirtless young men took in the sun. Ahead of us were the statue of Gen. Scott and, behind him, the north portico of the White House in the distance. There were no crowds beneath the shade trees on Rhode Island Avenue as we made our way east to 14th Street. I thanked the police officers I passed, wanting them to know that, unlike the protesters, I was glad they were there.

As I walked south on 14th Street after reaching the end of the parade route, the police contingent passed by and was cheered by the crowd. There is a disconnect between the protesters and the vast bulk of the LGBT community. NJNP dismissed Capital Pride supporters as white cis men, but it was a diverse crowd. In front of my car a mixed-race lesbian couple made out to amuse the crowd, and another honoree two cars ahead, outspoken black trans and HIV/AIDS activist Dee Curry, danced.

A banner held by the protesters declared their opposition to prisons, pipelines, and deportations. As evening came, the protesters, whom police had not arrested, [blockaded](#) the Lockheed Martin and Wells Fargo contingents.

Every generation has its passion. But we need more than that. We need engagement, expertise, and nuanced judgment. The radicals’ caricature-drenched attacks on police and corporations fail by these criteria. One of their problems is their static, monolithic views. After the electoral debacles of 2000 and 2016, it should be clear that the major parties are not interchangeable. But

ideological purists reject anything short of their view of perfection. That is a recipe for remaining powerless in Congress and the White House.

Michael Petrelis, a former D.C. resident living in San Francisco and a radical in his own right, wrote on Facebook: “I find it quite hypocritical of GetEqual ... to have taken a robust six-figure sum years ago from the gay heir to the Progressive Insurance fortune, and played a key role in getting DADT repealed. They wanted to get gays in the military, yet they have issues with [gay cops](#)? Something’s not quite right with their thinking. I found their list of demands to be obnoxious and unreasonable.” If you are too obnoxious for Mike, you might have a problem.

At the Pride Brunch earlier Saturday, my friend Craig Howell, another former Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance president, told me, “You can never appease totalitarians of whatever stripe.” There is nothing constructive in NJNP and GetEqual abusing people they expect to work with. But that’s just it: they want capitulation, not cooperation. Walter Olson of the [Cato Institute](#) wrote on Facebook, “Capital Pride should reject the absurd demands of the disrupters out of hand and without negotiation, both because they are absurd, and because it is wrong to yield to intimidation tactics.”

A corollary of Howell’s dictum is that you cannot reason with unreasonable people. For me the day was summed up neatly in the evening when a small group chanting “No police in Pride!” marched below my window, escorted by officers of the Metropolitan Police Department.