**M&M 27 (From Brother Summer 2002)**

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**NOMAS Gathering: Supporting Local Initiatives**

The weekend of June 6, 2002, found a small but enthusiastic collection of NOMAS members and supporters who came together for a new experiment in Men & Masculinity conferences. It was a true gathering of like-minded people eager to share with, and learn from, one another. And to lend their personal support to Gay Pride Rockland, a community project that supports one of the NOMAS principles – gay affirmation.

Held at the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, NY, M&M27 combined a number of programs and activities that everyone agreed were impactful and useful to their lives on the front lines of the fight for gender equality and equal rights for everyone.

The weekend kicked off with a visit to a staff meeting of council member Phyllis Frank’s VCS Community Change Project in New City, NY. What a revelation it was to observe the dynamics of this group who work with men-who-batter and who approach the work with a truly feminist philosophy. “We must be ever vigilant to society’s prejudices because we have absorbed them just like everyone else,” admonished one young member of the staff during the discussion. “We practice that here,” said Phyllis. “If we don’t do it here, how will we remember to do it everywhere else?”

Later that evening there was a video presentation of the documentary Daddy and Papa (see review) that drew additional guests from the community, including two young men who announced during the post-viewing discussion that they were the first gay couple in Rockland County to adopt as a couple. Suddenly, the issue of gay adoption didn’t seem remote and confined just to the media representations. Here were two gay men who were choosing to become fathers and share their love for one another with a child.

David Greene hosted the 14th Annual Men’s Studies Association (MSA) Meeting which kicked off the day on Friday. Highlighting John Fox, who gave an overview of his paper on men’s movements, “Men Have a Long Way to Go...: The Crisis of Masculinity According to the Pro-feminist, Men’s Rights and Mythopoetic Men’s Movements.”

Recipients on the NOMAS email distribution list may recall a survey that John conducted a few months back wherein he asked NOMAS members a series of questions. He also queried a number of other men’s movements at the same time and his paper is a comparative study on the way men’s movements members perceive themselves and others.

As an extension of this presentation, David conducted a roundtable discussion on teaching men’s studies and activism on university campuses, outside the classroom.

The rest of the weekend was given over to round table discussions on a range of topics including: Bob Brannon on prostitution and pornography; a viewing and discussion of the award winning video “Tough Guise” by Jackson Katz; Allen Corben and Moshe Rozdzial on homophobia and heterosexism; Bob Brannon and Mal Jones on the bonobos gender and society; Allen and Moshe on men’s spirituality and David Greene and Rose Garrity on class and gender issues.

In the evenings and on Sunday, the gathering joined Gay Pride Rockland for a dinner-plus-theater-plus-dessert reception, a concert by the New York City Gay Men’s Chorus followed by a gay pride dance. Attendees closed the gathering by participating in Gay Pride Rockland’s day-long street fair in downtown Nyack.

As a special lagniappe, NOMAS was able to get group rates to the Penguin Repertory Theater at the Stony Point Center for a production of David Schechter’s “Hannah Senesh” starring Lori Wilner in the roles of Hannah, a real-life heroine who, having escaped Hungary during World War II, parachuted back behind enemy lines with the resistance and was ultimately caught and executed, and her mother Katarina who opens and closes the play relating the tale of her daughter’s life. It was a powerful play, powerfully played.

Everyone agreed that M&M27 was a success and all the attendees felt that they had participated in meaningful work while having fun and getting to know one another.