

## ACTING UP VERSUS ANTI-GAY MILITARY

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Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and Matt Foreman, just as they were being arrested outside the Times Square military recruiting center on March 15. JEFFERSON SIEGEL

In response to a call from Larry Kramer for the formation of some sort of ACT UP Army in a speech at the LGBT Community Center two nights before, about a hundred demonstrators turned up at the Times Square military recruiting booth at noon on March 15 to condemn the characterization of gay people as "immoral" by General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"We refuse to sit still while the leaders of our country demean us," said Ann Northrop of ACT UP. "We demand that he be fired."

Northrop called Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's failure to straightforwardly disagree with Pace's "immoral" comment "disgusting."

"The fact that she and Barack Obama could waffle on the subject of gay morality shows how deeply uncomfortable people are with homosexuality," she said.

**Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said that the slowness of their responses "speaks to some fundamental lack of acceptance of our humanity."**

Allen Roskoff, president of the Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club, said he was as concerned about Clinton's "failure to apologize for her vote on the war," as he was about her hesitation to disagree with Pace. "It's unacceptable," he said.

The action was replete with veterans of ACT UP and LGBT rights battles, including Kramer himself and Eric Sawyer. Former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey, who also attended Kramer's speech, said that this was his first gay rights demonstration.

Two of the notables, Foreman and Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, the city's lesbian and gay synagogue, were arrested when they joined others in carrying a 75-foot rainbow banner into the street and refused to get up on orders of the police.

"I think it is bigotry to use religion as a weapon," Kleinbaum said of Pace's comments.

Gilbert Baker, who made this banner as well as the original 1978 rainbow flag, said the banner was confiscated by police for evidence. Foreman and Kleinbaum must appear in court on disorderly conduct charges on March 26.

"We've been taking this crap for too long and not speaking up," said Mark Hannay of ACT UP.

Is this kind of activism sustainable?

"I hope it is," he said.