

It's Time

Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force • Vol. 7, no. 4 • May-June 1980

NGTF UPDATES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



BRYDON IN CALIFORNIA. Charles F. Brydon at the fundraiser on April 16 in San Jose for the Santa Clara County Coalition for Human Rights. With the NGTF Co-Exec are Constance Carpenter (left), of the Coalition's board, and Johnie Staggs, campaign manager for the Coalition. Photo by Ted Stahl.



BUT SERIOUSLY . . . Lucia on wheels in Albuquerque this past April with Integrity's Chuck Jones.

White House Conference

The three national conferences for the White House Conference on Families are scheduled for: Baltimore, June 5-7; Minneapolis, June 19-21; and Los Angeles, July 10-12. Right wing religious groups have continued to plague state conferences across the country, succeeding in winning many delegate seats to the national conferences. Although there has been a national call to all lesbian and gay organizations, urging participation, there is no way as yet to determine how many gay, lesbian, or active gay rights supporters have been elected as delegates. NGTF hopes there will be a visible gay presence at all three national conferences. For those interested in involvement at the national level, contact the state representative listed in the November-December 1979 issue of *It's Time* or the NGTF office.

Immigration

The January 30 meeting at the Department of Justice (DOJ) with Acting Associate Attorney General John H. Shenefield was a success. NGTF attorneys (Gay Rights Advocates) presented a rebuttal of the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) memorandum. Mr. Shenefield, after hearing NGTF's arguments, deferred a decision and ordered OLC to take another look at the issues. Co-Executive Directors Brydon and Valeska left the meeting with the impression this review would take two weeks, but recent advice from Shenefield's deputy indicates another one or two months will be needed. Further, in all likelihood, a final decision will be made by Attorney General Civiletti; this will require additional time.

In the interim, Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) has introduced a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act. This bill was drafted without consultation with NGTF or Gay Rights Advocates. There are two problems with the legislation. One is the matter of its timing. NGTF would have advised against its introduction until after the Attorney General had reached a decision. This would avoid giving the Executive Branch the political option of citing "legislation is pending in Congress" as an excuse for inaction. However, Senator Cranston faces election this year and felt political pressure to do something. Senator Cranston's legislative aide has acknowledged that it stands little chance of passage in an election year.

Litigation

NGTF has taken an active role in the pending legal challenge to the Oklahoma Helm's Law (same wording as the Briggs initiative). The Federal District Court judge handling the case dismissed the suit because none of the plaintiffs would step forward to be

identified publicly. Action has been further frustrated by the preoccupation of the law firm managing the case (Gay Rights Advocates) with the immigration issues as well as a general sense of worry concerning the public relations impact of the case for the cooperating attorneys in Oklahoma City. NGTF has been serving as a catalyst to get all the pieces together and has opened discussion with the National Education Association to bring them into the case as plaintiffs. NGTF will also be a plaintiff.

National Convention Project

The first phase of the project—raising the issues with candidates, formal contacts with the Republican and Democratic parties, and assistance to local gay groups in the early primary and caucus states—has been completed. There is no count of open gay delegates as yet. However, the first openly gay delegate of the 1980 season is a Chicago Republican pledged to John Anderson. The project is now turning its attention to the platform drafting process and to fundraising.

White House Meetings

These meetings, apart from those generated by Immigration and the Bureau of Prisons, discussed separately, continue on a variety of questions. NGTF has met with the General Counsel of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (successor agency to the Civil Service Commission) in an effort to get them moving on a memorandum of instruction and policy statement to all federal departments and agencies concerning non-job-related private conduct provisions of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. NGTF has also had continuing discussions of the Executive Order. NGTF has requested a copy of any memoranda written in support of this position so that we can examine their analysis. The White House Domestic Policy staff has asked NGTF for information on the experience of gay organizations with application for federal funds.

Bureau of Prisons

Victory appears imminent in NGTF's long-standing battle to get gay literature into federal prisons. Lucia Valeska and attorneys Margot Karle (Lambda Legal Defense) and Nancy Hunter (Washington, D.C., Women's Law Collective) met with Bureau of Prisons attorneys on February 27 to discuss the possibility of an out-of-court settlement. Negotiations are still underway. Bureau of Prisons Director Norm Carlson has announced the formation of new policy on the issue. It appears that the Bureau is willing to admit gay literature as long as it does not portray explicit sex. Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy still to be resolved concerning gay and nongay standards.

Media Alert:

The National Gay Task Force is collecting all printed material and documentation about the program "CBS Reports: Gay Power, Gay Politics" which was broadcast on Saturday, April 26. This material will be accumulated for use with a possible Fairness Doctrine and National News Council complaint. The material that is needed includes:

- copies of all TV reviews in local media
- reports of any incidents that are a direct result of this program, including changes in relationship with police, political repercussions, and increased harassment.

All reports must be firmly documented with statements, news articles, photographs, and so forth. All material related to this program should be sent to:

National Gay Task Force
80 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1601
New York, N.Y. 10011
Att: Tom Burrows

PROJECT OPEN EMPLOYMENT

Along with the April issue of *It's Time*, New York City area members received an Employment Discrimination Survey prepared by the NGTF Project Open Employment staff. Those of you who received the survey but have not yet completed it are reminded to do so as soon as possible. Additional copies of the Survey may be obtained by calling the NGTF office: (212) 741-5800.

PROJECT OPEN EMPLOYMENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Action taken at the March 29 Executive Committee meeting held in New York City:

- asked for increased effort to solicit membership participation in the White House Conference on Families
- reviewed NGTF's financial situation for the first half of the fiscal year
- heard update on process of getting NGTF material translated into Spanish
- reviewed status of nominations process (still under study by NGTF's legal counsel)
- decided that NGTF would not take a position on the proposal to begin draft registration until full Board of Directors meets in May
- passed resolution thanking Larry Bush for his work as NGTF's liaison in Washington, D.C.

The Executive Committee is composed of Board members Larry Bagneris, Richard Cash, Meryl Friedman, William Kelley, Barbara Love, Scott Norman, Kay Whitlock, and Kerry Woodward, NGTF staff members Scott Anderson, Charles Brydon, Larry Gurel, and Lucia Valeska were also present.

NATIONAL GAY TASK FORCE



RICHARD CASH,
Board Co-Chairperson
KAY WHITLOCK,
Board Co-Chairperson
CHARLES F. BRYDON,
Co-Executive Director
LUCIA VALESKA,
Co-Executive Director

IT'S TIME

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Special thanks to Ralph Herman, cub reporter.

NOTES FROM THE CO-EXECS

The protracted negotiations with the Justice Department over U.S. immigration policy are a source of considerable frustration for everyone involved — NGTF staff, our co-operating attorneys at Gay Rights Advocates, and the many lesbians and gay men overseas who would like to visit our country free from fear of harassment and abuse by immigration officials. Provided the Justice Department adheres to its self-proclaimed timetable, the issue should be on Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti's desk by late May. We wish it were possible to forecast the outcome, but that is not one of our skills. Our friends at the White House project a positive outlook when asked for an opinion. The State Department's early April letter to the Justice Department arguing for change on human rights grounds is helpful. But we have also learned that the Justice Department is a fiercely independent agency — a legacy of the Nixon abuses of Watergate fame — and no one can be certain how the government's senior lawyers will see the issue when face to face with a decision.

We have kept busy with program work, travel, and management duties. Lucia has been to Canada for an appearance at the convention of the Ortho-Psychiatric Association; to South Dakota for the annual regional gathering of rural lesbians and gay men at Sioux Falls; to Washington, D.C., to testify at the congressional briefings on the federal Gay Rights Bill; and to California where she met with many members and played an active role in the response to that distorted and sensationalized look at San Francisco gay politics by CBS television.

Charlie has visited San Jose, California, for consultations with the leaders of the Santa Clara referendum campaign; appeared at Stanford and Cornell universities for speaking engagements; and carried on negotiations with the Justice Department, the U.W. Office of Personnel Management, and the White House on a variety of issues while keeping in touch with the work of the National Convention Project.

NCP, by the way, has done an excellent job of lining up party platform testimony for the April Democratic hearings in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Republican hearings in Davenport, Iowa. They are working on the remaining hearings as well. And several NGTF members have been elected delegates to both party conventions. But the Project badly needs your financial support. There is much work to be done and sustaining an effective presence at the Detroit and New York conventions will be costly. If you haven't done so, send your contribution to NCP, 1469 Church St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005.

It is budget season at NGTF. Finance Manager Scott Anderson and the staff are developing the fiscal plan for 1981. NGTF has weathered the recent serious financial threat to its survival. The question now is what impact the recession will have on our income. The NGTF membership is a loyal group of people. But we need to expand membership dramatically to avoid a repetition of last year's crises, deal with inadequate staff salaries which have been ravaged by New York City's soaring inflation rate, and restore and improve staff and programs that were cut last year. We are looking at some new and imaginative ways to build membership and would welcome your suggestions.

Charles F. Brydon

LETTERS

Draft Standards

I believe that vocational guidance services are sadly inadequate in their responsiveness to the special needs of sexual minority persons. And I think it's about time we all started planning for alternative employment counseling programs.

As a case in point, consider my timely concern that many young people may be soon faced with an awkward dilemma in reference to the military draft call. I recently wrote a letter to the *Headquarters Recruiting Enlistment Standards Division* for the United States Air Force, asking to please be provided with some basic information, e.g., "What are the present standards for enlistments and commissions concerning homosexuals? Are there any screening-out steps? If so, please explain what these steps are, and send me the reasoning behind their practice."

It has been six weeks since I mailed by letter to the "Standards Division." I have not received a response, not to say that there is a possible response which is satisfactory. So what is there to do?

We need to advocate for and plan alternative and/or outreach counseling services. The U.S. Air Force is not unique; we need to address the job preparation guidance and placement services in reference to many occupations.

The National Gay Task Force can play a central role in providing news coverage and research on vocational preparation and training for sexual minorities. And individual NGTF members can provide community leadership and resource information in coordinating a more satisfactory system for all.

Greg Owen Grant
Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Daytime Volunteering

By Judy Burns

New York City area members: Do you work nights or afternoons? Are you unemployed or in school or independently wealthy? If you have spare daytime hours during the week, NGTF needs you. . . .

You've seen the ad in *It's Time*. So did Mike Nappo, a student at the State University of New York at Stony Brook on Long Island. When he began a semester-long research project in New York City, he gave us a call. "I had wanted to do something more political for a major gay rights organization," said Mike, a former president of the Gay Student Union at Stony Brook, "but I didn't know the Task Force used volunteers."

In fact, volunteers play a crucial role in day-to-day operations at NGTF. Over the past several years NGTF's workload has grown faster than its staff. And when economic considerations forced staff cutbacks last year, it became clear that volunteers would have to help fill in the gaps. Staff members identified specific jobs which volunteers might perform on a regular basis, including phone answering and reception, typing, filing, filling publication orders, answering information requests, processing membership materials, mimeographing, running errands, and so forth. Training is, of course, given for those jobs which require it. Prospective volunteers are offered their choice of jobs; many initially opt to try out a variety of tasks in order to familiarize themselves with the office. Later on, some take on a specific job that they especially like; some show a particular talent for some job and are asked to continue with it. Others continue to do whatever is needed most on any given day, enjoying the variety. Still others take on special long-term projects: this newsletter, for example, is entirely put together by volunteers.

On a Monday afternoon several weeks ago, three volunteers were in the office. Donald, who runs his own small private publishing press, took on a pile of material waiting to be filed, then typed some correspondence. Harvey, a longtime evening volunteer who responded to our call for daytime help, braved a rainstorm to take our postage meter to the post office for refilling, put postage on a mountain of publication orders, and then prepared renewal notices for the membership director. Vance, not usually in the office on Mondays, scanned some of the over 300 periodicals we receive each week for articles to update our files. This is an important job since NGTF receives many research requests from media people and students seeking information from our files that is not readily available elsewhere. In addition, Vance answered the phones and, in the course of the after-

Bryant Program Protested

NGTF QUESTIONS GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

Citing questions of church-state separation and the spectre of implicit government sanction of Anita Bryant's antigay crusade, the National Gay Task Force has protested the cooperation of Defense Department officials in the production of Anita Bryant's television program, "Anita Bryant's Spectacular — My Little Corner of the World."

In a letter to President Jimmy Carter, Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska wrote, "We are deeply disturbed and dismayed by the cooperation and participation of elements of the Department of Defense in the television program produced by and on behalf of Anita Bryant Ministries."

Noting the military's past and present record of antipathy toward gays, and the active participation of government in this religious-sponsored production, Brydon and Valeska questioned the adequacy of official guidelines and the judgment of military officials who elected to extend government assistance.

"Beyond this and of immediate and paramount concern to this nation's 20 million tax-paying lesbian and gay male citizens is the implicit government sanction extended through this cooperation and participation to the virulent antihuman rights crusade directed against gay people by Ms. Bryant and for which she has a national identification and reputation," wrote Brydon and Valeska. Pointing to the antigay activity of Anita Bryant Ministries, Inc., and its link with Protect America's Children — both entities have the same executive director, Edward Rowe — Brydon and Valeska concluded their letter to the President with a challenge.

"The central question in all this is government cooperation in Ms. Bryant's self-promotion — cooperation we see as inconsistent with the human rights policies of your administration. This issue — the willingness of your administration to apply actively the same value to the civil and human rights of gay people that is accorded to racial and ethnic minorities and women — this is the issue we would like you to address personally and see that your policy is reflected by all departments and agencies of the government."

CORRECTION

Due to an editorial oversight, the last paragraph of the review of *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry* (*It's Time*, April 1980) was mistakenly attributed to reviewer Richard Hall. It should have been attributed to the Editor. Also, Mr. Hall is correctly the playwright of *The Prisoner of Love*, not *The Prisoner of Sex*. Our apologies to Mr. Hall.

Fire Manual Revised

HOMOPHOBIC PUBLICATION CHANGED AFTER NGTF COMPLAINT

A manual used in the Fire Arson Investigation Training Course of the National Fire Academy has been revised following a complaint by the National Gay Task Force. The manual asserted that female arsonists are often thought to be lesbians. Further it claimed that a male pyromaniac, if a homosexual, retains a distinct predilection for arson "initiated by hatred, jealousy or other uncontrolled emotions."

In their complaint, NGTF Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska noted that "this is one of the more preposterous ideas to come to our attention in some time. It would be funny were it not for the fact that strong opposition to local gay rights ordinances often emerges within uniformed public safety organizations such as municipal fire departments."

Responding to the White House, U.S. Fire Administration Administrator Gordon Vickery said, "While those materials assert that arson is in part associated with homosexuality, they are not sufficiently documented to objectively support the assertion. Consequently, I have instructed the Superintendent of the National Fire Academy to take those steps necessary to delete . . . statements which might directly or by inference tend to unfairly discriminate against any group or otherwise give academic credit to conventional prejudices."

Catching the Bus

GREYHOUND REPLIES TO NGTF QUERY

Co-Executive Director Charles F. Brydon recently requested a clarification of Greyhound's policy regarding the company's special charters for the Washington for Jesus March. The following is Greyhound's explanation.

March 18, 1980
Dear Mr. Brydon:

Thank you for your recent letter. I have checked in depth our involvement in the Washington for Jesus March in April and we are indeed providing charter transportation and handling arrangements for hotel accommodations, etc. All of this comes within the standard operational activities of our Greyhound Group Travel operation. Like all of our charters, this is a full cost, full markup charter. We are not contributors to the organization nor to ancillary organization in the event. As I stressed on the phone, The Greyhound Corporation never takes a stance for or against any individual's or group's religious, political or lifestyle preference. We are in the business of providing transportation and we are prohibited by the regulatory agency to which we are subject (the ICC) and by the restrictions of our own corporate policy from refusing transportation to any individual or group for prejudicial reasons.

Much has been made of the brochure printed by Greyhound and distributed to members of the Washington for Jesus group to assist them in this venture. This is what we call a "work sheet" and our Group Travel operation does this for every special event charter for organizational reasons to assist us in coordinating details. I am also enclosing a copy of a letter written in August of 1978 to Dr. Bruce Voeller reiterating our policy of non-discrimination toward any individual on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, or lifestyle.

I am greatly distressed at the controversy that has arisen on this subject inasmuch as it places Greyhound in the untenable position of attempting to force us to "take sides" for or against an organization when in fact this corporation by its own policy and by federal regulations simply cannot do so.

Dorothy Lorant,
Vice President for Public Relations and Advertising,
The Greyhound Corporation

April 28, 1978
Dear Dr. Voeller,

Your recent letter to Mr. Gerald H. Trautman has been referred to me for review and response.

Greyhound's policy of non-discrimination in hiring, training, promoting, terminating and compensating employees antedates the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We have always believed that discrimination is morally wrong and that the best available talent is not limited by race, color, sex, or national origin. Further to this policy, Greyhound does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. An employee's private lifestyle is not a concern to Greyhound as long as activities away from the job do not adversely affect The Greyhound Corporation and its employees.

Howard Rohan
Vice President, Personnel,
The Greyhound Corporation

Evangelist Challenge

NGTF TO OPPOSE COMPLAINT BY ROBINSON ASSOCIATION

The National Gay Task Force has filed a request with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to oppose the complaint by the James Robison Evangelistic Association (JREA) against WFAA-TV of Dallas, Texas. The JREA complaint seeks to overturn a February 27, 1980, decision by the Complaints and Compliance Division of the FCC which held that WFAA-TV acted within a licensee's editorial discretion in canceling the JREA program.

On February 25, 1979, James Robison, an evangelistic minister based in Dallas, preached a sermon on morality of which a substantial portion dealt with a one-sided view of homosexuality. The following day, WFAA-TV terminated the series (since reinstated) stating that it believed that religious programs should not deal with controversial issues of public importance. WFAA asserted that it covered such controversies in news and public affairs programming which provide for a balanced presentation of diverse viewpoints. WFAA's action was based on the Fairness Doctrine and Personal Attack Rule. Action by WFAA followed a personal attack complaint by a local gay organization, the Dallas Gay Political Caucus.

ACTIONREPORT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION/REPORTS ON RESULTS
DAVID STEIN, EDITOR

FEEL FREE TO REPRINT ANY ITEM BELOW—BUT PLEASE CREDIT NGTF

GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME

One of the most innovative gay service organizations we know of is New York City's SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. It is the country's first, and so far only, private or public agency exclusively devoted to helping older lesbians and gay men deal with the problems of aging in a homophobic society and an often cruelly youth-worshipping gay culture. In operation since September 1979, SAGE currently has twenty-five home-bound clients plus about forty others served by 140 part-time volunteer workers, many of them health-care or social-work professionals. The first paid staffer, a full-time director, began work this May.

Along with visiting, escort, and referral services, bereavement support, and social activities, SAGE has been running a CETA-funded writer's workshop in which twelve older lesbians and gay men have been recording their memoirs of growing up gay earlier in this century; SAGE expects to publish these memoirs within the next few months. SAGE is a non-profit, privately funded, tax-exempt corporation. Recently it received the area's first-ever grant to a gay organization, in the amount of \$34,200, from the Greater New York Fund/United Way, and it has also received \$20,000 from the New York Community Trust philanthropy. Both grants, however, are earmarked mainly for salaries, and additional funds are and will continue to be needed for supplies, rent for SAGE's community center in Greenwich Village, and other costs.

Because of local publicity concerning the United Way grant, that organization has received some letters and calls of protest and cancellations of membership. The people at SAGE would appreciate it if members of the gay community and friends would express support in letters to the fund. Please write to Donald L. Miller, Chair, Special Allocations Committee, Greater New York Fund/United Way, 99 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016; if possible, send copies to Ben Ross at the same address and to SAGE. For more information about SAGE, or to make a tax-deductible contribution, please write or call Senior Action in a Gay Environment, Inc., 487A Hudson Street, New York, N.Y. 10014; (212) 741-2247.

GAY CAPITALISM CO-OP

The magazine *Business Week* has estimated that some 19 percent of small businesses in the U.S. are gay-owned and -operated (do they know something we don't?), so there's a way to go yet, but local gay business groups representing more than a thousand lesbian and gay-male entrepreneurs have joined together in a national trade association. The National Association of Business Councils, Inc., formed last November, at this writing includes groups from eleven localities, among them most of the biggest gay centers, such as New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and Ft. Lauderdale/Miami. Acting President Gerald Schiff of New York projects that by the end of this year there will be twenty member groups representing more than 3,000 businesspeople and self-employed professionals.

The NABC was organized "to promote the common business interests of its members [and] the acceptance of gay business and gay business councils in the business and professional community at large. . . ." Mr. Schiff attended the White House Conference on Small Business this past January, and he has been in touch with officials at the federal Economic Development Administration and Small Business Administration seeking to ease the way for openly gay businesses to benefit from their programs. One main function of the organization, according to Schiff, is to share the members' experience in starting and holding together local gay business councils, especially with others trying to start new ones around the country.

Members of councils that belong to the NABC are automatically members of the national group and eligible for such members' benefits as discounts on advertising and data processing; individual businesspeople in areas without a local council may become associate members of the NABC and receive equivalent benefits.

At the NABC's general meeting in Houston this month, it is expected that most of the acting officers chosen when it was formed will be confirmed for regular one-year terms. The group's policy is to alternate the gender of its president, and former NGTF co-exec Jean O'Leary is acting president-elect for 1981-82. The officers are all unpaid volunteers—but this is not an appeal for funds! All we want to do is to commend this community-building enterprise and to urge lesbian and gay businesspeople in areas currently without a business council, or whose council has not yet joined the NABC, to investigate the association and see what it has to offer. The National Association of Business Councils, Inc., has offices at 55 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036; (212) 944-9185. The mailing address is P.O. Box 744, Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y. 10011.

TEACHER'S AID

While non-prejudicial material about homosexuality has been finding its way into many college-level courses, there is still a great dearth in secondary- and elementary-school curricula in most areas of the country. To help teachers fill this gap, the Education Exploration Center—a ten-year-old, non-profit, alternative-education resource center—is producing a curriculum-anthology on the teaching of gay and lesbian issues in Grades 1-12. The editors, Shelley Anderson and Polly Kellogg, are interested in contributions and suggestions from teachers, students, and parents. For instance, they'd like some first-person articles on such topics as "being the only lesbian in the local PTA," slipping lesbian and gay issues into lesson plans, student reactions to a gay speaker, coming out to other teachers or students, and organizing a gay teachers association.

Suggestions would also be appreciated for the lesson-plan sections of the book, which will cover such topics as: prejudice; stereotypes; gay civil rights; lesbians and gay men in history, literature, science, etc.; lesbian and gay culture; feminism; sex roles; the range of sexual behavior; how young people make decisions about their sexual values. Finally, they'd like tips about other resources in this area—films, books, people, organizations—they may not be aware of. If you have something to contribute to this project, please write or call the editors at the Education Exploration Center, P.O. Box 7339, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, Minn. 55407; (612) 722-6613.

MARIPOSA MARCHES ON

Many people have wondered what Bruce Voeller is up to these days, and we're happy to report that NGTF's former co-exec isn't letting any moss grow between his toes. After leaving NGTF last year, Bruce founded the Mariposa Education and Research Foundation, the main purpose of which is to combat ignorance and fear about human sexuality, and homosexuality in particular, by making the work of respected sex researchers available to a wider public and to influential opinion molders. In these days of backlash against hard-won sexual freedoms, Mariposa is especially dedicated to exposing the close connection between the repression of perfectly normal sexual feelings and acts of sexual violence such as rape, torture-murder (as in the recent John Gacy case), and "queer-bashing."

Mariposa has been quite successful in fund-raising; four substantial grants from other foundations

(Continued on page 4)



FORGING LINKS. The staff of *Quest*, a feminist quarterly based in Washington, D.C. Co-Executive Director Lucia Valeska met with the group in March as part of NGTF's outreach toward important aspects of the national lesbian and feminist communities.



KEY COUNSEL. Margot Karle of Lambda Legal Defense, Nancy Hunter of the Washington, D.C., Women's Law Collective, and Ed Koren, ACLU's National Prison Project—attorneys suing the Federal Bureau of Prisons on behalf of NGTF and other gay and lesbian organizations.

Volunteering

(continued from page 2)

noon, offered the address of a local church which would perform a holy union ceremony to two women who wanted to get married, supplied a list of local support groups to a man who had been thrown out of a bar because he is black, and steered a candidate for Democratic convention delegate to a group which might endorse him—in addition to handling the more routine run of calls. The atmosphere was generally relaxed; volunteers and staff traded jokes as they went about their jobs.

Some days are considerably more exciting and more hectic; volunteers help staff absorb the shock of crisis days. On one such Friday afternoon recently, three staff members were out sick with the flu and both co-executive directors were "on the road." Remaining staff and volunteers were preparing a press release containing presidential candidates' positions on gay rights. We wanted to send them out to the approximately 350 publications on our gay press list in time to affect several important primaries. Susan Thames was furiously mimeographing, and staff members were sitting on the floor collating whatever was ready, while Jess Lowen ran off press labels on our Mag machine. We had to meet a 5 P.M. express mail deadline for several key publications. At the same time, one staff member was also assisting a middle-aged heterosexual woman go through the files to prepare a presentation for her graduate counseling course. Her professor had made a number of homophobic remarks about gay parents in his last lecture, and she felt that the entire class deserved a more balanced, factual view. A young man, thrown out of his home by his family, waited in our office to contact a local organization which finds homes and jobs for gay youths. And to top it off, we received a call that an English visitor had just been prevented from entering the United States by Immigration and Naturalization officials. We had to find out details and track down the staff member responsible for followup.

What's in it for volunteers? Obviously, the sense that they are actively contributing to the gay cause, that they are *doing* something with a major gay rights organization. John, a music teacher who has been a volunteer for nearly four years, spoke elo-

quently on this theme: "I've seen too many gay people with so much going for them, people too good to waste, spending a lifetime in the closet. Before I started volunteering I did nothing but work. Music was my whole life. I was teaching six days a week." When John took a day off to volunteer, he faced his anger and gave himself a place to do something about the destructive stereotypes and discrimination lesbians and gay men face. "The frustration that knows no expression," John adds, "is not what I want. Just knowing this could keep me going for eight hours, stuffing envelopes."

There are other quite tangible benefits for volunteering. For some, it's a chance to learn new skills and greater competence in a nonthreatening setting. Ann Wilensky, the staff bookkeeper, says volunteering helped ease her back into the world of work. Susan Thames had never worked in an office or used a mimeograph machine before volunteering. Jess Lowen saw himself as a person who couldn't cope with machines; in spite of this he learned to operate our Mag II automatic typewriter. Other volunteers see volunteering as a stepping stone to professional involvement in the movement. After Mike Nappo completes law school, he'd like to open a gay legal clinic. And while NGTF isn't often able to offer paid jobs to volunteers, Ann Wilensky, Larry Gurel, director of our CETA project, Scott Anderson, Finance and Operations Director, and Tom Burrows, a consultant, all started as volunteers. There are also more personal emotional rewards for volunteering. Many volunteers mentioned friendships with staff members as a powerful incentive. And working in a gay organization helped several volunteers feel less isolated and more positive about their own gay/lesbian identities. As John noted, "It's more fun *not* to be supercloseted!"

And what are the benefits for staff? As one staff person observed, volunteers are our biggest major donors, because we cannot afford to pay for the time they give us week in and week out. But there's also another real bonus for staff members, and that's the chance to meet and work with a lot of pretty special members and community people we might not otherwise know.

If you have four hours a week you can commit to NGTF for a minimum of three months, please call me, Judy Burns, at (212) 741-5800 for an interview. We very much need *you* to continue our important work.



Clients and volunteers of SAGE—Senior Action in a Gay Environment. See lead article above.

(Continued from page 3)

Photos by Lynne Reynolds.



JESS LOWEN

If you call NGTF on a Friday afternoon, the witty voice which answers the phone will probably belong to Jess Lowen. A longtime NGTF member, Jess answered our plea for volunteers last September. Not only did we gain a wonderful phone answerer, receptionist, and (that valuable commodity) typist, but also an insistent grammarian (merciless with correspondence) and a delicious humorist.

A self-employed investor for the past seven years, Jess has written fiction ever since he was a child. "I've got the world's largest collection of unpublished manuscripts," admits Jess. He lives in an apartment overlooking Greenwich Village which, he proudly asserts, has 17 windows. He describes himself as "as award-winning former copywriter, army veteran, ballet freak, and terrible cook." He is a former editor of the *Homosexual Counseling Journal*, and a member of a number of gay organizations, including NYPAC, NYSCGO, Lambda Legal Defense, and Gay Rights Advocates and, quips Jess, "I go to the gym five mornings a week."

Volunteer work has always been a part of Jess' life, including play therapy for handicapped children, tutoring high school children, making recordings for the blind, and assisting various art associations and dance companies. "I've received a lot of good things the world has to offer, and I feel people like me ought to give something in return." In addition to volunteering at NGTF, for the past five and a half years Jess has been speaking at colleges, churches, PTAs, hospitals, and social organizations, on television and radio, about homosexuality and gay civil rights. "I can't march in parades and storm barricades, so my volunteer work at NGTF and the talks I give are what I can do."

The biggest benefit for Jess of volunteering at NGTF is "working with people I really like. Plus," he adds, "the chance to contribute a tiny bit to something extraordinarily important at a time when it's blossoming. Also working with the prime organization. I think it's a privilege to come here four hours a week."

ANSLEY CARNAHAN

Ansley Carnahan read about Dade County in *The New York Times*, got angry, and called NGTF, offering to volunteer. "I found it personally distressing, a backlash that threatened the destruction of everyone's rights. I saw my gay friends in such anguish, and volunteering my time seemed to be the best thing I could do to help."

Helping is nothing new for Ansley. The mother of two sons, she estimates that she and her husband Kelly have had "a good hundred extra kids in our lives," teenagers whose families have rejected them or who have just needed a loving place to be themselves. "It's important for people to live out



SUSAN THAMES

On her first day at NGTF, not only did Susan Thames sit down at the phone and handle crisis calls like a pro; she also became unofficial interpreter for foreign members. A young Frenchman came into the office, having just arrived for a job in New York City and anxious to learn about the local movement. He spoke no English, and the staff could muster only college Spanish and German. Then Susan stepped in and gave him the information we needed in fluent French. We were wowed!

If you write to the Task Force asking for information or help, chances are that it will be Susan who answers your letter. She likes the personal contact of letters and phone calls. Susan observes, "Because I feel confident about these things, I know I can make people feel good about contacting NGTF." She also does the mimeographing, and worked on the Petition the President campaign. "I came to the Task Force at a time when I needed to feel useful and have some responsibility. I needed a place to learn which wasn't threatening. What I got from volunteering was exactly what I put in. I couldn't do this work for a straight wage, but I can do it for nothing—because I want to."

Volunteering at NGTF represented a lot of "firsts" for Susan. She had had no previous political or volunteer involvement. "Volunteering opened up the community for me," Susan said. After coming to NGTF, she became a founding member of the *Womanews* collective—the New York City women's newspaper for which she writes restaurant reviews—and a "friendly visitor" for SAGE, the service organization for gay senior citizens. A chef by trade, Susan had never worked in an office until she came to NGTF. "It raised my consciousness about the dynamics of a larger group of people working together," Susan observed. This awareness, as well as practical skills learned while volunteering, have spilled over into her other volunteer work.

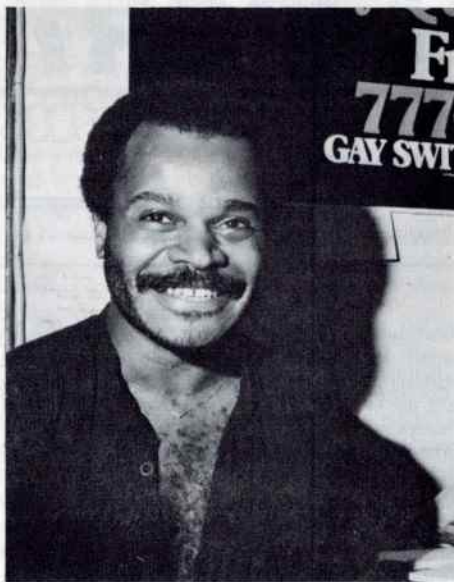
What makes Susan feel most useful at the Task Force is seeing the enormous volume of work that needs to be done. "Whatever I don't do will have to be absorbed by the staff. At the end of an afternoon I usually feel as though I've really accomplished something."

their lives in their own way. Kids need to talk to their families, stand up for who they are, and know the world is capable of loving them."

The same spirit fills Ansley's work at the Task Force. "While opening the mail, filling publication orders, and answering the phone may not be monumental work, when you hear the loneliness or despair at the other end of the telephone line, and you're able to give a few minutes of support, or offer a few answers, some help, you've really accomplished something." Ansley feels this is especially important since the National Gay Switchboard closed.

Ansley says she's gotten more from NGTF than from anyplace she's ever worked. "I never felt my time was wasted. I wished I had more time to give. There is such an overwhelming amount of work to be done, and everyone works harder than I've seen anywhere else." Ansley also appreciates working with staff members. "They're an amazingly diverse group of people who actually manage to work together because of a common cause."

After almost three years of work at NGTF, Ansley feels the need for volunteers is greater than ever. "Gay people have become only an excuse for right-wing political organizing, and that's dangerous." Her gay friends are proud of her involvement with NGTF, but most don't volunteer themselves. "We need people—gay and straight—to spend as much—time or money—on the Task Force as they do in bars."



VANCE HINES

Vance Hines has worked in and around the gay scene in Greenwich Village ever since he came to New York City from suburban New Jersey. After two and a half years working at a gay disco, he went into business as a consultant, doing display for local shops, boutiques, and department stores. The people he met saw NGTF as an "elite" organization, its staff "unapproachable." Vance didn't think he'd "fit in," but he wanted to see how a national gay rights organization functioned. When he heard that we needed volunteers, he showed up one Wednesday morning a few months ago, and has been with us one or more days a week ever since. "I was surprised to find out the staff is real people you can talk to and be with. I think there are a lot of people who share the misconception I had."

Vance feels that volunteering at NGTF has put him back in touch with parts of himself that had been dormant for a long time. "I was looking for the serious side of myself. Working at the Task Force is very challenging. The level of attention is different from my work before. I have to use every facet of my personality. The person at the other end of the phone line could really be in trouble or only harassing you, and you have to figure it out—like a phone psychologist." Vance enjoys helping people and prides himself on his ability to "keep his cool" under trying circumstances. But the best part of volunteering is that "while it's serious, you can have fun too."

Vance enjoys the pace of the NGTF office. "I like doing more than one thing. It's a situation where nothing is the same any two days. I also like doing long-term projects, relying on myself, and using my own discretion," traits that carry over from his display work. To accommodate his tastes, Vance was given the ongoing task of scanning all printed materials which come to NGTF in order to find materials to keep our files up to date. This job offers him what is probably the benefit he values most about volunteering: "I like to keep up with what's going on. I've learned a lot and I don't want to stop growing. I'm more aware of being gay, and proud of it!"

have been received, and a great many private individuals have donated generously. Bruce told us that all of the projects previously announced are well under way, and some are nearing completion. Among those in progress are: a series of standard reference works on aspects of homosexuality by distinguished scientists and scholars, a biographical volume detailing the contributions of notable lesbians and gay men throughout history, an oral-history collection of reminiscences by older gay people, production of a series of radio and TV public-service announcements presenting factual information about sexuality and homosexuality, and a volume of research on sexual violence. The manuscript is finished for David McWhirter and Andrew Mattison's book presenting the results of interviewing 156 long-term gay-male couples not in therapy, and Mariposa is currently negotiating with publishers for this first volume carrying its imprint.

Early in April Mariposa sponsored a major conference on homosexuality at Greta Garbo's estate, Tara, in Palm Springs. Many of the country's leading sex researchers—such as Evelyn Hooker, Wardell Pomeroy, C. A. Tripp, and Laud Humphreys—met to plan strategy for research projected over the next few decades. Mariposa will publish both a summary report of the conference and full transcripts of the proceedings. Perhaps Mariposa's most unusual project is the commissioning of life-size statues of gay-male and lesbian couples for placement in public areas of New York City, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. George Segal has completed his design for the New York City group, and it will be cast in bronze shortly; placement has yet to be decided. The Washington project is in the hands of the noted woman sculptor Marisol.

Mariposa has offices in New York City and San Diego. A private donor has equipped both offices with thousand-volume research libraries, and both the *Advocate* and *Christopher Street* have provided complete bound sets of their back issues. For more information, or to make a tax-deductible donation, please write or call Mariposa Education and Research Foundation, Inc., either at 186 Spring Street, New York, N.Y. 10012, (212) 431-3843, or at 3821 Fourth Avenue, San Diego, Calif. 92103, (714) 293-3881.

LESBIAN SELF—DEFINITION

Traditionally, research on lesbianism has been conducted by non-lesbians. Ronda Carlson, a lesbian, is conducting a national survey to determine how lesbians define themselves and their communities. She recently completed requirements for a master's degree in social work, and this research is a continuation of that done for her thesis. She is looking for lesbians willing to complete a fairly long and specific questionnaire (it should take about an hour and a half to fill out). The questionnaires and all correspondence will be kept strictly confidential, but Ms. Carlson hopes eventually to publish a distillation of her results. It is not necessary to have come out either publicly or to family and non-gay friends in order to participate; all that is necessary is being a lesbian and willing to take some time and energy to explain some of what this means to you. To request a questionnaire, please write to Ronda Carlson, 3014 Millmar Drive, Dallas, Tex. 75228.

NOW HEAR THIS

One of the easiest, yet often least used, ways for gay organizations to reach the people they wish to serve, or the public at large, is through radio and TV broadcasts of public-service announcements (PSAs). Broadcasters must air a certain quantity of PSAs to keep their licenses, and they are in a poor position to refuse messages from gay sources on grounds of "poor taste" and the like when references to homosexuality are so common today in news and entertainment programs. Moreover, the FCC's recent favorable action on the NGTF petition concerning broadcasters' "ascertainment of community needs" (see article in April *It's Time*) should force stations to weigh seriously requests from local gay groups.

Free PSA airtime is one of the best bargains to be had in broadcasting, and there is nothing really comparable to it in the print media ("calendar" items and such are, of course, worthwhile, but they don't have the impact of a PSA being intoned at you by an announcer). PSAs may give concrete information about events or non-profit services (a gay switchboard, community center, VD-screening program, support groups of all kinds, etc.), explain gay people's established rights under local, state, or national law, or make a non-partisan pitch for acceptance and understanding. They may not be overt or covert political or commercial advertisements, and their tone must be moderate and reasonable, not strident. Messages can run as short as ten seconds or as long as a minute (it's best to give broadcasters a variety of lengths).

Gay organizations in New York City, Washington, D.C., San Diego, and a number of other cities have been successful in having their PSAs broadcast, and there is no reason it cannot be done in most areas of the country. For a general guide to preparing and placing PSAs, we again strongly recommend a booklet called *Strategies for Access to Public Service Advertising* by Glenn Hirsh and Alan Lewis. Copies are available for \$4 each postpaid from the Public Media Center, 25 Scotland Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94109; (415) 434-1403. Buying it may be one of the best investments your group will ever make.

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- Two executive office swivel chairs

COMING EVENTS

NGTF Annual Meeting September 3rd, 1980
5:30pm, 80 Fifth Ave. Suite 1601

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