

It's Time

Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force • Vol. 7, No. 5 • July-August 1980

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES



ON THE MARCH. Volunteers and friends hold NGTF's banner during New York City's Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade held in June. Photo by Andrew Rubinfeld.

Gay Cubans

GAYS MEET TO FORM NATIONWIDE NETWORK FOR AIDING REFUGEES

Based on estimates supplied by the State Department and on sources inside the refugee camps, a minimum of 2,000 and as many as 10,000 gay men and lesbians are among the Cuban refugees in the U.S. Existing resettlement agencies are either unable or unwilling to work with the homosexual refugees. In response to this, representatives of numerous organizations, both gay and nongay, met in Washington, D.C., to coordinate a nationwide effort for the resettlement of gay and lesbian Cuban refugees.

Participating organizations in this meeting, which was held in the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington, D.C., were: the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, National Gay Task Force, Gay Rights National Lobby, National Association of Business Councils, Dade County Coalition for Human Rights, Parents and Friends of Gays, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Gay Rights Advocates, National Organization for Women, Integrity, Dignity, American Council for Nationalities Services, and the Illinois Gay Task Force.

Resettlement efforts already underway are being coordinated by the UFMCC Lesbian/Gay Task Force under the direction of the Rev. Bob Arthur. Needed are sponsors to house refugees, jobs, clothing, health care, educational opportunities (English classes), and legal assistance. Money is also being raised for the coordinated interorganizational national effort. Tax deductible contributions may be sent to the "UFMCC Cuban Refugee Relief Fund," c/o UFMCC, Suite 304, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90029; (213) 464-5100.

A packet is being prepared to assist local organizations and individuals who want to sponsor and otherwise assist lesbian and gay Cubans. The packet will be widely distributed through the UFMCC.

See also similar item in this issue's *Action Report*.

Immigration Update

ADMINISTRATION OPPOSES BAN ON GAY ALIENS

The Carter Administration announced at the end of June that it would support the repeal of the prohibition against the entry of lesbians and gay men into the United States. Presidential Assistant for Public Liaison Anne Wexler announced the President's stand in a letter to NGTF Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska.

In her letter, Ms. Wexler said that the Administration's position was based "upon the President's human rights policies and the nation's responsibility to be consistent with our immigration expectation of other countries." As one of the signatories of the 1975 Helsinki accord, the United States is obligated to promote easy travel as one way of encouraging human liberty.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT POSITION

Assistant Attorney General Alan A. Parker, in a separate letter to Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), said that the Justice Department supported the repeal provision of a bill the Senator has introduced. The Department had previously concluded that it was obligated to enforce the exclusion of gay men and lesbians under the provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act (1952). This piece of McCarthy-era legislation was amended in the mid-1960s and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1967. As such, it required the exclusion of persons "afflicted with psychopathic personality, or sexual deviation, or a mental defect." Despite the omission of those terms from the American Psychiatric Association's current nomenclature regarding homosexuality, the Justice Department had concluded that it was Congress' intent to exclude lesbian and gay male aliens. The Parker letter was the first indication that the Justice Department would follow the Administration's guidelines. Although bills have been introduced in both houses of Congress to alter the current immigration laws, no action is expected in the near future.

BALTIMORE

A proposal which called for elimination of all discrimination based on sexual preference was passed by the first of three regional conferences of the White House Conference on Families. The final vote was close, but was a particularly significant victory in that preconference publicity had suggested a very conservative outcome.

The conference, held June 5-7 in Baltimore, Maryland, was composed of over 600 delegates from 18 Eastern and Southern states and territories.

The National Gay Task Force was represented at the conference by Board member Barbara Weinstock (National Organization Representative for NGTF) and Tom Burrows (Organizational Observer for NGTF and liaison between NGTF and the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families). After the vote, Weinstock and Burrows said, "The inclusion of sexual preference in the antidiscrimination part of the proposal and its final approval by the full conference was partly a result of the willingness of many lesbians and gay men to be open about their sexuality. Many directly discussed their sexual orientation with other participants at the conference, both in the formal meetings and the informal gatherings."

Weinstock and Burrows also commended the support the antidiscrimination proposal received from nongay member organizations of the Coalition. The delegates from the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Black Caucus, and the Hispanic Caucus cooperated with the gay and lesbian delegates to work for approval of a recommendation which called for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the antidiscrimination clause (which called for elimination of all discrimination, including sexual preference), and the right to choose to have an abortion.

"The victory in Baltimore, in the face of intense right-wing pressure, shows the increasing recognition that gay people are a significant and vital part of the American family, and are intensely interested in the wide range of family-related issues facing our society," Burrows and Weinstock said.

MINNEAPOLIS

The second of three regional conferences of the White House Conference on Families was held in Minneapolis on June 19-21. Compared to the Baltimore meeting the fight against right-wing proposals was much more difficult and the results not as positive. This was due to the much larger member of pro-family delegates attending the Conference.

NGTF again worked with the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families and was able to insert language into the final recommendations which is supportive of lesbian and gay rights. There was one openly gay delegate attending the Conference, Bill Kelley of Chicago who is also a member of the NGTF Board, as well as a number of closeted gay men and lesbians. By coordinating their efforts through Tom Burrows, Special Assistant to the Task Force, these delegates were able to work closely with Coalition member organization delegates in countering the efforts of the pro-family right-wing organizations.

Two recommendations passed by the Conference included references to gay issues. The second highest vote getter was a recommendation to ensure "equity and social justice for all individuals regardless of race, sex, age, handicap, religion, and cultural traditions and values." The reference to cultural traditions and values was a very veiled referral to the rights of gay people. Considering that two proposals defining family as "two or more persons related by blood, heterosexual marriage, adoption, and extended families" passed, it was fortunate that gay issues were discussed at all.

Also passed was a housing proposal which included an antidiscrimination clause with wording taken directly from the NGTF Memorandum on Family Issues that Impact on Gay Families. The Conference recommended that "discrimination against all minorities, single persons, handicapped persons, families with children, and people unrelated by blood, marriage, legal ties, or adoption *should be prohibited* by all local and federal housing and financing programs."

COMING EVENTS

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



GAY PLANK. Co-Executive Director Lucia Valeska (right) with members of the Democratic Party Platform Committee in Washington, D.C., this past June. Jack Campbell (NGTF Board member and delegate from Miami), Virginia Apuzzo (delegate from Brooklyn), Bill Kraus (delegate from San Francisco), and Ms. Valeska were successful in attempts to have a gay rights plank adopted by the committee.

EXERCISE YOUR VOTE

Contained with this newsletter is a ballot for election of NGTF Board members. Please study the biographical information on the candidates, vote for those of your choice, and return the ballot in the enclosed reply envelope to the NGTF office by Sept. 8, 1980. Thanks for your attention to this important process.

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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NOTES FROM THE CO-EXECS

As this issue of *It's Time* goes to press (early July) we at NGTF find ourselves in the middle of a number of key issues. The first two regional conferences for the White House Conference on Families (Baltimore and Minneapolis) proved—because of our constructive efforts and worrying—to be a clear victory for the rights of gay men and lesbians. We are a little closer to being recognized as integral aspects of the American family. At present, the Los Angeles conference is still to come, and will be covered in the next issue of *It's Time*.

Similarly, the continuing immigration saga remains unresolved, although the end is in sight. The Carter Administration's announcement to end opposition to lifting the ban on lesbian and gay aliens visiting our country *should* have a positive effect on the Justice Department, which still must decide where the current law is to be enforced until Congress rewrites it or that the laws pertaining to the exclusion of gay aliens be suspended for the time being. The specific issue of gay Cuban refugees is treated amply in both this issue of the newsletter as well as the *Action Report*. Needless to say, this is one area in which the gay community can quite literally "take care of its own."

Finally, we should all be proud of what happened in Washington, D.C., at the end of June. The Democratic Party's Platform Committee, by a majority vote, adopted a pro-gay plank. Both President Carter and Senator Kennedy had eventually come out in support of such a proposal. The plank, however, must be voted on by the full convention when the Democrats meet in New York City in mid-August.

"We must affirm the dignity of all people and the right of each individual to have equal access to and participation in the institutions and services of our society, including actions to protect all groups from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation. This includes specifically the right of foreign citizens to enter into this country. Appropriate legislative and Administrative actions to achieve these goals should be undertaken."

Substantial credit for this historic achievement goes to Tom Bastow and Spots Pou, Co-Directors of the NGTF/GRNL-sponsored National Convention Project and the openly gay members of the Democratic Party Platform Committee—Sheldon Andelson (Calif.), Ginny Apuzzo (N.Y.), Gary Grefenberg (Minn.), Bill Kraus (Calif.), Tim Mayhew (Wash.), and Janna Zumbrun (Texas). Democratic Convention Delegates Jack Campbell (Fla.) and Peter Vogel (N.Y.) volunteered their time to work behind the scenes throughout the week contributing to the final success.

The Republicans meeting in Detroit experienced their first visible gay participation at a national convention. Facing hordes of delegates swept by a frenzy of reactionary social policy emotionalism, two courageous delegates—Tim Drake (Ill.) and Chuck Thompson (N.Y.)—made it clear that gay people are part of the Republican Party,

(continued on page 4)

LETTERS

CBS Reports

What follows is a copy of the letter I wrote to CBS. In looking it over, I realize that I haven't changed my feelings or calmed down at all. The program remains an absolutely false and bigoted piece of journalism.

I am writing in response to your April 26 broadcast, "CBS Reports: Gay Power, Gay Politics." It was in many ways a praiseworthy examination of the leading edge of the gay rights movement. The interviews were pointed, both the reporters and respondents were articulate, and although Mr. Reasoner was worried about the impact of the gay rights struggle in San Francisco, that worry was so obvious that the viewers could make their own corrections to compensate for it. Finally, the gay men and women who spoke were obviously comfortable and happy with themselves, so that the viewers could see why we call ourselves gay in the first place.

Nevertheless, the documentary was deeply flawed, so flawed that it raised more misconceptions than it put to rest. The most important was the lack of participation by, and concern for, San Francisco's lesbian community. Except for some speakers at rallies, women were nowhere to be seen. They have been in the forefront of the gay political struggle from the beginning, and have continued to provide forthright, articulate leadership in the movement, sometimes in conjunction with gay men, and sometimes separately from us. Omitting lesbians and their concerns completely falsified the political map of San Francisco, or, for that matter, the gay rights movement throughout the country.

The second flaw was the presentation of a monolithic and powerful gay male political machine. Gay men are divided along racial and economic lines in San Francisco, as we are elsewhere. Moreover, there is a deep division between those who favor working within the present legal system and those who see a Marxist-oriented revolution as a prerequisite for gay liberation. Add to these splits those between gay men and lesbians, since some of one group will refuse to work with the other, and between activists of whatever stripe and those gay men and women who see no necessity for any political activity whatsoever, and the picture of San Francisco politics, as presented, can be seen as a serious distortion.

The third flaw was the question that was never asked: Why do gay men and women feel the need for a gay political movement? It is not so that we can copulate in the parks or wear women's clothes, if we are men, although some of your viewers could be forgiven if they thought that were the case. Why have gay men and women come to San Francisco from everywhere in the country in the first place? It may be a backhanded compliment that the question was not raised, that the logic of the gay rights movement could be taken for granted, but I doubt if that was your intent. Gay liberation has grown out of the necessity for freedom from the bigotry which surrounds us. Its purpose is to free us from landlords in Houston, some of whom will not rent a one-bedroom apartment to two men; to free lesbians who have had their children untimely ripped from them by courts in Colorado; to give those of us in Oklahoma the security to teach to the best of our abilities; to protect us everywhere from losing our jobs tomorrow and our houses the day after; to protect our lovers from some of our own families, when they try to raid our estates; and to give us more than one street, more than one city, where we can walk down the street holding the hand of someone we like, or, perhaps, the one person we love, without fear of someone bashing our heads in. Public sex, transvestism, sado-masochism, and the number of sexual contacts are simply not relevant to that question; whether or not any one of us chooses to practice any such activity, we are all vulnerable to such venomous prejudice.

The heterosexually-oriented media have never served our community faithfully. You have obviously made an effort in that direction. I hope that a follow-up report will be forthcoming, so that a truly accurate report, complete with warts, can be made.

Ralph Herman
Brooklyn, N.Y.

(continued on page 4)



HONORED GUEST. NGTF's Finance Manager Scott Anderson and CETA Projector Director Larry Gurel flank Fund for Human Dignity award recipient Ginny Vida at the annual benefit held in June in New York City. Photo by Lynne Reynolds.

Fund Dinner Honors Vida and White

The NGTF Fund for Human Dignity honored Ginny Vida and Edmund White at its third Annual Benefit Dinner. The Fund, the educational arm of the Task Force, held the benefit on June 4 at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City.

Ginny Vida is the former Media Director of NGTF and editor of *It's Time*. She has worked long and skillfully to establish NGTF's relationships with the print and broadcast media. She is also the author of children's textbooks, has taught English, and edited *Our Right to Love: A Lesbian*

Resource Book. She is now program coordinator for the New York City Commission on the Status of Women.

Edmund White is the author of the novels *Nocturnes for the King of Naples* and *Forgetting Elena*, the study of gay men in the U.S., *States of Desire*, and co-author *The Joy of Gay Sex*. He has contributed articles, reviews, and short stories to numerous publications.

Ms. Vida and Mr. White were given the Awards of Merit for their ability to educate the public—gay and nongay—about the lives of lesbians and gay men.

CBS Reports

NGTF MEETS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NETWORK

Representatives from the National Gay Task Force met with CBS officials on May 29 to discuss the April 26 national broadcast of the CBS documentary, "Gay Power, Gay Politics." Present at the meeting were Lucia Valeska and Charles Brydon, Co-Executive Directors of NGTF; Tom Burrows, Special Assistant for the Task Force; Robert Chandler, Vice President and Director of Public Affairs Broadcasts for CBS; and Margery Baker, CBS Vice President for Public Affairs Broadcasts.

Issues covered during the meeting included:

- specific charges against CBS of deliberate misrepresentation and distortion in the documentary.
- NGTF National News Council Complaint pending.
- the danger to all parties concerned when First Amendment liberty is abused by biased reporting through ignorance, design, or neglect.
- the need for and obstacles to CBS establishing a productive rapport with the national lesbian and gay community.
- coming events on the lesbian and gay political front of interest to major network news teams, e.g., national party conventions of this summer.
- exploration of ongoing, systematic communication with CBS.

Although CBS officials are not admitting to any charges of misrepresentation, Mr. Chandler indicated that he would pursue specific instances cited. The NGTF Co-Executive Directors declined to comment on the overall effectiveness of the meeting stating that: "It remains to be seen whether or not CBS is willing to report lesbian and gay community news in a fair and accurate manner. We found Ms. Baker's and Mr. Chandler's attitude during the May 29 meeting to be constructive, and we intend to give CBS the opportunity to assert this positive perspective outside the confines of CBS executive offices." Mr. Chandler and Ms. Baker appeared to be genuinely concerned over the potential threat to CBS credibility due to the pending National News Council investigations inaugurated by a complaint being filed by NGTF.

Bryant Program Protest Answered

WHITE HOUSE RESPONDS TO NGTF COMPLAINT

On behalf of President Carter, Anne Wexler, Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, responded to an April 1 NGTF letter that protested the participation of the West Point Glee Club in a television program sponsored by the Anita Bryant Ministries, Inc.

The program, "Anita Bryant's Spectacular—My Little Corner of the World," was aired during March on independent television stations across the country. Considering that Anita Bryant Ministries is essentially a religious organization, the cooperation of the military raised serious questions relating to the traditional separation of church and state.

In her June 24 letter, Wexler stated that "the Department of the Army has concluded that... the Glee Club's appearance was not consistent with Department of Defense's guidance concerning the Department's support of and participation in events and activities in the civilian sector." She went on to say that "the Military Academy has been informed that the appearance of the West Point Glee Club was inconsistent with regulations. The producers of the show... are aware of the objection to use of the West Point segment in connection with Anita Bryant Ministries, Inc." In concluding, Wexler said that "the Department of the Army is studying the matter to see whether changes in procedures are necessary to avoid repetition of the event."

NGTF Co-Directors Brydon and Valeska expressed general satisfaction with the Administration's response. "There is little justification for this kind of incident. Separation of church and state is a fundamental principle of our form of government. If the military establishment was not so infected with homophobia, the helpful intervention of the White House would not have been necessary."

ACTIONREPORT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION/REPORTS ON RESULTS

DAVID STEIN, EDITOR

HELPING GAY CUBAN REFUGEES

Because of the stringently antigay policies and attitudes of the Castro government, many thousands of the Cuban refugees, both voluntary and involuntary, who have poured into the U.S. in recent months are gay. The Carter Administration has relaxed U.S. immigration rules so as to allow gay refugees to stay, but for many this has meant only an indefinitely long period of internment in camps where they are often subject to abuse from nongay refugees or from prejudiced U.S. personnel. Conventional service organizations are largely indifferent if not actively hostile to refugees stigmatized as homosexual, whom they, like the Cuban government, view as an "undesirable element."

Clearly, it's time for America's lesbians and gay men to extend our hands and hearts. While such local organizations as Latins for Human Rights in Miami and the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights have been working with new arrivals and internees at Florida's Eglin Air Force Base, the first national effort to aid all the gay and lesbian Cuban refugees is the recently established Cuban Refugee Task Force and Relief Fund of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). Nearly \$60,000 in start-up funds was pledged in mid-June by ministers attending UFMCC's Eastern Ministers Conference in Toronto, and a special, separately administered account was set up — which, however, shares UFMCC's tax exemption. In the words of UFMCC founder Rev. Troy Perry, who called for the effort, the aim of the task force is "... to negotiate with government agencies to facilitate the release and relocation of our sisters and brothers... [and to] arrange for them to be visited now in the camps, ministered to, and reassured that the lesbian and gay community in our country really cares."

The refugees' principal need is for "sponsors," U.S. residents who will pledge to give a refugee temporary room and board together with assistance in finding a job. The UFMCC task force, in cooperation with other agencies, is attempting to match refugees with sponsors. Besides volunteer sponsors, there is a need for Spanish-speaking volunteers living near one of the camps — Eglin AFB in Florida, Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania, and Fort Chafee in Arkansas — to visit the refugees and to provide a visible gay presence, a symbol of our community's concern.

For more information, to volunteer as a sponsor or visitor, or to make a tax-deductible contribution (make checks payable to "UFMCC Cuban Refugee Relief Fund"), contact Dale Leeche at UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, Calif. 90029; (213) 464-5100.

HOW TO BE WELL READ

The sixth, newly updated edition is now available of *A Gay Bibliography*, the invaluable listing compiled by the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association. It is a selective, 16-page list of 563 nonfiction publications. Books, articles, and pamphlets are grouped under these topical headings: General, Human Sciences, Law and Civil Rights, History and Biography, Religion, Gay/Lesbian Movement, and Literature and the Arts. There are separate listings for other bibliographies and directories, for periodicals, and for films (annotated).

Prices: 1-2 copies, \$1 each; 3-9 copies, 85¢ each; 10 or more copies, 70¢ each. Canadian orders should include payment in U.S. funds or add a 15% currency-exchange surcharge. Prices include mailing in the U.S. and Canada; for mailing elsewhere, add 25% of total for surface mail, 75% for air mail. Orders under \$25 must be prepaid. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "Barbara Gittings — GTF" and sent to same at P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Attempting to imitate the success of such mainstream "umbrella" charitable fund-raising organizations as the United Way, a group of Toronto lesbians and gay men has established Gay Community Appeal of Toronto (GCAT). Its focus is not on any particular project or institution serving the community, but rather on raising funds from as broad a base as possible and channeling them to a wide variety of worthwhile programs. The hope is that, as with the United Way, potential contributors will be more receptive to requests for a single donation that will benefit many organizations than to a whole series of competing "pitches" whose merits they must weigh individually.

Applications for GCAT funds are evaluated and

ruled on by the Appeal's board of directors, a distinguished but representative panel of Toronto-area gay men and lesbians. There is a separate management group to oversee GCAT's operations and a media group responsible for its publicity and fund-raising materials. Members of all these groups are unpaid volunteers.

GCAT's primary fund-raising device is the SOS (Support Our Selves) evening. Someone volunteers to host a small party, inviting perhaps eight to twelve friends and acquaintances. The social aspects of the affair are up to the host, but the fund-raising side is taken care of by an Appeal volunteer who presents a professionally produced forty-minute slide show, hands out brochures, answers questions, and takes donations. It's all quite painless and can even be a lot of fun; the pitch is very low key, and the people at the Appeal don't think they've wasted their time even when little or no money is raised (although substantial amounts have been raised in this manner since the program started this past May), for they've at least had another chance to spread the word.

For more information about Gay Community Appeal of Toronto, write to them at P.O. Box 2212, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5F 2T2, Canada; or call (416) 869-3036.

BECOMING VISIBLE

A New York City-area group, the Committee for the Visibility of the Other Black Woman: the Black Lesbian, is organizing a national conference on the problems of black lesbians. To be held at P.S. 136 in Harlem this October (tentatively October 10-12), the conference is entitled: "Becoming Visible — Survival for Black Lesbians." The conference will include discussion groups, seminars, and workshops on various topics and issues, plus performances, art exhibits, and commercial exhibits of products oriented toward women's needs. The conference is open to and welcomes all women, black or white, gay or nongay.

If you are interested in performing, exhibiting, speaking, or leading a workshop at the conference, would like to make a donation to defray its expenses, would like to attend, or simply wish more information, write to the Committee for the Visibility of the Other Black Woman, c/o Georgia M. Brooks, P.O. Box M564, Hoboken, N.J. 07030. Or telephone Georgia Brooks at (201) 795-1794, Luvenia Pinson at (212) 982-6280, or Jeanne Gray at (212) 860-4936.

GETTING TOGETHER

• The 1980 *Integrity International Convention*, the sixth annual meeting of the association of gay and lesbian Episcopalians (Anglicans) and their friends, will be held in Boston on August 21-24. The convention will center on Emmanuel Church on Newbury Street in the Back Bay section of the city, and the main social event will be a three-hour boat cruise through the islands of Boston harbor on Friday evening, August 22. Principal speakers during the convention will be Joan L. Clark (formerly with the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church's Board of Global Ministries, she was fired last year after voluntarily disclosing her lesbianism), Prof. John E. Boswell of Yale University (his book *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* was recently published by the University of Chicago Press), and Dr. Franklin Kameny (long-time Washington, D.C., gay activist and community leader, and NGTF Board member). For more information, contact Allan Stifflear, 9 Rockwell Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139; (617) 547-4676.

• The fifth *International Conference of Gay and Lesbian Jews* will be held in San Francisco the weekend of August 29 to September 1, 1980. Sponsored by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and gay and lesbian Jews of the Bay area, the conference will feature workshops, symposia, discussion groups, social events, and worship services, among other activities. The conference is open to all Jewish lesbians and gay men, not only those currently affiliated with a gay Jewish organization. For registration forms and further information, write to: Conference Registration, P.O. Box 5640, San Francisco, Calif. 94101.

YOUR input is essential for the continued usefulness of the "Action Report." If you have comments, suggestions, or relevant news information, please write to David Stein, c/o NGTF, 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Please understand that letters usually cannot be personally acknowledged.



HELPING OUT. Tuesday night volunteers Ralph Herman, Andy Greenhouse, Jerry Olanoff, and Jim Holmes share a relaxed moment after arduous envelope-stuffing activities. Photo by Andrew Rubinfeld.

Gay Inmates

By Claude Winfield

The National Gay Task Force office receives three to four letters a week from gay inmates who explain that they have been raped, harassed, and physically and verbally abused by other inmates because they are gay. The majority of these gay prisoners are afraid to report abuse from other inmates and prison guards because reporting anything to prison authorities is regarded as "snitching," an unpardonable offense in the eyes of inmates. Threats of violence, as they become an everyday occurrence, only worsen the situation.

NGTF recently received a letter from an inmate in Waupun, Wisconsin. He wrote in his letter that "T.B. as well as other diseases are running rampant throughout the institution, with three visits weekly for sick calls. If you are sick on a day when there is no sick call, you are told to suffer. This prison is made worse by doubling up 2 to 4 men in a two-man cell. I remain in voluntary segregation status here for my own protection from the general population. I am denied numerous rights, most important of which is my right to earn good time by working. Because of this, my sentence has been extended by six months. And even in voluntary segregation, safety is still an issue. Complaints to officials appear to fall on deaf ears."

An inmate from Comstock Correctional Institution, New York, states that "On June 9th I wrote a letter to security with an outline of my problems, and requesting 'Protection.' I was moved to the protection block Monday afternoon; but on Wednesday I

was told that 'Superintendent's Proceedings' had denied my request. I was then returned to C-7 block. Only last night I was informed that I had lost my job assignment as 'Inventory Clerk' in the lower store house. The reason given was that I was too 'vulnerable' in that position. A further example of the harassment that I am taking at the hands of the administration. Frankly, I can't help but think that their [security's] action this week stems from a prejudiced view with regard to my homosexuality."

It's obvious that the prison system does not see gays as fully human and having basic human rights. Gays are treated as the lowest inmates in the prison system, and as such, gay prisoners have even fewer "rights" than straight prisoners. They are labeled immediately faggot or dyke, and suspected by both straight inmates and the prison system.

Despite promises by The Federal Bureau of Prisons, reports increase showing that gay inmates are not allowed to receive gay male and lesbian publications and newsletters from organizations of interest to these prisoners.

One of the best ways to combat the inequities and inhumanities in our prison systems that both gays and straights face as well as the additional problems that lesbian and gay male inmates are confronted with, is to *write*. Corresponding with a gay prisoner — personal mail is unbothered as long as it is free of "suspicious" inserts — will give that inmate a sense that someone knows, cares, and that we are all willing to fight for his or her rights as a human being. Also, letters of protest to government representatives of the prison systems as well as key legislators can also have a beneficial effect. Remember, writing back is a way of fighting back.

For more information on corresponding with gay prisoners or whom to contact in the various systems, write to me at the NGTF office.

(Claude Winfield, an NGTF staff member, is currently at work on Task Force's CETA Project Open Employment.)

NEED OF THE MONTH
Two-cubic-foot refrigerator



PROFILE: JOHN GAFFNEY

As a long-time civil rights activist, John Gaffney brings invaluable experience and expertise to the gay rights effort in Rhode Island. After working in the black and women's civil rights movements in his native New Jersey, John moved to New England to head the Civil Rights Division of the Providence Human Relations Commission. He was later appointed Director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Rhode Island affiliate, and now works as a consultant and writer.

John was a founding Director of the Gay Task Force in Rhode Island. Formerly a state affiliate of NGTF, the GTF in Rhode Island is now completely independent. While working for the city of Providence, John authored a comprehensive antidiscrimination bill which was passed by the City Council, although the gay rights section was deleted. He also coordinated the celebrated *Fricke v. Lynch* case in which the right of a gay male high school senior to bring a male date to his prom was recognized as constitutionally protected free speech.

According to John, the dissemination of information and the coordination of local and national efforts are two major aspects of any civil rights movements, including the one for gay rights. In this context, John Gaffney is glad and eager to help out in the gay rights struggle.

ADVERTISE IN ITS TIME—
IT PAYS!

LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

1976 Revisited

I want to make a couple of comments about the article "Contenders Respond to NGTF Letter" in the April issue of *It's Time*.

First, I want to correct a serious distortion of the historical record. You are quoted as observing that the responses of this year's Presidential candidates to your questionnaire "reflect significant movement since 1976 when only one candidate, Jimmy Carter, was prepared to speak out on the issue." The article later states: "In his letter to the NGTF co-executive directors, Carter-Mondale Campaign Chairman Robert Strauss cited Carter as the first major presidential contender to openly discuss gay concerns during the 1976 campaign."

In the first place, Mr. Carter was not unambiguously pro-gay in 1976. He specifically supported the Supreme Court decision upholding the Virginia sodomy law, for example, and gratuitously noted several times during the campaign his private religious objections to homosexuality. He told an *Advocate* reporter that he did not regard gay rights as an important issue. In the second place, Representative Mo Udall did come out in favor of the National Gay Rights Bill, which Mr. Carter failed to do, and he also argued against the exclusion of lesbians and gay men from the military. Former Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris also made more strongly pro-gay statements than those issued by Mr. Carter, although Mr. Harris' bid was relatively short-lived.

My other comments concern the belated attempts of the Carter camp to claim credit for the provisions in the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act which, in Mr. Strauss' words, "prohibit discrimination in federal personnel actions based on private, non-job-related behavior such as sexual orientation." The victory over the Civil Service Commission's raging homophobia was fought and won by courageous gay activists and civil libertarians such as Frank Kameny, the Society for Individual Rights, and the ACLU; it is incredible that we should let a bunch of politicians pretend that we should thank them. At best, the 1978 law codifies the court decisions that we won before anybody had ever heard of Jimmy Carter.

Craig Howell
Washington, D.C.

NOTES FROM THE CO-EXECS

(continued from page 2)

and GOP gays will not be intimidated or frightened away by those who now control the party machinery. Apart from the thin ray of hope provided by these delegates' example, the news from Detroit was grim. The anti-ERA plank received considerable press play as did the endorsement of Senator Laxalt's anti-gay "Family Protection Act." Not so well reported, however, was the amendment to the equal rights plank which added language designed to make it clear that the GOP did not include lesbians and gay men in their thinking when it came to equal rights. The language of the immigration plank reflects a subtle anti-gay tone as well.

These are the facts of life for gay men and lesbians as we face Election '80. The answer is to raise the participation of our community in the political process by education and voter registration. We need not succumb to apathy. Too many women and men have fought too hard to get where we are today. The responsibility of each gay person of voting age is to register now and vote in November.

Charles F. Brydon
Lucia Valeska

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GAY RIGHTS PROTECTIONS



UNITED STATES AND CANADA

GAY RIGHTS PROTECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

MUNICIPALITY	YEAR(S) ENACTED	PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT	PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS	EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING	EDUCATION	REAL ESTATE PRACTICES	CREDIT	UNION PRACTICES	AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM
ALFRED, N.Y.	5/74	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
AMHERST, MA.	5/76	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ANN ARBOR, MI.	7/72		X	X	X		X	X		
ASPEN, CO.	11/77	X		X	X				X	
ATLANTA, GA. (E.O.)	7/71	X								
AUSTIN, TX.	7/75	X								
BERKELEY, CA.	10/78	X								
BLOOMINGTON, IN.	12/75		X	X		X	X			
BOSTON, MA. (E.O.)	4/76	X								X
CHAMPAIGN, IL.	7/77		X	X	X			X	X	
CHAPEL HILL, N.C.	9/75	X								
COLUMBUS, OH.	1/79		X		X			X		
CUPERTINO, CA.	2/75	X								X
DETROIT, MI.	1/79	X								
EAST LANSING, MI.	5/73		X	X						
HARTFORD, CT.	4/79	X		X						
IOWA CITY, IA.	5/77		X	X				X		
ITHACA, N.Y.	9/74	X								X
LOS ANGELES, CA.	5/77		X	X	X	X	X			
MADISON, WI.	3/75		X	X	X		X			
MARSHALL, MN.	4/75		X	X	X		X			
MINNEAPOLIS, MN.	4/74	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
MOUNTAINVIEW, CA.	3/75	X								X
NEW YORK, N.Y. (E.O.)	1/78	X								
OTTAWA, ONT.	4/76	X								
PALO ALTO, CA.	8/74			X	X					
PORTLAND, OR.	12/74	X								
PULLMAN, WA.	4/76	X								X
SAN FRANCISCO, CA.	7/78		X	X	X					
SANTA BARBARA, CA.	8/75	X								X
SEATTLE, WA.	10/75	X		X			X			
TORONTO, ONT.	10/73	X								
TROY, N.Y.	1/79	X								
TUCSON, AZ.	1/77	X	X	X	X				X	
URBANA, IL.	4/79	X	X	X	X			X		X
WASHINGTON, D.C.	11/73	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
WINDSOR, ONT.	3/77	X								
YELLOW SPRINGS, OH.	7/75		X	X						X
COUNTY										
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN.	11/75	X								X
HOWARD COUNTY, MD.	11/75		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
INGHAM COUNTY, MI.	6/78	X								
MINNEHAHA COUNTY, S.D.	5/79	X								
SAN MATEO COUNTY, CA.	2/75			X	X					
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA.	7/75	X								
STATE OR PROVINCE										
CALIFORNIA (E.O.)	4/79	X								
PENNSYLVANIA (E.O.)	4/76		X	X	X			X	X	X
QUEBEC	12/75		X	X	X					

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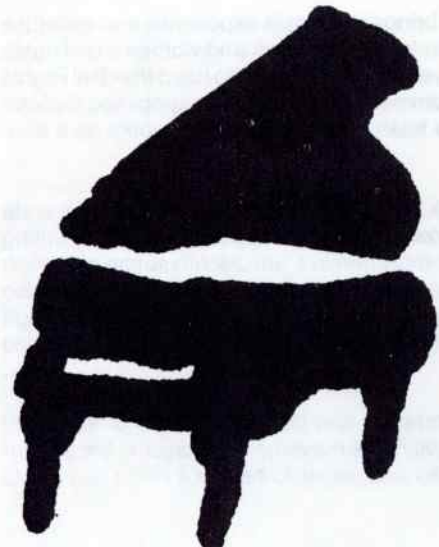
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