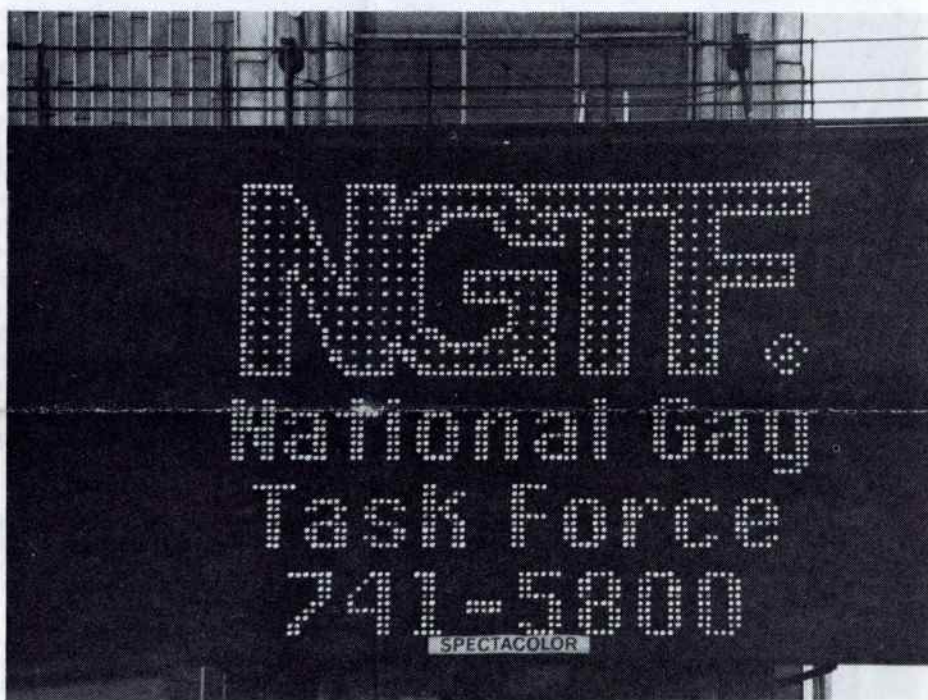
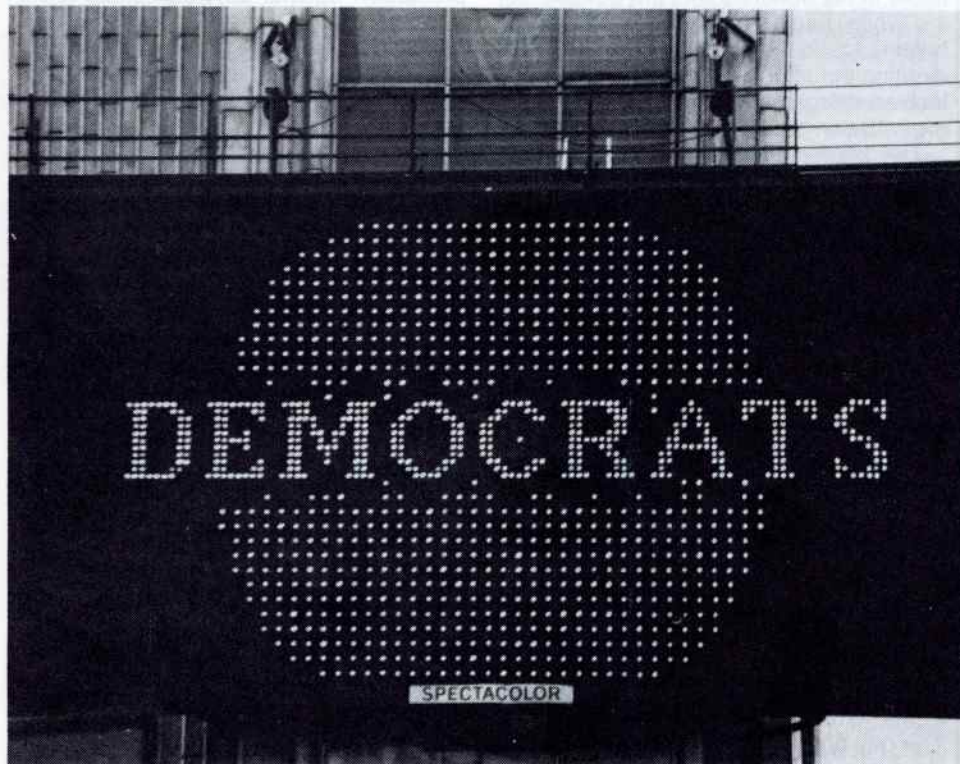


# It's Time

Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force • Vol. 7, No. 6 • September 1980



UP IN LIGHTS. Times Square billboard spreads the word as New York City and NGTF welcome Democratic delegates to the party convention held in August.

## NGTF AND GRA EXPLORE AFFILIATION

Gay Rights Advocates, Inc., a public interest law firm based in San Francisco, and the National Gay Task Force have agreed to open discussions aimed at developing a proposal for formal affiliation between the two organizations.

In a joint statement, GRA Board Chair Fred Ponder and NGTF Board Co-Chairs Kay Whitlock and Dick Cash explained these exploratory discussions as follows: "The need to consider affiliation has emerged from a perception, shared by both organizations, that as the gay rights movement moves into the 1980s, there is a need for a national entity with the capability to coordinate advocacy, lobbying, education,

and litigation in support of common interests. This is the successful model we see in organizations such as the NAACP, NOW, and the Anti-Defamation League, and we believe that model offers us important lessons as we seek to become even more effective in our work."

These discussions are exploratory and aimed at developing a proposal for consideration by the respective Boards of Directors. Both organizations wish to make it clear that these discussions and any relationship that may emerge will not serve to limit contacts or cooperation with other gay and lesbian groups.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Action taken at the August 3 Executive Committee meeting held in New York City:

- approved opening formal affiliation discussions with GRA. (See article in this issue.)
- instructed Co-Executive Directors to thank Carter Administration for its open support of Senator Cranston's bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act, and for its support of a gay rights plank in the Democratic Party Platform.
- received and discussed in detail the staff's 1981 revenue and expense budget, and provided feedback for consideration prior to the full board meeting in September.
- discussed a member's proposal to formulate a comprehensive long-term public education program.
- heard a report on a proposed 1981 conference for employees of public radio stations. The NGTF Annual Meeting is scheduled for September 30 in New York City.

## IMMIGRATION VICTORY

Suspected gay aliens will no longer be subject to probing interrogation on their private sexual life by immigration authorities under a new policy announced by the Department of Justice, September 10th. The National Gay Task Force and Gay Rights Advocates were given advance notice of this decision by Associate Attorney General John H. Shenefield at a special Justice Department briefing on Tuesday, September 9. The new policy replaces the parole procedure in effect since August, 1979. The State Department is expected to bring its procedures for visa applications into conformance with Justice Department guidelines.

Henceforth, only those individuals who self-identify themselves as homosexual to immigration personnel will be subject to exclusion. Wearing political buttons, T-shirts or other symbols expressing support for the gay rights movement will not be sufficient to trigger inquiry into an alien's sexual orientation. However, a button or other sign which states that the wearer is a homosexual or the identification of an individual as homosexual by a traveling companion would lead to specific inquiry. If the suspected alien answers 'No' to the question, "Are you a homosexual?" he or she will be permitted to enter the United States without further inquiry.

### NGTF RESPONSE

"This decision is the culmination of years of work to bring about more enlightened and sensitive enforcement of the 1952 Immigration Act," commented NGTF Co-Director, Charles Brydon. "Combined with Carter Administration support for Senator Cranston's bill to remove the infamous anti-gay language from the Immigration Act, it is an important practical political victory for the gay rights movement.

"I want to commend the Department of Justice for the humanitarian approach implicit in this decision. From a situation in which immigration officers were free to ask any question that came to mind about an individual's private sexual life to establish that person's sexual orientation, the field of inquiry has been dramatically limited to a single question. The Justice Department has shown considerable sensitivity toward the right to privacy of all people by this decision. This is vital to lesbians and gay men. We believe the decision has created a standard that should be a hallmark for all government policies concerning gay people.

(continued on page 4)

ADVERTISE IN IT'S TIME— IT PAYS!

## 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

Vol. 7, No. 6  
September 1980

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Typesetting: Village Type & Graphics

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### NOTES FROM THE CO-EXECS

#### Membership Renewals

An administrative and financial note to lead off this column. Membership Director Judy Burns will be implementing soon the revised membership fee schedule approved by the Board of Directors (see February-March *It's Time*) for renewals. The revised schedule has been part of new members' literature since June. Commencing October 1, Basic Membership will be \$30 and Household Membership (for two individuals) \$45, an increase of \$10 in each category. The \$5 limited Income category has been dropped although the \$10 option has been retained.

Like every other organization, business, and individual in the country, NGTF has experienced the consequences of inflation. It is in response to that reality and as one of several steps needed to ensure that financial health of NGTF for future growth that the Board acted to adjust the overall membership fee schedule.

#### Gay Vote 1980

As you read this issue of *It's Time*, the fall presidential campaign is in full swing. We find ourselves, as co-directors of an organization that does not "endorse" candidates for public office, confronted with frequent questions as to where we stand.

Our response is to point to the record of the candidates, the respective political parties, and the candidates' standing in the polls. Apart from the latter, the pages of *It's Time* have reported the position or lack thereof of the candidates and the parties. Your local newspaper can tell you the latest polling results. Barring what would be the unexpected concerning Mr. Anderson's standing in the polls, our personal judgment is that gay people have only one viable choice this November, and he is President Jimmy Carter.

Space for this column does not allow an in-depth analysis of all that contributes to this personal conclusion. We have been privileged to have access to the views and attitudes of the players in this presidential contest. Whatever one may feel about the other issues, whatever may be one's opinion of President Carter's overall performance, the specter of a Reagan Administration, the kind of people attracted to his views, the kinds of people he would appoint to the Supreme Court or his Cabinet, or other sensitive federal posts such as the Surgeon General and the Immigration Commissioner, and the consequences for social programs serving special populations are of deep concern. For these reasons, the choice to us is obvious.

None of us want gay rights to be a partisan issue. We wish the Republican party today exemplified the vision of its two greatest leaders, Lincoln and Roosevelt, with regard to prejudice and discrimination. But the Republicans have not reached that level of understanding and acceptance yet, although a courageous beginning was made in Detroit this year.

For 1980, none of us can afford to stay away from the polls this November 4. We urge you to urge everyone to vote for the President.

Charles F. Brydon  
Lucia Valeska

## LETTERS

### TERMINOLOGY

Received your newsletter and once again found myself quite irritated with you. It's over the insistent and continued use of the terms "lesbian and gay men" — never varied.

I suppose that the usage is a result of much soul searching, political correctness, and a group decision.

I tend to function more on common sense than political correctness (which has its virtues and problems on both sides of the coin). However, it does seem to me that it would be considerably more productive, effective, and accurate if you (we all) used the term(s) "Gay Women and Men" — varied now and then to show sensitivity.

It's been pretty evident to me that lesbian-feminist issues, male rights issues, political and other social issues are additional means of fragmenting and causing schisms amongst us. The purpose of NGTF and many other organizations is to organize and unite us around the primary issue of our homosexuality and its implications in our society—is it not? To state, as many have, that (for example) feminist issues are inextricable from lesbian issues is arrogant and naive. Gay fascists or Maoists or S-&-M'ers could all say the same thing. If you'll note in my third paragraph, I had to insert the word "feminist" (often "lesbian") — apparently the two words have become synonymous to me — and that's not accurate or fair.

If you're wondering why I am writing to you *re* what may seem a trivial or pissy issue, it is because as our prime national organization you are obviously and appropriately giving gay women an equal (though it seems at times dominant) role in what you're doing and covering in the newsletter. However, the reality (from my experiences in San Francisco) is that our local lesbian leaders are separatists and hostile to gay men (beneficent tolerances are another issue), maybe even more than to straight men. This is appalling to me and seems so unnecessary and counterproductive to all of us. "Mea Culpas" aside, it seems that if we can identify our common concerns, maybe we can unite on those. And as semantics are important, I am saying that to many of us, lesbian and feminist have come to mean the same thing. So let's get together on homosexual issues!

Calvin Epp  
San Francisco, Calif.

Lucia Valeska responds

Thank you very much for your letter. We want to know what irritates members as well as what pleases them. In addition, your letter is particularly helpful in that you outline very clearly the reasoning behind your complaint, as well as indicate that you are aware of and sensitive to the probable political machinations we have been through in our decision to use one label over another in describing the homosexual population in the U.S.

As one who is daily responsible for walking the fine line between "political correctness" and "common sense," I am in sympathy with your plea for a little more of the latter. Furthermore, I don't know if you will be reassured, but current NGTF policy and practice in the area of linguistic preferences is not static. Current practice is, as you suspect, the result of years of debate, but the debate will continue. And the policy and practice can change to reflect newly articulated community and membership demands. Your own contribution to the debate is appreciated and will be drawn on as current practice is re-evaluated by NGTF staff and the Board of Directors. Also, I think from discussions with gay men in different areas of the country that your opinion is shared by others.

On the other hand, we also hear regularly from lesbians who thank us for acknowledging what many of them feel to be a necessary separate identity. And recently there has been some amount of pressure exerted on NGTF staff and Board to change the name of the organization to the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force. Aside from the common arguments in favor of increased lesbian visibility and presence in the Task Force, the push in this direction is also the result of a perceived need to work in close cooperation with the feminist movement as a whole. In this vein, it is argued that the more overt indication NGTF gives that women's interests are also our interests, the easier it will be to build a solid coalition with the feminist movement. The argument is powerful when translated into specific instances. For example, right now we're in the process of preparing a lawsuit

## White House Conference on Families

### LOS ANGELES

The third and final regional meeting of the White House Conference on Families was held at the Los Angeles Hilton, July 10-12. Again representing the National Gay Task Force was Tom Burrows, Special Assistant. Randy Gardull also attended and was invaluable in his workings with the Coalition for the White House Conference on Families in helping to run the Coalition suite and coordinating the efforts of not only the gay and lesbian delegates but all Coalition member organization delegates.

The efforts of the Coalition and NGTF would have been difficult without the assistance of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community services Center and Nancy Taylor, Director of Community Education. Further cooperation and assistance, was provided through the efforts of Planned Parenthood. Jane Trichter, Vice President, Public Affairs, and her assistant, Amy Goldstein, did an exemplary job in working with the Coalition and setting up the Moderate-Liberal Caucus in which most of the strategy against the new right was developed.

The right-wing, calling itself the Pro-Family Coalition, again attempted to pass its full agenda of anti-gay, anti-ERA, anti-Choice resolutions. Labelling the Coalition to which the Task Force belonged the "anti-Family Coalition," they informed the press that the Conference would result in the feminists battling against the gays. The gay and lesbian representation at the Conference was larger than at Baltimore or Minneapolis, and included a very politically

astute group of people. The cooperation of delegates from NOW and other women's organizations with the gay men and lesbians was excellent. The delegates from the 52 organizations in the Coalition worked together to defeat resolutions calling for prohibition against gay teachers and the removal of any presentations of homosexuality in the media. The delegates were also able to prevent the passage of a narrow definition of the family.

Again, as in both Baltimore and Minneapolis, resolutions calling for the passage of the ERA and freedom of choice for abortion were passed. In the housing area there was a recommendation calling for the end of discrimination based on sexual preference. This same recommendation also passed in Minneapolis. Aging recommendations pointed out the need for an awareness of sexual differences among the aged. References to the needs of nontraditional family forms and "extended" families were used in a number of other areas and Conference participants agreed to avoid red-flag words to the right-wing and tried to include gay issues in ways that could not be knocked down.

A national task force of 117 member organizations will convene in Washington, D.C., in mid-August to take the recommendations of the three regional conferences and create a final report. The next two scheduled White House Conferences are on Aging and on Children and Youth

### PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON WHITE HOUSE FELLOWSHIPS

The White House Fellowship Program, established in 1964, is a highly competitive opportunity for 14-20 individuals to participate in and learn about the Executive Branch by working in a Cabinet-level agency, the Office of the President, or the Office of the Vice President. In addition to the high-level internship, there is also an educational aspect that complements the full-time government assignment. The program lasts one year and most individuals return to their geographic areas. A few stay on to enter government service.

As a government employee, each Fellow is paid by his or her agency at an appropriate scale (no higher than a GS-15, step 3). There are no application restrictions as to age, sex, race, creed, national origin, or sexual orientation. Application forms are available now from the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, P.O. Box 7737, Washington, D.C. 20044, and must be submitted no later than December 1, 1980.

against the State of Oklahoma for enacting the Helms (essentially the same as the Briggs initiative) amendment into law. If the National Organization for Women and the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund join us as complainants in the case (NOW is currently considering this action), we have the additional resources and input of a national organization with 120,000 members and a budget ten times our own to bring to bear on the outcome of the case. Furthermore, the organized feminist movement has made vital contributions to gay rights causes — both at the national level and in local battles across the country. The recently won gay rights plank in the national Democratic Party Platform (formally approved at the August Convention) is largely the result of *coalitional* efforts between gay and feminist advocates working closely together throughout the platform hearings and drafting sessions.

It is my personal contention as co-executive director of the National Gay Task Force that the name of the organization should remain the same. Further, I believe the constant separation of "lesbian" from "gay" may be overdone — to the point where women achieve the opposite of what we're fighting for, i.e., "gay" may *become* a term that refers only to men. In any case, as the debate continues, I would ask for some patience on your part as staff at the Task Force attempts to balance the demands of formidable, sometimes antagonistic constituencies within our own membership.

Player Piano Repair  
12 East 12th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
212 243-5026



Marion R. Frazier

## NGTF Files Complaint

### ASKS NATIONAL NEWS COUNCIL FOR STUDY OF "CBS REPORTS"

The National Gay Task Force — with the cooperation of the leadership of San Francisco gay community, Supervisor Harry Britt and Mayor Diane Feinstein — has filed a complaint with the National News Council regarding the CBS News Special "Gay Power, Gay Politics." Special cooperation with Mr. Randy Alfred, an independent journalist from San Francisco, has resulted in a substantial, well documented complaint against CBS News.

NGTF charges CBS News with failure to meet acceptable journalistic standards of accuracy and fairness in the program. According to the complaint, CBS went beyond the legitimate bounds of robust journalism into the realm of misrepresentation, omission of information fundamental to an understanding of the events portrayed, and distortion.

NGTF Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska said in the complaint: "It is our contention, and the contention of the many individuals and organizations who wrote or called us, that the program unjustly maligned and stigmatized gay people by presenting an inaccurate and unbalanced view of the political work of San Francisco's gay community. By failing to distinguish between the facts of the political movement in San Francisco and the opinions and conjectures of the producers, and drawing national implications from the latter, [CBS] did great harm to America's gay community. "With this complaint, we welcome the independent investigation and evaluation of the facts by the National News Council."

The "Action Alert" included in the last issue of *It's Time* inadvertently omitted from the list of those U.S. Representatives voting against the McDonald Amendment Mike Lowrey (D-Wash.) and Joel Pritchard (R-Wash.). Our apologies to both.

# ACTION REPORT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION/REPORTS ON RESULTS  
DAVID STEIN, EDITOR

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

## WRITE NOW!

A lot of politicians are running for re-election right now, and a lot of them are running scared. Despite the fantasies of CBS News, it's not us they're scared of—the terror is being wielded by "Moral Majority," "Christian Voice," and a whole slew of other reactionary, anti-gay, and anti-feminist pressure groups. They have been very busy over the past year inundating legislators and administrators with letters and calls saying that supporting equal rights for women and gay people is political suicide. NGTF, GRNL, and other pro-rights groups have done their best to counter this propaganda, but there has not been nearly enough support from individual lesbians and gay men telling their elected representatives and officials how they feel about these issues. Some members of Congress, we've heard, are still under the impression that they just don't have any gay constituents.

Thoughtful, forceful letters now may be even more important than thoughtful votes in November, because they force politicians to think about how they might earn those votes—and it's assumed that every letter received must represent the views of hundreds or thousands of other voters who didn't bother to write. The privacy of the voting booth is precious, but it can work against us if it serves to perpetuate gay invisibility and consequent indifference to our needs and claims. It's fine to help vote the rascals out or the good guys in, but if they don't hear from us they'll have no idea that we had a hand in their victory or defeat.

Just considering Congress alone (your local gay media and organizations can inform you about the performance of local politicians), there's plenty worth writing letters about. For starters, check your representative's vote on July's McDonald Amendment to the Legal Services Corporation appropriation bill (see the "Action Alert" included in last month's mailing and the correction in this issue of *It's Time*). Like the similar amendment (barring legal assistance in gay-rights cases) passed in 1977, this one is an excellent litmus test for gay-rights support in the House; the brave few who voted No deserve our thanks and support, and those who voted Yes (or failed to vote) need to realize that we will hold them accountable in November.

The McDonald Amendment may come up for a vote in the Senate (last time it was quietly killed there, but we may not be so fortunate again), and senators need to be urged to vote against it if it does. Even more important, they should be urged in the strongest terms to reject the so-called "Family Protection Act" (S. 1808). Among other horrendous provisions, this would explicitly exclude lesbians and gay men from federal civil-rights protection.

As always, though at this point neither bill is likely to come to a vote any time soon, House members should be urged to support H.R. 2074, the comprehensive federal gay-rights bill, and senators S. 2081, the Fair Employment Act, which would bar employment discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. And don't forget to thank those who are already on record as co-sponsors of these bills (call the NGTF office for more information). Letters, telegrams, and mailgrams to representatives may be addressed to them at the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515; to senators at the Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Finally, while you're brandishing the weapon of your vote in November, please make sure that you are registered at your current address so you can vote!

## GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL

Boston's Exodus Center, a nonprofit educational, counseling, and support center for gay people and their families, has embarked on the project of establishing a rural "retreat" facility. Its purpose will be to enable gay individuals, couples, and non-gay family members to deal with sexual-minority problems in a low-pressure, low-distraction atmosphere with maximum professional and peer support. The planned facility is loosely modeled on the established institution of the religious retreat, as befits the background of Exodus founder Fr. Paul Shanley, but it will be nondenominational and nonideological. The projected start-up cost is \$400,000, and since it is hoped that the retreat will draw participants from all over the country, not just the Boston area, Exodus is making a national appeal for funds. Donor lists are kept confidential, and donations are tax deductible. For more information, write or call Exodus Center, Inc., 25 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Mass. 02116; (617) 266-0612.

## UNIFORM SUPPORT

The Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines aren't the only uniformed services that benefit from substantial gay and lesbian participation yet maintain an official homophobic stance. Not even gay teachers face as severe a pressure to stay deep in the closet and to cooperate in their own and other gay people's oppression as do gay and lesbian police officers, firefighters, corrections officers,

and so on. Few other members of our community have such a close-up view of the mechanisms of our oppression, yet few are in as insecure a position for combatting them.

A support group formed recently with the modest goal of working to end all that: "to eliminate bans on gay hiring, bring about job security for gay employees, and improve the treatment of gay communities in general." The group is called IFO-LEOFFRCO—International Fraternal Order of Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Forest Rangers, and Correctional Officers—and currently numbers about a hundred lesbians and gay men who are past, present, or prospective employees in these fields. Members join by subscribing to the group's newsletter, which costs \$12.50 for six issues published at intervals of from two to four months. The newsletter is put out by unpaid volunteer workers and is mailed in a plain envelope; the mailing list is kept confidential. For more information or to join, write to IFO-LEOFFRCO at 323 Franklin Parkway South, Suite 804/1-36, Chicago, Ill. 60606.

## SAGE WRITINGS

Two issues ago our lead item concerned New York City's SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) and its program to aid the older members of our community. One of the projects mentioned was a writing workshop participated in by four lesbians and four gay men ranging in age from 47 to 78. An anthology of their work—poetry and short stories, theater reviews, and excerpts from journals, personal histories, a play, and two novels in progress—has now been published under the title *Sage Writings*. The book is a perfect-bound, 6 x 9-inch, 115-page paperback that includes ten black-and-white photographs. The cost is \$2.50 per copy, which includes postage and handling. Make checks payable to the Teachers & Writers Collaborative and send orders to same at 84 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011.

## PARENTING SUPPORT

Psychotherapist Audrey Steinhorn of New York City has been specializing for some time in helping with the mental and emotional problems of lesbian mothers and gay fathers who seek to rear or at least to remain in close contact with their children. Besides individual counseling, Steinhorn often addresses professional mental-health-care groups and gay organizations about the difficulties our society imposes on gay parents. She is currently compiling material for a handbook dealing with these problems and would appreciate hearing from other professionals interested in or doing research in this area as well as from parents who have experience they would like to share. If you have information to contribute or if you would be interested in having Ms. Steinhorn address your group, please write to Audrey I. Steinhorn, C.S.W., Westside Psychotherapy, 110 West 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024.

## DENTISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the most effective forces for gay liberation has been the formation of gay/lesbian caucuses within or alongside professional associations, since coming out to one's professional peers strikes directly at the "them/us" dichotomy that is the root of prejudice. The mere existence of a gay professional group can have a far-reaching impact, though most are also very active in educating, lobbying, politicking, etc.

We are, therefore, most happy to help spread the word about an attempt to form a national association of gay and lesbian dentists. The Northern and Southern California Dentists for Human Rights groups will be jointly sponsoring daily hospitality events in conjunction with the American Dental Association's national meeting this year in New Orleans on October 11-16. These get-togethers will be held each evening at Lafitte's Guest House in the French Quarter; a dinner is also being planned for Tuesday, October 14. Advance registration is \$15 per person, \$20 at the convention (fee covers the open bar at Lafitte's; the dinner is extra). For more information, write or call the Southern California Dental Society for Human Rights, 256 South Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211, (213) 652-6459; or Northern California Dentists for Human Rights, P.O. Box 14575, San Francisco, Calif. 94114, (415) 673-3189.

*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.*

LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS MEETINGS AT THE 1980 DEMOCRATIC PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD IN NEW YORK CITY IN AUGUST. Photos by C. F. Brydon.



Floor demonstration following nomination of Mel Boozier as Vice President



NGTF's Lucia Valeska and Betty Naylor, Texas Gay Task Force member



National Convention Project directors Spots Pou and Tom Bastow convene the first session of the Lesbian and Gay Caucus.



Allison Thomas, White House Public Liaison Staff, and NCP volunteer Michael Ziskand exchange information.

## PROFILE: INTERNATIONAL GAY ASSOCIATION

The International Gay Association (IGA) was founded in 1974 at a meeting of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE), one of the leading gay liberation groups in Great Britain. Membership in IGA is by national organizations; at the first meeting were representatives from Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. NGTF member Robert Mehl represented the United States, and the Task Force subsequently became officially affiliated with the Association. The aim of the IGA, in its founding statement, were "to maximize the effectiveness of gay organizations by coordinating political action on an international level in the pursuit of gay rights, and in particular to apply concerted political pressure on governments and international institutions" and "to set up an information center to distribute information on gay matters between gay organizations, to promote a wider knowledge of gay oppression, and to identify areas where international political pressure may be more effectively pursued."

IGA considers its primary purpose to be the dissemination of information and publicity. This is coordinated from the Information Centre and Secretariat in Dublin. Tactics include writing letters to heads of state, legislatures, and foreign embassies; demonstrations; and eliciting support from friendly governments to protest actions harmful to lesbians and gay men. When anti-gay measures were introduced in the Greek Parliament, IGA organized demonstrations outside Greek embassies in Europe. IGA pressured members of the European Common Market to persuade Greece to withdraw its homophobic bills prior to admission to the EC. Over 140 members of the Dutch Parliament signed a letter of protest to the Greek government. IGA has lobbied the World Health Organization to have homosexuality stricken from its list of mental disorders. It has a liaison with the International Labor Organization to solicit support for gay men and lesbians unions. IGA rescues gay refugees and finds friendly countries for asylum. IGA is documenting gay persecution, so that Amnesty International can adopt gay men and lesbians as "prisoners of conscience." When gay newspapers are threatened, such as in Canada or Brazil, IGA protests. The association has worked particularly hard to report the executions of gay men in Iran. Closer to home, IGA has protested the 1978 Briggs Initiative in California, as well as the continuing presence of anti-sodomy laws in various states, and has sent numerous protests to American embassies against the harassment of gay emigrants and visitors to this country.

As in many gay political organizations, lesbians in IGA are outnumbered by gay men. Nevertheless, lesbians have an active voice in the leadership and all activities of the Association. Issues which IGA has pursued of particular interest to women include child custody, child-bearing, violence against women, and sexism within the gay male community. Special workshops devoted to women's issues are held at all IGA conferences.

IGA concluded its annual meeting in Belgium in August, with fifty member organizations in attendance. The purpose of the gathering was to find ways to improve IGA's efficiency without compromising its democratic structure. IGA presently makes statements only through the annual meeting, so that for much of the year it is silenced. Recommendations for alleviating this situation will be made at the annual conference next spring in Italy. IGA has also begun to investigate the plight of lesbians and gay men in the USSR and Poland, and, thanks largely to IGA pressure, the Spanish government has legalized the Catalan Gay Liberation Front, a significant victory in a conservative, church-dominated country.

In a short time, the International Gay Association has proven to be an effective advocate for rights of gay men and women everywhere. Its international membership allows it to attack homophobia wherever it occurs, while simultaneously putting pressure on individual countries. Its recent expansion into Latin America, Africa, and Asia has increased its ability to protect gays in those areas. IGA is an essential component of the struggle of gay women and men for dignity and equality.

For further information contact:  
IGA Liaison Office  
c/o Gay Community Center  
1469 Church Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

## Parents of Gays Help Each Other And Their Children

By Andrew Garfinkel

Being gay can be a problem not only for gay men and lesbians, but also for their parents and relatives. For most parents, it is a difficult and painful experience to learn that their child is gay. The closeted lesbian or gay man often feels the victim of social oppression and can live neither openly nor with dignity. Similarly, the closeted parent of a gay man or lesbian may react with feelings of guilt, shame, anger, and a sense of failure when he or she finds out about the child's homosexuality.

Finding out that their child is homosexual may shatter these parents' dreams of happily married children who will give them grandchildren. It is a dream that is virtually "smashed to smithereens" because the parents now find themselves confused about what homosexuality is, fearful of what the future holds for their gay child, plagued with questions about where they "went wrong", and guilty about what will happen to them if their friends and neighbors "find out."

The worst part of this suffering is that, for many parents, it is done in virtual isolation and silence. Determined to keep this news from other family members and from their friends, the anguish felt by parents of gays is magnified because they cut themselves off from being able to talk about homosexuality in general or about their child's homosexuality in particular with anyone who may be able to help them.

Eight years ago in New York City, parents who needed such help began to turn to each other for sympathy and understanding. This led to the creation of what is today almost 200 similar Parents & Friends Of Gays (PFOG) groups all across the country. Parents meet to help each other understand what homosexuality is about and how to deal with their feelings about their child's homosexuality. PFOG meetings usually involve personal stories wherein parents share their thoughts about how they felt upon discovering that their daughter or son is gay. Just as gay men and lesbians generate support for each other in dealing with the problems of their homosexuality, so it is that parents of gays have the greatest ability to sympathize with and to encourage other parents of gays. Sharing these feelings helps parents to understand themselves better and to deal with their homophobia. The presence of other gay men and lesbians at these meetings usually helps parents to understand why their children told them about their homosexuality in the first place.

PFOG does not stop there, however. The declared statement of purpose of PFOG is to challenge distorted attitudes about homosexuality and to promote enlightenment and understanding on the topic in order to enhance both their own happiness and that of their children as well as their children's civil, human, and social rights. To this end, members of PFOG frequently speak to other organizations (both gay and nongay religious, professional, and civic organizations have received PFOG speakers) and appear on television and radio programs in order to discuss their experiences as parents of gays. Almost without exception, these appearances generate requests for more information about how to "deal with" homosexuality and about PFOG. A recent appearance by PFOG members on *The Phil Donohue Show* and the mention of PFOG by Abigail Van Buren in her "Dear Abby" column brought over 3,000 such requests.

There are active PFOG chapters in most major cities (New York City, Los Angeles, Denver, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Houston, Chicago, and Seattle are just a few) and the presence of PFOG is beginning to be felt in smaller communities across the country. Members of existing groups help parents in other cities and towns to start their own PFOG chapters. In order to promote communication between the individual groups and to better unify their efforts, members of the various PFOG chapters met to form the National Federation Of Parents And Friends Of Gays "supporting our gay sons and lesbian daughters" during the march on Washington, D.C., in support of gay rights held in October 1979. The goal of this national group is to fight aggressively to bring an end to the discrimination that has been imposed on their children as a result of their homosexuality. A representative of this group recently addressed Congress in support of the Weiss - Waxman gay civil rights bill (H.R. 2074).

All these accomplishments are remarkable and praiseworthy, but they are all the more so because PFOG groups are run completely by volunteers and depend entirely on the participants' donations of time and money. PFOG is simply a self-help group and it is not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic, or political group. Parents may attend PFOG meetings without being a member, but it is hoped that they would eventually choose to join the membership rolls. Parents of gays who are troubled about their children's homosexuality and who wish to attend a PFOG meeting

need only show up at such a meeting. They may actively participate in the discussion if they so desire or they may just sit and listen. They can remain anonymous if they want to or become as actively involved as they feel the strength to in order to help themselves and other parents deal with their common problem.

PFOG deserves the support not only of parents whose children are gay, but of the entire gay community as well. It is an active, dynamic, and tireless group of men and women who are devoted to achieving happiness for all gay men and lesbians and for their families. There are twice as many parents of gays as there are gays themselves, so their impact on reaching these noble goals should be obvious. More information about PFOG groups located anywhere in the country can be obtained by writing to: Parents Of Lesbians & Gay Men, P.O. Box 553, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021.

(Andrew Garfinkel was a member of last year's Membership Survey Committee.)

## Immigration

continued

"This does not mean that we are satisfied with the provision which permits the exclusion of those who choose to identify themselves as homosexual," cautioned Brydon. "However, the decision does establish a narrowly focused area of disagreement and creates a basis for litigation on the merits."

### DON KNUTSON OF GRA COMMENTS

"Of course, I am disappointed that we have been unable to convince the Justice Department to abandon enforcement of this obnoxious law altogether," commented Don Knutson, Legal Director of Gay Rights Advocates. "As a practical matter, however, today's decision is very close to total victory. No longer will any alien be subjected to interrogation, harassment or exclusion because of his or her private sexual conduct. Visas will be issued and access to this country assured regardless of one's sexual orientation. We expect to promptly challenge in the courts the remnants of the exclusionary policy which would deny entry only to those who make unsolicited and considered statements regarding their homosexual orientation. We remain confident that that challenge will succeed."

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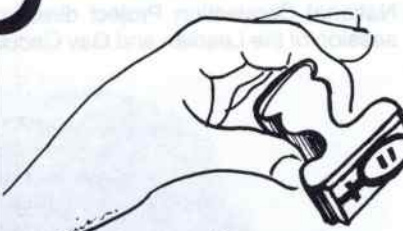
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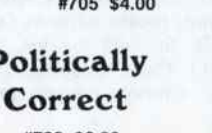
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