

Scondras *from page 1*

working on the more obvious external obstacles to getting power, such as homophobic laws and legislators, and homophobic institutions. But we as lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, must also overcome our internal obstacles to getting power.

Denial is our most powerful internal obstacle, Scondras said. We live in a form of social apartheid in this country, where we are free only as long as we "remain invisible" and "stay in our places." We devalue ourselves when we refuse to acknowledge this or insist that its not important. We eventually have enough experiences to wear down this denial.

Addictions to drugs and alcohol in the gay and lesbian community have impeded our progress. A Boston survey found that 37% of respondents suffered from addictions. We, as a community are taking responsibility for our own by establishing groups and centers for those with addictions.

The need for approval, Scondras asserted, keeps us from getting power. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are on an "endless search" for the approval that has been denied us because of our orientation. When getting power requires "rocking the boat," we as approval seekers are reticent to do it.

Pretending we're straight, although it has its advantages in allowing us to get ahead in a straight world, has left us stuck deeper in our double lives. Rather than using our energy to get power, we are using it to hide ourselves and to control the behavior of other lesbians and gay men so that we as a community can "pass for straight." These obstacles, while protecting us from a hostile world, no longer serve us well.

Scondras also criticized the heterosexual "religion," described as "the deification of the traditional American family." The basic heterosexual belief is that, "the object of life is to propagate and that nature has dictated that job to heterosexual couples in a traditional family." We as lesbians and gay men are considered "fundamentally defective" because we don't participate in this.

In response to this belief Scondras said, we need to "expand our concept of the family to include all people who commit themselves to each other in an emotional and financial way," because the traditional American family doesn't exist. We also must understand that the purpose of life is not to propagate but to enjoy life, and to improve the quality of life so that others may enjoy life.

Scondras ended on a positive note by encouraging us to "be ourselves" and to

"give the problem back to the people who have it." Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are realizing that we deserve more. We are defining ourselves and valuing ourselves. Scondras says, "Dance where you want, with whoever you want, and watch others react."

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cial management of the Task Force, and is actively involved in long-term planning and setting policy directions for the organization. NGLTF's Board is committed by its by-laws to reflect gender parity and racial diversity. There is also a strong commitment to geographic diversity. All NGLTF Board members make a commitment to raise at least \$1500 dollars a year for the organization; to attend quarterly Board meetings held around the country; and to work with Board and staff on a variety of projects.

All persons interested in the positions should send a letter and resume to NGLTF Board Nominations Committee, NGLTF, 1517 U Street NW, Washington DC 20009. An application form will be sent to interested persons and further contact made to the candidates by the Nominations Committee.

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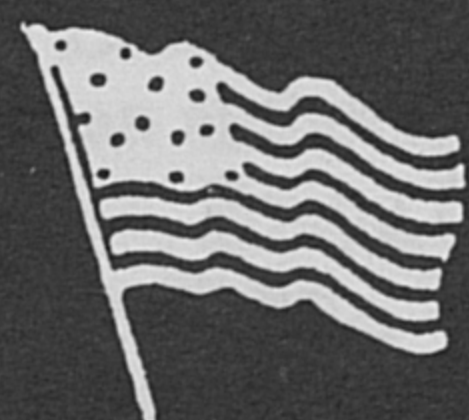
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