

# National Gay Plank Proposed<sup>5</sup>

Members of the National Convention Project are spearheading efforts to ensure that the 1980 Democratic and Republican conventions include gay rights planks.

The National Convention Project has drafted, with the support of other gay groups, a proposed plank based upon the demands of the Oct. 14 National March on Washington.

The project members feel that it is necessary for at least one major party to adopt a gay plank before pro-gay legislation can be passed on a federal level.

Groups involved in the project include: Gay Rights National Lobby; National Gay Task Force; Lesbian Caucus of the National Organization for Women; and the National Coalition of Black Gays.

For information on the delegate selection procedures, contact the N.C. Democratic Headquarters at (919) 821-2777, the N.C. Republican Headquarters at (919) 828-0678, or:

National Convention Project  
1606 - 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (202) 462-4255.

## ☆ PROPOSED GAY PLATFORM PLANK ☆

*We affirm the right of all lesbian and gay Americans to full participation in the social, political and economic life of the country, without fear of prejudice or reprisals based on sexual orientation.*

*To support this commitment and give life to this principle, we call for an executive order, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all government employment and government programs, and further we support the enactment of legislation to protect the civil rights of gay people and the repeal of all laws which are used to stigmatize persons on the basis of sexual orientation.*

## Scandinavian Self-help Groups Push For Political Change

The self-help movement in the U.S. is a very old concept, and there are more than one and one-half million self-help groups.

According to UNC-G Professor Tom Fitzgerald, although the self-help movement is virtually unknown in Sweden and Finland, gay self-help groups have developed in reaction to social attitudes towards homosexuality.

"Self-help groups are a type of support system, which tends to flourish in areas of isolation, especially among stigmatized groups," Fitzgerald said to over 30 people at the Jan. 21 CGA program meeting.

"The self-help movement reflects human needs for affiliation and community with folks who share similar lives. Self-help groups put nurturance back into social institutions.

"A self-help group is a voluntary small group to give mutual aid for

special purposes. It is usually started by peers who provide emotional support. Many self-help groups are cause-oriented."

Although many Americans may view Sweden and Finland as similar societies, attitudes towards gay people are very different in the two countries.

"Sweden is open and liberal, whereas in Finland, by law, homosexuality is treated as an illness, and people are not supposed to talk about it," Fitzgerald says.

Begun as a local chapter of a Danish group in 1950, the Sexual Equality Group in Sweden has expanded to 13 chapters and has become politically active.

"It's major accomplishments are that homosexuality is no longer illegal in Sweden and the age of consent has been changed to 15 years of age.

(SCANDINAVIAN, cont. p. 13)