

Equality • Vision • Action

You are invited to
A Conference for
Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals
& People Who Support Us

Conference Goal: *To create a shared vision
and action plan to promote equality*

No experts here. All participants will be equal
in the process at this Search Conference
facilitated by Len Leritz.

Saturday, October 9, 1993
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Masonic Temple Building
1119 S.W. Park, Portland

Cost: \$15 (includes lunch). Please make
your reservation by September 24th.
Limited to 150 participants.

Call 503/775-5920
for more information

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Conference Registration Form

Name _____

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Organization _____

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Checks payable to: **Advocates for Gay and Lesbian Equality**
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national news



Torrie Osborn is standing arm in arm with Bill Clinton at a historic meeting with other gay and lesbian leaders from organizations, such as, the March on Washington and the Human Rights Campaign Fund.

Osborn resigns NGLTF position

Gay leadership meltdown in Washington raises big questions

by Bob Roehr

Torie Osborn announced her resignation as executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in a letter to the board of directors dated Sept. 3. It will become effective Nov. 1. This continues the leadership instability at NGLTF which began in May of last year when Urvashi Vaid announced her retirement after four years of leadership.

Osborn said, "I came to Washington because my interests are to help with strategic thinking, framing an agenda, public speaking and articulation of where the lesbian and gay movement is going.

"The times have changed and exploded, partly due to my leadership but largely due to the times. This organization has just gone through a rapid expansion and the internal management demands, the pull inside, the day-to-day realities of being executive director managing an exploding organization did not fit with the woman who came to Washington to do big-picture strategic thinking and speaking.

"We've become a victim of our own success, not just me but the movement's success, and I'm plowed under . . . The bottom line is that the growth in the organization created a whole series of internal management demands that just don't match my interests."

Elizabeth Birch, co-chair of the NGLTF board, said that the mismatch began to become apparent once people caught their breaths after the March on Washington. "Torie and I together, as well as some other key board members that are close to Torie, we began to notice this, that it wasn't working, that the mix was wrong and that Torie was frustrated.

Some on the NGLTF staff were also frustrated with Osborn. She brought a strong executive management style to an organization which has traditionally run on more of a consensus model.

In less than six months she created two new positions and hired three major staff members without following established administrative procedures for advertising and filling those positions. Osborn discussed in detail her reasons for doing so and concluded by saying, "I think that there are times when the executive director gets to hire whoever the hell she wants."

"I think she left some people spinning," conceded Birch. She supported Osborn's choices but said, "the methodology could have been better thought through."

The most contentious of those new hires was David Smith, who recently began work as director of communications, a post he held under Osborn at the Community Center in Los Angeles. Several on staff question both the way he was hired and his competence. Smith held a similar position with the short-lived Campaign for Military Service, the coalition effort on lifting the military ban.

Osborn informally proposed a structural change that would create a senior administrative position to handle internal chores, leaving her free to travel, speak and work on broader issues. She said that "as it was floated around [to some board members], it was clear that people just weren't ready for it."

Birch added that the board "hasn't even addressed it yet." She expects they will discuss possible structural changes at their next meeting, in Detroit, in September, 10-11, but acknowledged they are unlikely to move as quickly and as far as Osborn would have liked.

Osborn began seriously discussing resignation with some of the board leadership at a strategic planning session in San Francisco in mid-July, at the same time she initiated discussions of possible structural changes. She denied that resignation was a negotiation ploy to influence her call for the structural changes, saying that the two