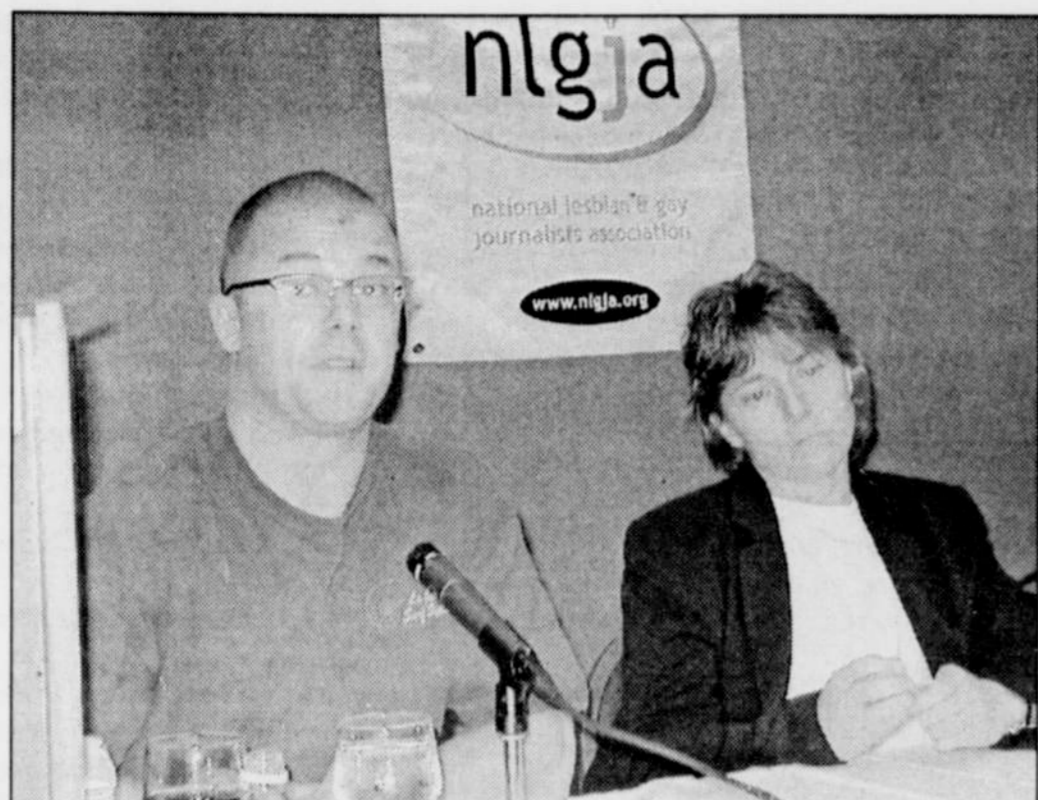


NATIONAL news

Andrew Sullivan (left), former editor of *The New Republic*, and Lisa Keen of *The Washington Blade* and *The New York Blade News*



"It may not be a deeper one, but it certainly is an easier one to get across to the country at this moment," interjected moderator Charles Kaiser, author of *The Gay Metropolis*.

"This is something we really need to ask for," said Sullivan. "It is a fundamental part of citizenship that is invested in the Declaration of Independence and equality under the law. If you actually believe that, you might take it seriously, instead of this constant apologizing for what is this most basic civil right."

Sullivan also accused the Human Rights Campaign, a national gay political group, of being "scared" of marriage: "They need to get over their fears and lack of self-esteem on this matter and demand it."

"If George Bush is elected president, the welcome mat at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will be snatched away."

—Jonathan Capehart

Detroit News columnist Deb Price and her partner, Joyce, celebrated their 10th anniversary by applying to the state of Maryland for a marriage license, and of course were refused.

"Five years later, we will be going to Vermont to be parties to a civil union," Price said.

The matter of the Millennium March on Washington, held three days after the forum, was also addressed.

"I get a little fed up with my forty-something friends who say, 'Why do we need to march again?' who have forgotten how exhilarating it was to us [when we were] in our 20s," said Kaiser. All agreed that it is always positive for gay

people to get together in large numbers. There is something empowering about such gatherings said Keen. Sullivan called the culture "post-march."

"The question is whether marching as such is a relevant tool at this particular moment," he added.

Kaiser said the Internet is "a revolutionary tool," especially for gay and lesbian people "in the hinterlands."

He believes "it is changing gay life at least as much as it is changing life in the rest of the country."

Price did not minimize the impact of the Internet, but she added that "there is something very uplifting about being around other gay people" that she doesn't get in cyberspace.

Sullivan railed against money: "One is never asked by HRC to come and talk about the issues. One is asked, 'Who do you know in Hollywood who can give us some money?' It is all about shoveling money out of gay pockets into the Democratic Party or these organizations."

He said that fund raising "requires demons," and the religious right wing fulfills that role for gay organizations. Sullivan called the arrangement politically counterproductive, because it inhibits building bridges to segments of the diverse religious fundamentalist community that could be supportive of gay issues.

Price, meanwhile, said the meeting several months ago between the Rev. Mel White, who is gay, and the Rev. Jerry Falwell stimulated many evangelicals "to start thinking about gay people in a new way.... If we focus on common ground, it seems to me we can move forward."

■ BOB ROEHR is a free-lance writer based in Washington, D.C.

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