

Acceptance To Present Grab-Bag Of Programs On January Tuesdays

Acceptance, the Charlotte gay group that meets weekly on Tuesday nights (8 p.m. at Park Road Baptist Church) will present a grab-bag of programs in January:

Jan. 3 A member of Acceptance will present a number of videotaped television programs of interest to gay men and lesbians including a recent Phil Donahue show.

Jan. 10 A gay man who sells insurance will address the group about special problems gay men and lesbians face in buying insurance. Questions from the audience will be welcomed.

Jan. 17 Dr. Larry Lantz, sexuality professor at UNCC, will present findings from surveys he took last summer testing the effectiveness of gay and lesbian speakers on his students' opinions of homosexual persons.

Jan. 24 A member of the staff of the Voluntary Action Center will focus on ways to become involved in Charlotte's volunteer helping organizations.

Jan. 31 "Gay Rap." These periodic Acceptance rap sessions feature frank, open discussion of issues concerning gay men and lesbians and may include personal problems, health, political concerns, psychological concerns, etc. The group usually breaks up into smaller groups of 10 to 12 people on rap nights.

QCQ Elections Set This Month

Elections for membership to the Board of Directors of the Queen City Quordinators (QCQ) will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 10. The meeting is open to the gay/lesbian public and anyone interested in serving on the board is invited to attend.

The meeting will be held at the SANE Center, 2125 Commonwealth Ave. (the Labor Building) in Charlotte.

Eight at-large board members will be elected for a term of one year. Four other board members will be selected by the four member organizations of QCQ to serve as their delegates. Officers will be chosen from the 12 board members at the Jan. 26 meeting.

QCQ begins its fourth year as the fund-raising arm of Charlotte's gay/lesbian community. For more information, contact Jeff Campbell at 372-7121.

Caucus Gets Meeting Place

Charlotte's Lambda Political Caucus now has a regular, accessible meeting place, thanks to a new member. Planning sessions, open to gay men, lesbians and their friends, are now held on the second Monday of each month at 8 p.m. in the clubhouse of the Cardinal Woods South apartments.

From I-77 (exit 4), to east on Nations Ford Road about a half mile. The apartment complex entrance will be on the left and the clubhouse is directly beyond.

Charlotte's only ga/lesbian political body has accomplished much in the past two years and has the potential to make many important gains in the future. Unfortunately, it needs more community support and will have to be disbanded unless more people get involved.

The next meeting will be Jan. 8. Please try to attend.

QCQ Meeting Dates Altered For January

Because of January's production of the play "Last Summer at Bluefish Cove," Queen City Quordinators' planning meetings will be held on Thursday, Jan. 12, and Thursday, Jan. 26, rather than the usual dates of the first and third Thursdays.

Both meetings are doubly important because they will feature election of the governing board of QCQ for 1984. The 8 p.m. meetings will be held at the SANE Center, 2125 Commonwealth Ave. All interested gay men, lesbians and their friends are invited to attend.

Meetings on the first and third Thursdays will resume in February.

Getting Involved Can Be Road To Personal Growth

An open letter to the Charlotte gay/lesbian community.

By STAN HURLBUT

Recently, while looking over the "men's personals" in *The Front Page*, a line of an ad caught my eye. Someone felt that one of his positive qualifications for seeking a relationship was "... am not involved in the gay community." How odd, I thought. Why, most people I know would consider that a **negative** qualification.

Many gay and lesbian persons might like to attend an Acceptance meeting, go to an MCC service, sit in on a QCQ or Lambda Political Caucus meeting, or even volunteer for the switchboard. But they don't. What's holding them back?

To try to find out, I have questioned several acquaintances who are reluctant to get involved with any of these groups. (By the way, many of these persons frequent bars or bookstores and sometimes say they're tired of the bar/bookstore scene.) Reasons frequently stated for noninvolvement is something like, "What if someone sees me there?" or "I'm afraid someone will find out I was there."

First of all, someone **will** see them there — a whole bunch of gay and lesbian people who may have once felt the same reluctance to get involved before walking through the door for the first time. Secondly, the chance that a

boss, coworker, nongay friend, mother, father, brother, sister, great aunt, etc. will find out they were there is practically **zero**. All these groups respect a person's privacy. Their membership list, mailing lists, etc., are strictly confidential. No one but gay brothers and sisters ever sees the names on a mailing list.

There are, by conservative estimate, about 30,000 gay/lesbian persons in Mecklenburg County (assume that about half of these are out of the closet to one degree or another). Yet, only about 1.3%, maybe 200, are actively involved in Charlotte's gay/lesbian groups. This means 98.7% aren't actively involved in any group!

Please stop and consider for a moment how so few are helping so many. The publication you are reading right now is a perfect example.

Consider this: attending any group could be a big step in personal growth and in getting rid of lingering guilt feelings or shame imposed by religion or society. It is only in the mind that the guilt exists. I am free of this guilt, due in part to getting involved with some of these groups and rubbing elbows with gay men and lesbian women who are comfortable with whom and what they are. It's a positive experience.

If you haven't done so yet, give it a try. People who join up only help themselves and others by their participation.