

Q-NOTES

October 1990

PRIDE IN PRINT

TO ADVERTISE: 364 1467

Switchboard, Charlotte (704) 525-6128
 AIDS Hotline, Charlotte (704) 333-AIDS
 PFLAG Hotline, Charlotte (704) 364-1474
 AIDS Hotline, Columbia (803) 779-PALS
 Switchboard, Wilmington (919) 675-9222

BEST BETS

- Oct. 1 Join the Monday Night Bowling League!
- Oct. 2 8p First Tuesday Special w/WOW
- Oct. 7 8:30p New Life MCC Potluck after Service
- Oct. 8 **Last Day to Register to Vote**
- Oct. 9 Fun N' Games Night at Liaisons
- Oct. 13-14 8:30a South/SE Lesbian Meeting
- Oct. 16 Lambda Connections Meeting for Business/Service Organizations
- Oct. 27 7p MCC Charlotte Pot Luck Supper
- Oct. 31 Halloween Parties EVERYWHERE!
- Nov. 2-4 GLAD District Conference

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America 'Comes Out' In October

By David Stout
 Q-Notes Staff

Once again, October 11 has been designated National Coming Out Day. This will be the third year that NCOD will be observed by gays and lesbians all over the country.

The purpose of NCOD is two-fold. One of its goals is to raise the awareness of the heterosexual community concerning the degree to which they inter-act with homosexuals and simply don't realize it. NCOD is a powerful way to break down gay invisibility in the "straight" world.

Secondly, NCOD allows "closeted" homosexuals the chance to see the great number of self-identified gays and lesbians around them, thus offering a feeling of commonality and community to those people who would

otherwise think, "I am the only one."

National Coming Out Day is very important for all gay and lesbian people in America. It is the equivalent of July 4: it is Independence Day. On October 11 there is a solidarity that binds the many diverse factions of the homosexual community together — We're Gay and We're Proud Of It.

Here are ten suggested ways to observe NCOD:

1. Introduce your partner to people as your partner.
2. Place a picture of your partner on your desk and truthfully answer co-workers' questions about the identity of the person.
3. Send your partner flowers, candy, balloons, etc., to his/her workplace (the recipient should also be honest about the sender's identity).

4. Tell one family member you are gay or lesbian.

5. Tell one friend you are gay or lesbian.

6. Hold your partner's hand in public.

7. Wear clothing or buttons which state gay-positive messages.

8. Write a letter to your elected representatives asking them to introduce gay/lesbian rights legislation (sign your name).

9. Write a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper about the status of gays and lesbians in America (sign your name).

10. Make a donation to a gay-positive organization.

Liaisons Hosts Fun N' Games Fundraiser

Tired of playing the same old games in bars?

Here's a few you probably haven't thought of lately: Twister, Scrabble and Mystery Date.

They will be featured Oct. 9 at Liaisons as part of "Fun N' Games Night," a fundraiser for the First Tuesday gay and lesbian activist group.

The event, which runs from 7:30 to 10 p.m. in the bar's downstairs level, also will offer Balderdash; Checkers; Uno; Win, Lose or Draw and Backgammon.

The cost is \$3.50 for First Tuesday members and \$4 for nonmembers. Light refreshments will be served.

First Tuesday organizers encourage people to attend, get involved and show support for Charlotte's gay and lesbian community.

Liaisons is located at 316 Rensselaer Ave., Charlotte. For more information on Fun N' Games Night, call Jim Fulton at 531-8993.

First Tuesday meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at St. Peter's Episcopal Church at Seventh and Tryon Streets in Charlotte. For more information, call Rod Thornton at 376-2320 or Chris Werte at 376-6352.

Elgin Kenna: 'What Dreams Are Made Of'

By David Stout
 Q-Notes Staff

Imagine what it must be like to meet, and become friends with, a world-reknowned celebrity.

Now, further imagine that you not only meet this celebrity but that you get to travel with and work for them in a high-visibility stage production.

Well, this is the exact "stuff dreams are made of" situation that Charlotte native Elgin Kenna is in.

For the past year and a half, Elgin has been touring with pop music idol Cher. And the really amazing part of all this is that he not only performs on stage with Cher but that he performs as Cher.

In 1978 the Odyssey Nightclub, which has now been closed down for a number of years, was holding an open talent show to spotlight some of the best local talent when a young man named Elgin Kenna decided to enter. For his talent, he had decided that he would try his hand at female impersonation.

But not just impersonation of any type, he had decided that he would attempt to "do a character." This is much harder because everyone is usually familiar with the celebrity who is being impersonated and can judge you more critically than an impersonator who is just trying to give the illusion of being a woman.

Elgin decided to impersonate Cher because, "I like her and I thought I could do it."

The judges agreed, naming Elgin as first runner-up to a girl who sang live. However, no one could have anticipated how that one night would change the rest of his life.

Steve Freeman was co-owner of the Odyssey and saw Elgin's performance the night of the talent show and was sufficiently impressed to offer the fledgling entertainer a job as a member of the house cast at the club. Elgin accepted and his alter-ego Kelly Almond came into being.

With the exception of a six-month stint at Scorpio, Elgin performed for the next six years at the Odyssey until his partner got transferred to Greensboro, North Carolina, by his employer in 1983. Naturally, this meant that Elgin, too, was moving.

During his stay in Greensboro, Elgin further honed his Cher impersonation and eventually used the character impression to win the title of Miss Gay Greensboro.

Then in March 1985, Elgin was put upon the path that led him to Cher.

A friend of Elgin's named Michael Andrews (this name will sound familiar to aficionados of female impersonation as Andrews was the first person to ever hold two national pageant titles) called to say that



Elgin Kenna as Cher at XTC nightclub in Greensboro

a female impersonation/cabaret show was being put together for New York, based on the original (running at the time in Atlantic City, New Jersey) called "An Evening at La Cage." And they needed a Cher.

"La Cage" was a club act held at Bally's Park Place where female impersonators who did characters would come and perform for the audience as that character. There were a number of entertainers there culled from the best in the country. And the response to the show had been so overwhelming that a decision was made to put together a second ensemble for New York City. By the end of the month, Elgin had auditioned for, and won a spot as Cher in the new troupe.

Unfortunately, audiences in New York didn't respond to the show like they did in Atlantic City and after just three months, it closed.

Elgin packed his things and returned home to Greensboro to map out a future for himself but no sooner had he gotten home than a representative of the Atlantic City group was calling to ask him to join them.

So in July, Elgin once again gathered up his belongings and moved to New Jersey to join the original "La Cage." It was a move that brought the entertainer a steady job performing six days a week for the next four years.

Many good things happened to Elgin during that time; one of the best was that his Cher routine was named Best Specialty Act in the *Casino Review*.

Then one day the news came that Geraldo Rivera wanted to do an episode of his talk show on some of the entertainers from "An Evening at La Cage." Next Elgin learned that he was one of the persons chosen to do their character on the air.

Capital Cowboys Step Out In Atlanta

The Capital Cowboys, Raleigh's country and western dance team, two-stepped their way through Atlanta at Summer Round-up '90, August 24, 25 & 26.

The three-day event, sponsored by Southern Country Atlanta, was an entire weekend of country and western music, dance and fun. The Capital Cowboys danced Friday night at Deana's and performed a special show at the Cove on Saturday night but their black hats were seen all over Atlanta. Their fancy footwork and custom outfits were real crowd pleasers.

The Cowboys have been dancing for a year now every Monday night at the Capital Corral and classes are open to all interested in C&W dancing. Newcomers are nervous at first and are afraid of missing a step but just watch the Cowboys learning a new routine and you won't feel intimidated. Everyone is just out to have fun. Come on down and have a good ole time with some good ole boys!

The show aired live in late January, 1989, and Elgin simply did what he had been doing for the past eleven years: he brought the house down.

The next morning when he walked into work at Bally's, Elgin found a telegram waiting for him. It was from Cher — she had seen the *Geraldo* show the day before and was "very impressed." Naturally, Elgin was ecstatic over the compliment, but the real news was still to come.