



Black Out

...Page 19

Pumping up with Pride

...Page 6

Vol. 9, No. 2
February 1994

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

Printed on Recycled Paper

FREE

NC Pride PAC hires new director

by David Jones
Q-Notes Staff

CARRBORO, NC—Derek Charles Livingston, a 25-year-old African-American activist with experience from Rhode Island to Florida, has been named the new executive director of NC Pride PAC, the statewide lesbian and gay political lobbying group that seeks to repeal the state crime against nature law, among other objectives. Livingston replaces Mike Nelson who resigned last year and is now an alderman in Carrboro, NC.

Bob Barret, a psychologist at UNC-Charlotte and in private practice who was recently elected chair of the Pride PAC board, said the board was very optimistic about Derek," he said, "and we particularly appreciate his articulateness, his experience in testifying before legislative bodies and his general political savvy. We are very glad to have him here."

Livingston started work on January 18 and, by all accounts, hit the ground running. In the few days he has been on the job, he has already met Governor Jim Hunt, Lt. Governor Dennis Wicker and Speaker of the House

Rep. Dan Blue at a reception, using that opportunity to talk about gay and lesbian issues, and started research voting records and legislative histories.

While Livingston's extensive experience, both as a gay and AIDS activist, would make him a candidate for many positions around the country, when asked why he applied for the job in North Carolina, he admits, "Doing this work in Jesse Helms' backyard has a lot of appeal."

Livingston reports that Pride PAC is planning to move its offices within the next few weeks from Carrboro to Raleigh to be closer to legislative and administrative offices, and that he is already connected with a group of progressive lobbyist that has monthly meetings to discuss issues and share information. He reports that

building a strong relationship with other progressive organizations is a high priority.

In addition to planning for future legislative sessions in Raleigh, he is also beginning immediately on some administrative issues such as persuading the state's Crime Control Bureau to renew its membership in a national victims-compensation organization (the state dropped out when it learned that the group supports compensating gay and lesbian victims of violence).

Prior to coming to North Carolina, Livingston was a gay outreach educator with the Health Crisis Network in Miami, FL, managing HIV prevention and education

Continued on page 19



Derek Livingston

MCSP folds; switchboard will continue

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—The city's gay community was caught by surprise in January when Metrolina Community Service Project (MCSP), an umbrella organization for four smaller groups, announced that it was reorganizing into one of its sub-parts, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard.

According to a press release, MCSP was created in 1987 to provide "operational support, tax-exempt status, and financial stability" for small, newly developed organizations. MCSP also absorbed the Switchboard at that time, although the information and referral line had been operating since 1981.

As a result of the restructuring, MCSP will no longer oversee Queen City Friends, a lesbian social group, or the Gay Men's Support Group, but decided to continue to sponsor the Speaker's Bureau.

The MCSP Board of Directors met for the last time on January 15. At that meeting, members voted to close the group down and re-form as the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Charlotte. Immediately following the final MCSP meeting was the inaugural meeting of the new organization. Sharon Simpson, the Switchboard's former director, was named the new Board President and Steve DuPrey was elected Vice-President.

In the past, MCSP was one of Charlotte's best funded gay and lesbian organizations. Its annual Casino Night was the biggest fundraiser of any gay group and also considered one of the year's social highlights. Unfortunately, state Alcohol Law Enforcement (A.L.E.) officials shut down the event in 1992, claiming that it violated North Carolina gambling laws.

After considering its options, the MCSP Board of Directors decided not to pursue legal action against A.L.E., even though a major children's charity fundraiser had utilized a similar casino theme only days earlier with no problems. Some community members criticized the decision as an example of buckling under and charged that MCSP, whose very name was a sore spot for some people due to its non-committal wording, was rife with internalized homophobia.

The group's image wasn't enhanced any when Jim DiMartino, Board President at that time, wrote a piece of commentary for the June 1993 MCSP newsletter wherein he railed against the "dancing drag queens, leather lesbos and flitting fairies" at the 1993 March on Washington.

Support for the organization seemed to dwindle from there. In July, MCSP had its first ever negative fundraiser, a country/western themed dance, and a follow-up mail appeal for funds netted much less than was hoped for.

DiMartino rebuffed the idea that either his letter ("In total, I only got three letters...I thought it was interesting that only [three] people were interested or involved enough to respond.") or MCSP's degree of openness ("I don't see where MCSP, not being a political organization, needed to be in the forefront. I don't think that hurt us. We forget that some people want to help but don't want to be out.") had much to do with the decline. But Simpson

Continued on page 20

Creating Change audit finds surplus of funds

by David Jones
Q-Notes Staff

DURHAM—The North Carolina Host Committee for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute's national Creating Change Conference is winding up its work with a financial surplus of around \$8000. It will distribute that money soon to several other groups and create a scholarship fund to help gay and lesbian teens attend next year's conference in Dallas, TX. It may be the first time that a host committee has been able to provide financial support to other gay and lesbian organizations in the state where the annual conference was held.

The local host committee of 39 people has worked for over a year coordinating local arrangements for the conference which brought over 1400 activists from all over the country, and several other countries, to Durham last November. The committee was co-chaired by Mark Donohue and Doris Taylor, both Triangle-area activists.

Donohue reports that the surplus resulted

primarily from the large level of local support for the conference and the committee's work. The committee sent a direct-mail appeal for financial support which generated a large number of \$50 and \$100 gifts. The mailing went to 1300 people and businesses. In addition to individuals, major contributors included a number of restaurants, book stores, service agencies, retail shops and grocery stores. He said that the community dance held during the conference brought in more than expected. It was budgeted to net \$2000 for the committee's work, but produced \$5000 instead. "The difference was made by a tremendous response from local lesbians and gay men who came to it in addition to people attending the conference," he says, "and it was a big and very pleasant surprise."

Officials at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's office in Washington, DC could not recall another Creating Change Conference in which the local host committee was able to generate a surplus to help other

groups. The plan to provide a scholarship fund to support teens who want to attend the next meeting seemed to draw a particularly positive response from Task Force spokesperson David Smith who called it "fantastic." A contingent of teenage lesbians and gay men at the Durham conference pressed the Task Force and 1993 attendees to find more ways to support teens on a wide variety of issues. The teen scholarship will be administered jointly by OutRight! Triangle Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Youth, and Stand Out - Fayetteville Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Youth.

The organizations that will receive financial support from the host committee include the NC Pride Marching Band, NC Pride PAC for Gay and Lesbian Equality, Our Own Place, OutRight!, P-FLAG-Triangle, Stand Out and the Triangle Bisexual Network. The specific levels of support for each group will be determined by a survey of host committee members which was being conducted at press time.

Jacksonville bar owner stabbed by Marine

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

JACKSONVILLE, NC—Friend's Lounge owner Danny Leonard was stabbed four times on Dec. 22 by an active-duty New River Air Station marine. Leonard claimed the attack was motivated by robbery, but the defendant told police that amyl nitrite, commonly known as "poppers," drove him to do it.

Leonard told Q-Notes he had been "seeing" Pfc. Raul Fernandez, 20, "off and on" so it wasn't unusual when Fernandez stayed past closing that night. "I was going to do paperwork that evening, and he was getting ready to go home on leave for [Christmas], and I asked him what he was doing out so late, and he said he was bored so he stayed. And after everybody left, I closed the bar up."

Leonard said he put the night's earnings and a .38 caliber revolver in a money bag and placed it on the bar's beer cooler. At that point, he and Fernandez started "fooling

around."

Within a short while, they decided to move to the stage where Leonard said he laid out a quilt, some condoms, lubricant and a bottle of amyl nitrite, used as a sexual stimulant, and then both men removed their pants and shoes.

The stories diverge here.

Leonard said that he remembered he hadn't locked the front door and went to do so. When he returned, he bent over to straighten a corner of the quilt and felt pain shoot through his back. Looking into the mirrored wall, he said he saw Fernandez pull a knife from his back. "I started to come up, and he caught me again with the knife in the shoulder blade. I pushed him, and I got up on my feet, and he did, too, real quick, and I kept hollering, 'Raul, why are you doing this?'"

Fernandez responded by cutting Leonard twice more, leaving one gash across his left cheek and another beside his left eye, permanently severing nerves and the tear duct.

Leonard said he then began to run. "I finally managed to get away from him, and I went running up toward the bar throwing the chairs behind me, trying to, you know, trip him up, and I got to the front door, and I got it open, and ran out. And when I turned to look back to see if he was following me, I saw him go behind the bar and get my money bag. All I could think was, 'My God, he's gone after my gun.' So I took off running up through the woods and whenever a car would come by, I would jump out and try to stop it."

After a few attempts, he was able to flag down a passing police officer who stopped and called for an ambulance. Leonard said he told the officer that Fernandez had taken his money and handgun and was then driven to a nearby hospital for surgery.

Police officers recovered the money bag several days after the attack, Leonard stated. "They did find the money bag about five or

Continued on page 28