



Christian party line

...Page 4

Fun with  
Lily and Jane

...Page 7

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## Two gay men murdered in Mississippi

by Dan Van Mourik  
Q-Notes Staff

LAUREL, MS—Late Friday night, October 7, two gay men were murdered "execution style" near Camp Sister Spirit, a feminist-lesbian retreat near Ovett, MS. Both the Jones County Sheriff's Department and Laurel Police Department are working on the killings since investigators do not know exactly where the slayings occurred.

The bodies of Robert Walter, 31, and Joseph Shoemaker, 24, were discovered Saturday morning by two women walking along unused railroad tracks just north of the Laurel city limits and about 30 minutes from Camp Sister Spirit. Laurel police investigator Lee Knight said both men were shot at least once in the front of the head with a small-caliber weapon. Knight also stated the men were apparently killed between midnight and 1:00am, their bodies then dumped next to the tracks.

Investigators said the underwear of one victim had been pulled down around his ankles, but no motive has been determined.

Brenda Henson, one of the founders of Camp Sister Spirit, believes the motive is homophobia. She went one step further, blaming opposition groups for encouraging violence against gays and lesbians.

"By their propaganda, by their meetings, I feel they give a green light to those that would kill and hurt gay and lesbian people," Henson

said. "It is an atmosphere of hate that has been created here."

Camp Sister Spirit has been at the center of a 10-month string of violent incidents. Over 64 acts of violence and intimidation have been reported, including a dead dog and feminine napkin draped over the camp mailbox, gun shots fired at caretakers, bombs detonated on the property, armed men patrolling the camp's borders, and telephoned death threats. In fact, gun shots were fired across the property only six hours after the bodies were found near Laurel.

"We're looking at it [the double murder] as a hate crime and a possible escalation against Camp Sister Spirit. We are going on 24-hour alert," said camp caretaker Kathy Wilson.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) has requested that Attorney General Janet Reno oversee a federal investigation into the murders, mediate between the local gay community and law enforcement officials, and monitor the action of Jones County Sheriff Maurice Hooks. NGLTF first acted on behalf of Camp Sister Spirit in December 1993, requesting that the Community Relations Service (CRS) mediate between the camp and the local community. Reno responded by authorizing CRS to intervene. That action marked the first time the agency had mediated community tensions based on sexual orientation.

"After months of asking, requesting and

demanding federal intervention in central Mississippi, we achieved this historic response, but it was not enough to save the lives of these two men," said NGLTF Executive Director Peri Jude Radecic.

The tension in Laurel and Ovett directly following the murders was extremely high. Todd Emerson and April Richards of G/L Friendly, an advocacy group for gay Mississippians, were in Laurel to monitor the situation. Emerson said, "We have a gun, and we have our hotel door barred. The sheriff has already said we'll be chased out of Jones County."

A 17-year-old African-American male was arrested in connection with the murders on Thursday, October 13, but that did not lay fears to rest.

San Francisco-based hate violence experts Jill Tregor, Executive Director of the Intergroup Clearinghouse, and Lester Olmstead-Rose, Executive Director of Community United Against Violence, were dispatched to Laurel by NGLTF to help focus national attention on the murders and to develop anti-violence organizing.

"Our job now, and the task before the gay and lesbian community everywhere, is to continue to insist that the Department of Justice intercede in this terrible tragedy to ensure that justice is served. An arrest has been made, but there are glaring discrepancies in the sheriff's

Continued on page 27

## MAP Seminar accents positive

by Gene Poteat  
Special to Q-Notes

How does HIV become AIDS? What is meant by an "open label" drug study? How do I go about applying for disability? Just what are alternative therapies? Should I fire my doctor? For those affected by HIV or AIDS the generation of questions and the quest for answers is endless. "Information is the most powerful tool people with HIV have," says Adam Robinson, Director of Edu-



Barbara Rein

cation for Metro-

lina AIDS Project (MAP). In response to the needs of the newly diagnosed, for long term survivors of HIV infection, including their families and caregivers, and for accurate and current information, MAP is sponsoring PLUS (Positive Living for US), a weekend long seminar, November 11, 12 and 13, that according to Robinson, "...is designed to inspire and encourage people to take control of their health

Continued on page 4

## Town meetings scheduled

CHARLOTTE—Almost 100 people enjoyed the second annual National Coming Out Day (NCO) Community Dinner on Tuesday October 11 at the Unitarian Church. Sponsored by NC Pride 1994 as their official final event, those assembled, in addition to enjoying great food, heard brief statements from 16 community groups represented.

"NC Pride 1994 has had a wonderful ripple effect," said Sue Henry, Pride co-chair, "in that people seem energized to continue the work to make things better for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community. The Switchboard recently organized a statewide meeting, Time Out Youth is planning a statewide meeting, and other groups benefited from the publicity generated around the weekend."

To capitalize on this energy, Henry and co-chair Dan Kirsch have been talking to several leaders in the community about "What's next?", and have scheduled three town meetings to involve the community in the discussion.

"We have some choices to make about how we grow as a community," said Kirsch. "Many people still ask 'What is our community—do we have a community?' We have lots of options to discuss about the next steps that will eliminate fear, make us visible and generate positive images."

The three town meetings will all use the same format, so a person need only attend one. The time of all three meetings is from 7:00-8:45pm, and the dates and places are:

- Sunday, November 6 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1900 The Plaza, co-hosted by Lutherans Concerned;

- Wednesday, November 9 at the Main Branch of the Public Library, 6th & College Streets, co-hosted by the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Charlotte; and

- Tuesday, November 15 at Christ Episcopal Church, 1412 Providence Road, co-hosted

by Queer Conversations.

At the NCOD Community Dinner, an informal survey was taken to prepare for the Town Meetings. Of 81 surveys returned, it showed that 90% are registered to vote, 73% make a financial contribution to local groups, and 68% volunteer time with local groups. Regarding the question, "How out are you to friends, family and at work?," 20% responded they are totally out everywhere to everyone, and 74% are mostly or somewhat out to friends, 64% are mostly or somewhat out to family and 54% are mostly or somewhat out at work.

The survey also asked if it was important to have a gay or lesbian community center in Charlotte — 79% said it was either urgent, very important, or important to have a community center. The survey also asked what issues the community should address. A wide variety of responses were given, including: discrimination, job security, homophobia, a local rights ordinance, overcoming factions, overturn the Crimes Against Nature law, prejudice, and unity within the community.

"These Town Meetings give us a way to have a more effective voice," stated Tonda Taylor, executive director of Time Out Youth. Taylor and other community leaders will be on hand to answer questions about their area of expertise.

We hope we can get a consensus on two to four issues," explained Kirsch, "then form short-term task forces to address those issues. It's important to us to involve a lot of new people in the process, and we hope this method will enable people to feel good about participating. And if they feel they contributed, the community benefits not only from solving some problems, but from encouraging new leadership as well." The town meetings are open to everyone. Questions can be addressed to Sue Henry at 704/332-7473 (days) or Dan Kirsch at 704/536-1372.

## Pride PAC issues fall endorsements

RALEIGH—North Carolina Pride PAC (Political Action Committee) for Lesbian and Gay Equality's board of directors has voted to endorse a record 41 candidates for the fall elections. This includes a re-endorsement of 27 candidates endorsed in the spring who won their primary bids; 14 additional candidates have been endorsed or recommended for their fall bids. The board also re-issued its support for Jim Fuller for Supreme Court.

Pride PAC has introduced a new system to better communicate candidates' support of the issues delineated in Pride PAC's Survey to Candidates. The new system gives candidates one of three recommendation levels: E (Endorse Fully), R (Recommend) or P (Preferred). A candidate receiving an "E"—the

highest level of recommendation—returned a survey to Pride PAC with favorable responses. Level "R" indicates a candidate who may not have scored as well on their survey but did well on Crime Against Nature revision, Pride PAC's key issue. An "R" may also indicate a candidate who did not return a survey but is an incumbent who (1) has received endorsement in the past, and/or (2) has a good voting record or history with gay issues. The third level of recommendation, "P," indicates that the candidate will clearly be better for us than his or her opponent.

Pride PAC plans to donate over \$6,000 to candidates this fall. The general election is November 8.

Clip & Carry

### North Carolina PRIDE PAC 1994 General Election Voter Guide

#### Supreme Court

Jim Fuller ..... E

#### Senate

S7 Luther Henry Jordan (D) ..... E  
S12 Virginia Foxx (R) ..... E  
S13 Jeanne R. Lucas (D) ..... E  
S13 Wib Gulley (D) ..... E  
S14 Ruth E. Cook (D) ..... E  
S14 JK Sherron (D) ..... R  
S16 Fred Hobbs (D) ..... E  
S27 Donovan R. Kirby (D) ..... E  
S27 James Owen Rose (D) ..... E  
S31 Bill Martin (D) ..... E  
S32 Dot Kendall Kearns (D) ..... E  
S36 Linda Gunter (D) ..... E  
S40 Leslie Winner (D) ..... E

#### House

H13 Karen Gottovi (D) ..... E  
H19 Clyde J. Rhyne (D) ..... E  
H23 Paul Luebke (D) ..... E  
H23 Mickey Michaux (D) ..... R

H24 Joe Hackney (D) ..... E  
H24 Anne Barnes (D) ..... R  
H25 Bertha Holt (D) ..... R  
H26 Alma Adams (D) ..... E  
H35 A. Neal Smith (D) ..... E  
H48 Edith Lutz (D) ..... R  
H51 Doris Giezantanner (D) ..... R  
H52 Liston B. Ramsey (D) ..... E  
H56 Martha Alexander (D) ..... E  
H60 Beverly Earle (D) ..... E  
H61 Brad Miller (D) ..... E  
H62 Andy Penry (D) ..... E  
H64 Bob Hensley (D) ..... E  
H65 Larry Wayne Womble (D) ..... E  
H67 Warren Oldham (D) ..... E  
H68 Bill Ives (R) ..... E  
H78 Joseph Alexander (R) ..... E  
H87 Frances Cummings (D) ..... E  
H89 Mary L. Jarrell (D) ..... E  
H89 Maggie Jeffus (D) ..... E  
H93 Billy Joye (D) ..... E  
H97 Jerry Braswell (D) ..... E