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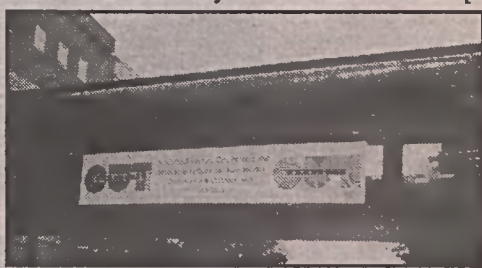
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OutCharlotte 95 surpasses expectations

by Robert Marcus James
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—The closing ceremony to OutCharlotte 95, the first-ever community cultural festival held in Charlotte, proved just how successful the event had been. Folksinger Deidre McCalla asked if she could join the cast in the finale. Artist-in-residence Paul Bonin-Rodriguez spoke about how wonderful it had been to be part of Charlotte's gay, lesbian, bisexual



The OutCharlotte 95 banner hangs on the pedestrian walkway over Trade St.

and transgender (LGBT) community for the weekend. And playwright Terrence McNally returned his honorarium to seed OutCharlotte 96 because "this [festival] has to happen again."

"It was a glorious weekend," exclaimed Jim Fulton, co-chair of the Festival Steering Committee. "We had exceptional artists who truly participated in the spirit of the festival, which was to share LGBT culture with both the gay and non-gay communi-

ties."

Planned as an annual cultural festival to celebrate the community, much of the success of OutCharlotte 95 goes to dozens of volunteers who contributed their time and expertise at events throughout the year.

While the community can expect opposition to any LGBT event, negative comments made by Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot turned out to be an added bonus for the festival. "I just don't want to elevate the gay and lesbian exposure in this community; that's my concern," said Vinroot in a television interview. He continued with, "If you ask me why, then go to San Francisco, and I think you'd know why." The newscast went on to

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Henry offers voters a choice

by Robert Marcus James
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—Citing the current leadership's failure to represent all the citizens of this city, Sue Henry, 43, a long-time gay/lesbian and women's activist, has announced her candidacy for mayor. Through a grass-roots campaign, she is asking voters who are similarly dissatisfied with the Republican and Democratic mayoral candidates to write in her name at the polls.

Henry moved to Charlotte from Boston in 1988 with her partner of nine years, Barbara Parke. With a Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of South Florida at Tampa, her first job in Charlotte was as a reference librarian at UNC-Charlotte. She left that position in 1991 to open Rising Moon Books & Beyond, an independent alternative/feminist/gay bookstore at 316 East Blvd.

Once settled in the community, Henry began participating in many local organizations devoted to positive social change. She was co-chair of the North Carolina Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Celebration held in Charlotte in June 1994 and currently serves as co-chair of the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Information Exchange, a bi-monthly gathering of representatives from Charlotte organizations who discuss issues and activities relevant to the



Sue Henry

community.

"It is important that our leadership represent all the people of our city," Henry emphatically said. "Back in 1992, I was disappointed when both of the current mayoral candidates voted against the Community Relations Committee recommendation to amend Charlotte's Public Accommodations Ordinance to bar discrimination based on sexual orientation. These men recently spoke out against OutCharlotte 95. Since they continue to speak out against one group of citizens, I felt it was important to step forward and send a message that their discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated."

"Pat McCrory's campaign slogan is 'A Safe and Affordable City'—if we assume it is to be safe for everyone, then why has he stated that he wished the gay and lesbian community did not have their recent festival in Charlotte? The same goes for Hoyle Martin who says he puts 'People Before Politics.' It sounds decidedly political to me when he excludes one group of people from participating in their community."

"Being practical, I realize that it is highly unlikely I will win this election. However, it is important to let these candidates know that we expect to be fairly represented."

A campaign committee has been formed to support Henry's candidacy. Campaign donations can be sent to: Sue Henry, Write-in for Mayor, PO Box 9481, Charlotte, NC 28299.

To cast a write-in vote in the new electronic election booths: 1) Press the gray "Write-in Selection" button. 2) Press the "Write-in Window" bar on the lower left panel — the lights will be blinking. 3) Write the name you want on the paper tape in the window. The window will close when all selections have been made and the red "Cast Vote" button has been pressed.

Black gays join national Million Man March

by Bob Roehr
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—"Black by Birth, Gay by God, Proud by Choice," read placards carried by a group of a hundred gay men in the Million Man March. The October 16 March was called by the controversial Minister Louis Farrakhan head of the Nation of Islam (NOI). The National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum organized the contingent after much soul searching and with some trepidation. But their participation matched the warmly positive experience that permeated the event.

Pride, determination, and a tinge of apprehension shone on the faces of those gay men who gathered a half dozen blocks off the Mall. They girded themselves for the unknown challenge of marching openly into an event orchestrated by a group, the NOI, known to be vocally homophobic.

"I pour a libation to remember our ancestors and to remind us that we didn't get here by ourselves. That someone made a path before

us. And that we have an obligation to lay a path for those who are coming behind us," offered Rev. Rainey Cheeks in his opening prayer.

"I'm not here because of Farrakhan, or despite Farrakhan, or to spite Farrakhan," said Derek Livingston, a co-chair of the 1993 Gay Rights March on Washington. "I'm here because we are family and we are in crisis."

"We are running cities and running cities very well," proclaimed Ken Reeves, Mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts. "And we are proud to stand up and say that we make up what black people are. And they could not do it without us, and will not have to."

"We have a great African legacy, we have always been proud of it. We are here to protect it and not be absent from it...We are going to have a warm and loving day. I claim it."

Leadership Forum co-founder Phill Wilson was the inspiration behind this rally. He recited a list of friends and leaders lost "from AIDS and other illnesses" as his reason for marching. "Black men loving black men is a

revolutionary act. I say, let the revolution begin."

"What we are talking about today is a revolution in our thinking, a revolution in our way of seeing ourselves, and our relationship to our community at large," said Leadership Forum executive director Keith Boykin.

"You are the vanguard. You send the message of courage and hope to all those who cannot be here. We represent the tens of thousands of black gay men who are assembled on the Mall today and cannot be there openly. We represent them."

"By wearing your African rainbows, by showing your pride, you will send a signal today to those who cannot yet be there but will be there in the future."

The marchers were advised of security precautions, to stay together for protection. "Do not respond to verbal outbursts from others," offered one parade marshal. "They are not our enemies, they are just ignorant." And with that the group exuberantly stepped

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US Supreme Court case sparks local action

by Eagle White
Special to Q-Notes

RALEIGH—An October 10 gathering on the steps of Raleigh's Wake County Courthouse provided a forum for several prominent members and friends of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) community to speak publicly about *Romer v. Evans*, a landmark civil rights case being argued that day before the US Supreme Court. The mid-day rally, one of about 40 such events planned across the country, was attended by a small yet enthusiastic group of concerned citizens. Curious passers-by, part of the normal lunchtime throng of downtown Raleigh's Fayetteville Street Pedestrian Mall, paused to read the placards held by participants and to listen to speeches delivered from behind a makeshift podium draped in a rainbow unity flag.

The speakers, who represented several Triangle area, statewide and national organizations, eloquently and passionately urged the country's highest court to uphold the right of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and other minorities to seek legislative protection from discrimination. Signs held by onlookers showed photos of each of the Supreme Court justices, accompanied by the printed question, "Justice <name>, What will you decide?"

MK Cullen, Executive Director of NC PRIDE PAC for Lesbian and Gay Equality, welcomed and thanked attendees then introduced Doug Ferguson, a third-year honors

law student at UNC Chapel Hill and member of the Human Rights Campaign Board of Governors. Ferguson gave the audience background information on Amendment 2 and subsequent appellate court actions in Colorado. (See text following this article.)

Mandy Carter, Human Rights Campaign liaison to the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, compared the tactics used by Radical Right supporters of Amendment 2 to those previously used to decry racial civil rights, religious freedoms, and women's rights, eloquently refuting arguments in support of the amendment. Carter, who had participated in a vigil the previous evening at the Supreme Court building in Washington, recounted looking at the building's facade.

"Right above the headway there are four words, and this is exactly what the Supreme Court should think about the day that they make their decision," Carter said, "What are the four words? Equal justice under law. That's what this is all about." Carter expressed

optimism that the court would "do the right thing," saying that gays and lesbians are not looking for "special rights," but "equal rights."

Jeff Prince, director of the NC Lesbian and Gay Health Project addressed possible negative ramifications from a health care perspective, saying, "If this amendment is upheld in

Colorado, a gay or lesbian person going to the hospital could be denied health care simply on the basis of the fact that they are gay or lesbian. How frightening, how terrible that that could happen in this country." Prince added that by holding the amendment unconstitutional, the court could "send a message of hope...to a lesbian teenager who sits alone at night in her bedroom, contemplating suicide...or to the gay man who turns to substance abuse...." Prince cited high rates of suicide and substance abuse as two major concerns faced by the LGB community which might be helped by a court decision favoring equal rights.

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Doug Ferguson