

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

Rep. Kolbe addresses
Log Cabin conference Page 3

Making the most of
antiviral therapy Page 18

Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 12, Number 7 • August 23, 1997 • FREE

Former SC Pride co-chair acquitted of solicitation charge

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

GREENVILLE, SC—This past March, just one month prior to the annual SC Gay and Lesbian Pride March, event co-chair Derrick Gunter was arrested for soliciting sex from an undercover officer. On July 31, a jury deliberated 15 minutes before acquitting him.

Gunter, 29, was arrested in Timmons Park near downtown Greenville one afternoon as he waited to go to work. He maintained that an undercover officer approached him and initiated a conversation that quickly turned to sex. Gunter, who lives in Fountain Inn, SC, said that despite the fact he repeatedly told the officer he was not interested, the leading questions continued and he was subsequently arrested without cause.

The arrest report alleged that Gunter responded to the conversation by suggesting a location where the two men could go for sex.

After news of the arrest was released, leaders with the Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement

(GLPM), the organization that produces the annual march and celebration, removed Gunter from his position as co-chair. They were reportedly concerned that Gunter's arrest could be a rallying point for anti-gay opponents and take the focus away from the celebratory nature of the weekend.

In court, Randy Hiller, Gunter's attorney, held that the case was an example of police entrapment that simply came down to one man's word against another. Not enough evidence upon which to base a conviction, he argued.

Based upon their quickly-rendered verdict, the jury agreed. Not surprisingly, police officials did not. Maj. W.L. Johnson told *The Greenville News*, "We regret there was no conviction, but we're standing by our officer."

After the decision, GLPM member Tony Snell was quoted as saying, "We certainly welcome [Gunter's] support and his work on the state board again if he would like to serve." However, Gunter indicated that he had no desire to do so. ▼

Bar Association endorses needle exchange program to stop AIDS

by David M. Smith
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The American Bar Association (ABA) endorsed the use of needle exchange programs August 5 as an effective way to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS while complementing the fight against drug abuse and encouraged the removal of legal barriers to such health efforts.

"The ABA has joined public health experts in recognizing the scientific evidence that needle exchange and drug treatment efforts complement each other and save lives," said Seth Kilbourn, senior health policy advocate for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). "Needle exchange programs help meet an urgent public health need in communities combating the dual epidemics of AIDS and illegal drug use."

Needle exchange programs provide intravenous drug users with sterile syringes in exchange for used ones. Such programs have been implemented in more than 100 communities around the country and have been shown to stem the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases transmitted through the sharing of injection equipment.

In February, the Department of Health and Human Services released a report concluding that needle exchange programs are effective in slowing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

HRC continues to call on the secretary of Health and Human Services to act on the scientific evidence demonstrating the necessity and effectiveness of needle exchange programs. HRC is encouraging her to remove current restrictions preventing communities from using federal funds for these life-saving programs.

The ABA's resolution states that "in order to further scientifically based public health objectives to reduce HIV infection and other blood-borne diseases, and in support of our long-standing opposition to substance abuse, the American Bar Association supports the removal of legal barriers to the establishment and operation of approved needle exchange programs that include a component of drug coun-

seling and drug treatment referrals."

Approximately one-third of reported AIDS cases are related to injection drug use. Sixty-six percent of all AIDS cases among women — and more than half of such cases among children — are related to injection drug use.

With the adoption of this resolution, the ABA has joined a growing consensus in favor of needle exchange programs. Groups supporting such HIV prevention efforts include the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and the United States Conference of Mayors.

The ABA cited evidence that needle exchange programs reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis among injection drug users and their families; reduce the number of contaminated needles on the street that threaten public safety; do not increase — and may actually reduce — illegal drug use; and are far more cost-effective than treating the additional people who would otherwise become HIV-positive.

"It's all too rare that saving lives and saving money end up on the same side of the public health equation," noted Kilbourn. "So ignoring the mountain of scientific evidence in favor of needle exchange efforts would be both morally and fiscally irresponsible."

Beyond the support from public health, scientific and legal experts, needle exchange programs are earning favor with the majority of Americans. Fifty-five percent of voters support such programs, according to a bipartisan poll commissioned by HRC and conducted April 8-10 by the Tarrance Group, a Republican firm, and Lake Sosin Snell and Associates, a Democratic polling company. The overall margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percent.

In addition, a March 1996 survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 66 percent of Americans favor "having clinics make clean needles available to IV drug users to help stop the spread of AIDS." ▼

Baseball fundraiser thrown into spotlight after media attention

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—When the *Q-Notes* staff decided to sponsor a trip to a Charlotte Knights baseball game several weeks ago, they envisioned a fun, but low-key, outing to benefit Charlotte Pride Alliance. During the first several weeks of ticket sales, that's precisely how things were going. However, that changed after a few citizens complained about the event to Knights management and even contacted the media, leading to a flurry of publicity.

The impetus for the outing was a bulk mail solicitation from the Knights allowing businesses and organizations to buy game tickets at below face value and resale them for a profit as a means of fundraising. The *Q-Notes* staff decided to pursue the offer with the hope of assisting a worthy gay organization. "We wanted to give the community an opportunity to get together and have some fun while supporting the Charlotte Pride Alliance at the same time," said Associate Editor Dan Van Mourik.

Because Charlotte Pride Alliance was newly formed, it was agreed that all proceeds would go to them if the event was organized. Before moving ahead, though, a *Q-Notes* staff member contacted the Knights' sales department to ensure that team management would have no problems with the fundraiser — or a request to have the scoreboard acknowledgement (given to all groups of 25 or more) read "Lesbian and Gay Knights Fans."

A Knights sales representative said that clearance would have to come from his superiors, but he foresaw no problems with the requests. As predicted, the go-ahead for the fundraiser was given the next day and the August 30 game was selected since it offered a fireworks display and a performance by the Blues Brothers.

At this point, the staff began to advertise the fundraiser in *Q-Notes*, billing it as "Gay Nite at Knights Castle." Apparently, it was this slogan that led to the tumult among some non-gays who saw the ad.

According to Pete Moore, the Knights' general manager, some people took it to mean that the team was sponsoring an official night for the gay and lesbian community. They were angered by this "promotion" of homosexuality and called to say so. They also contacted the media.

Reporter Melissa Manware fielded a complaint at the *Rock Hill Herald* and contacted this writer as a follow-up. She stated that she was preparing an article on the situation and wanted to ask a few questions. Based on the

ensuing interview, and another she conducted with Moore, an article on the controversy ran on the front page of the *Herald* on August 12.

In the article, Moore tried to placate those who were upset, reportedly stating, "That [*Q-Notes*] ad leads you to believe we are sponsoring a night. We aren't doing anything special for them." However, he affirmed that the gay and lesbian contingent would be welcomed like



Photo: Jim Yarbrough

Editor David Stout at Knights Castle for Charlotte Observer photo session

any other at Knights Castle.

Over the next two days, the media continued to spotlight the fundraiser. There was a story in *The Charlotte Observer*, a morning call-in discussion on local talk radio and a segment on WBTV's early evening news broadcast.

What had been planned as a small gathering at a baseball game, turned into yet another public referendum on gay and lesbian visibility in Charlotte — with the usual results. "As we've seen with all the other controversies of the last few years, the attempts to stop these performances have only made them bigger. The same is happening with our baseball game. When the media started reporting that some people had a problem with our fundraiser, tickets began to sell faster than ever," Van Mourik said.

One ticket holder commented, "After I saw in the newspaper that some folks didn't want us to go to the game, I was more determined than ever to be there. This isn't about being 'in your face' or anything else. It's simply about gays and lesbians getting together and being who we are. I wanted to participate in this because it sounded like fun, not because of any 'gay agenda' or politics."

Despite the increase, plenty of tickets are still available. If you would like to help fund a worthy organization and increase gay visibility among the general citizenry, all while enjoying a fun evening of baseball, see the ad on page 15 of this issue or call (704) 531-9988. ▼

GLAAD gears up for history month

by Liz Tracey
Special to Q-Notes

NEW YORK—The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is proud to announce that October is "Lesbian & Gay History Month: A Celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History." The theme of this fourth annual event is "Charting the Future, Reclaiming the Past," which will highlight the often ignored contributions of gay figures and the community in history.

During Lesbian & Gay History Month, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community examines its political struggle, cultural achievements and collective creativity. "Lesbian & Gay History Month creates a more honest and complete understanding of history by tell-

ing untold stories," said Joan M. Garry, GLAAD's executive director. "It provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the distance we have traveled as a community and to honor the stewards of that journey."

In January 1994, a high school teacher in Missouri, appalled by the exclusion of lesbian and gay history from textbooks, set out to make a change. Rodney Wilson organized teachers and community leaders to educate the public about lesbians and gay men past and present. They formed a national grassroots network to create a celebration and education campaign that continues today. The month of October was selected to commemorate the anniversaries of the first two lesbian and gay marches on

See HISTORY on page 8