

# Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

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Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 12, Number 8 • September 6, 1997 • FREE

## Conference, networking group keep youth resources growing

by Dan Van Mourik  
Q-Notes Staff

ATLANTA—The third annual Southern Regional Conference for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Youth & Allies will be held over the weekend of October 24-26 at Georgia State University, Atlanta. Entitled "Reaching Out in the South" and sponsored by the National Youth Advocacy Coalition, the conference will be an opportunity to share experiences, network, socialize and explore cutting-edge issues. And there are a lot of issues to discuss concerning today's gay youth.

While more and more youth organizations seem to be appearing across the country, North Carolina recently lost one. OutRight!, a Durham-based group dedicated to providing direct services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, has officially dissolved, donating much of their assets to A Safer Place Youth Network (ASPYN), a program within the organization Triangle Community Works! (TCW!).

"It is a melancholy donation," said Michelle Topal, ASPYN's program coordinator. "ASPYN is modeled on the OutRight! concept. On one hand, the donation is greatly needed to continue to provide the direct services we deliver every weekend. On the other hand, it marks the end of a very supportive and cooperative relationship."

TCW! will redouble its efforts to help serve the entire Triangle area youth population. In an attempt to meet those needs, ASPYN vol-

unteers are discussing holding youth meetings in Durham.

While the closing of OutRight! is sad news, there are many positive things happening for our gay youth. The recent American Psychological Association resolution on "conversion" or "reparative" therapy (see separate article in this issue) is being viewed as a positive step for all GLBT people and especially for youth.

"For many young people dealing with their sexual orientation, going to an allegedly helpful mental health provider turns into a nightmare of inappropriate questions, hospitalization, shock treatment and other archaic measures," said Rea Carey, Director of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition. "All too often, 'conversion' or 'reparative' therapy is being pushed on young people who are seeking affirming support but are met instead with long sessions of shame."

Student Pride, an organization to support high school activists, begun by Chicago student Miguel Ayala in the fall of 1996, is now being implemented by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Educators' Network (GLSEN), the nation's largest advocacy group combating homophobia in the schools.

"The important and courageous work being done by students like Miguel all over the country is inspiring to us and we wanted to make sure Student Pride didn't die when Miguel graduated. Our goal is to make sure that these young people have a place to turn for support

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## UFMCC conference gets attention and good turnout in Australia

by James N. Birkitt, Jr.  
Special to Q-Notes

SYDNEY—The largest gay spirituality conference ever held in the Pacific Rim took place July 20-25 under the sponsorship of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). The impetus for the gathering was the 29-year-old denomination's 13th biennial conference.

More than 1600 participants from 15 countries gathered in the historic Sydney Town Hall in Sydney, Australia on July 20 for the opening rally of UFMCC's General Conference XVIII.

The conference was the Fellowship's most international to date and the first held outside of North America. International growth of the predominantly gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender denomination was a focus of the conference. Since 1993, UFMCC, composed of more than 300 local congregations in 15 countries, has welcomed 10,000 new members internationally.

A highlight of the conference was the presence of noted South Korean eco-feminist theologian Dr. Chung Hyun Kyung, professor of ecumenics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She presented the conference keynote address entitled, "Love In The Time Of AIDS: Reflections on a New Civilization Which Empowers our Resistance, Liberation, and Healing for the 21st Century."

The use of technology to share gay spirituality formed a second track of General Conference XVIII. UFMCC has made a significant

commitment to Internet technology, according to the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, founder and moderator of UFMCC.

More than 34,000 persons around the world visited the UFMCC Virtual Conference website at <http://www.ufmcc.com> during conference week, said Perry. The website carried photos of the conference, the "State of the Fellowship Address" (available through RealAudio), daily conference news and the transcripts of online conference Internet chats from Sydney.

Media interest in General Conference XVIII was exceptionally strong, according to UFMCC officials. Rev. Perry appeared on the Australian *Today Show* and the Australian Broadcasting Company filmed a documentary which aired nationally on August 10. The documentary featured scenes from conference workshops, seminars and worship sessions.

Conference news coverage was provided by mainline newspapers across the continent and the Australian gay press provided exceptional front-page coverage of this historic conference. The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, UFMCC's Chief Ecumenical Officer, conducted an extensive interview with the press service of the World Council of Churches.

During conference business, delegates re-elected the Rev. Darlene Garner (Falls Church, VA) and the Rev. Hong Tan (London, England) to the UFMCC Board of Elders and elected Mr. Clarke Friesen (Tucson, AZ) to the Board. In other business, delegates approved by-laws changes, rejected a proposal for a triennial conference system and approved new denominational mission, vision and values statements.

Additional information on UFMCC and General Conference XVIII can be found on the denomination's website. ▼

## Queen Cuisine Savory new plays offered on culture festival's latest menu

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

The folks behind OutCharlotte 97 have released information on two more menu items to run during next month's annual cultural festival celebrating the artistic contributions of the GLBT community. Both offerings are plays and are making their Queen City debuts.

Here are the latest ingredients for the sure-to-be-tasty OutCharlotte 97 stew:

*The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* (by David Drake; performed by Kevin Fabian.)

In *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me*, Obie-winning actor/playwright David Drake docu-

ments a gay man's journey of self-discovery in a series of meticulously crafted scenes that are alternately lyrical, brutal and hilarious. The title refers not to an actual caress, but to the night the author received the "kiss" of pride and self-awareness from seeing Kramer's play *The Normal Heart*. *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* is not only a valuable record of a landmark theatrical event, but also an important contribution to the literature of gay pride, enlightenment and activism.

Seattle actor Kevin Fabian stars in this one-man tour de force. He has worked with Seattle Children's Theatre, Greek Active, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Old Globe in San Diego and the Actors Theatre of Louisville.

"Fabian is agile and cogent, has the right pumped-up physique and is a very credible younger David; naively buying a gay disco record for his mom as a Christmas present. Where Fabian truly shines, though, is in "A

Thousand Points of Light," a vividly written recollection of AIDS losses." — *Seattle Times*

"He demonstrates a wide range, capturing with equal finesse the sensitivity of an effeminate eight-year-old, the blasé posing of varied gym rats and disco bunnies...." — *Seattle Weekly*

"Mr. Fabian is also excellent in the low-key but climactic final scene; lighting candles and relating a personal story of each friend who died of AIDS, all with nicely observed, unsaintly yet heroic detail." — *The Stranger*

Meal times: October 10 and 11; 8:45pm; Theatre Charlotte (501 Queens Road); \$12

*Next Year in Sodom* (by the Eggplant Faerie Players; performed by members MaxZine Weinstein, Tom Foolery and Delilah DeVille.)

*Next Year in Sodom* was specifically written for a radical faerie summer pilgrimage to Israel by three of the Eggplant Faerie Players' Jewish members. Created by queers living in the middle of the Bible Belt and performed in a land drenched in conflict, *Next Year in Sodom* celebrates freedom amidst repression.

Opening the door for the prophet Elijah during the Passover seder, Benjamin, Mark and Seaweed are not prepared for the parade of eccentric characters that come marching into their dining room — Bible heroes, jugglers, a transvestite member of "Meals on Heels" and a door-to-door arms dealer.

The rituals and symbols of the holiday take on new meanings through irreverent interpretations such as "Name that Matzoh," a television game show. The play explores universal

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Kevin Fabian

## IRS grants gay youth group federal tax-exempt status

by Peg Byron  
Special to Q-Notes

GREENSBORO, NC—The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued tax-exempt status to the Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Support System (GLASS), a gay youth support group, on August 26 after reviewing a complaint from Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund asserting that the tax agency had asked inappropriate and anti-gay follow-up questions about GLASS after receiving its filing.

"This is a wonderful and timely victory for lesbian and gay youth and their parents across the country just as a new school year starts," said David Buckel, the Lambda staff attorney who filed the written appeal on July 1 on behalf of the Greensboro-based organization.

"Faced with cruel, at times dangerous, anti-gay attitudes in many communities and schools, gay youth desperately need the kind of support that groups like GLASS offer," Buckel commented. "The federal government not only has admitted it made a mistake in its hostile re-

sponse to GLASS, it also has signaled hope to the rest of the country about building such volunteer pro-gay efforts," he added.

GLASS was formed to meet the needs of young people facing anti-gay bigotry and abuse by providing support groups and educational resources. It is staffed entirely by volunteers and has served about 120 youth between the ages of 15 and 21 since it started in 1994.

The IRS backed down on its earlier communication with GLASS, officially withdrawing the letter it had sent after the group applied for 501(c)3 status. That letter had demanded assurances "that counsellors [sic] and participants do not encourage or facilitate homosexual practices or encourage the development of homosexual attitudes and propensities by minor individuals...."

In withdrawing its letter, the IRS acknowledged that Lambda, the oldest and largest gay and lesbian legal organization, was right in criticizing the agency's attempt to police the viewpoint of a group because it serves gay youth. ▼