

# Q Notes

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Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 12, Number 17 • January 24, 1998 • FREE

## '96 hate crime stats released

### Officials say stiffer sentences needed

by Kim I. Mills  
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—Reported hate crimes against gays and lesbians declined slightly in 1996, but were more violent and more public than in 1995, with significantly more such crimes committed in commercial buildings or in fields and woods.

"These statistics are further evidence of the need for a federal law enabling the Justice Department to investigate and prosecute such crimes on the same basis as crimes targeting people because of race, religion, color or national origin," said Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay and lesbian civil rights organization.

"The federal government's hands are tied when it comes to investigating and prosecuting crimes aimed at people because of their sexual orientation. It's not enough to collect statistics. People who commit these crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered people should face the same penalties as all other hate criminals."

The FBI released a report January 8 that found 1016 crimes were committed in 1996 targeting people because of their sexual orientation. This amounted to 11.5 percent of the total 8759 bias-motivated incidents reported to the FBI for that period.

In 1995, the FBI reported 1019 hate crimes based on sexual orientation. This was 12.8 percent of the total.

HRC warned, however, that hate crimes targeting gays are virtually always underreported by law enforcement agencies.

"Even though the rate appears to have declined, we know from experience that local law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to report bias crimes based on sexual orientation," said Stachelberg. "One state, Alabama, reported no hate crimes whatsoever in 1996, which seems highly unlikely. In addition, crime victims are often afraid to tell police that they were singled out because of their real or perceived sexual orientation."

Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), agreed that the decreasing figures were a result of under-reporting. "GLBT people often do not



- crimes in commercial buildings rose from 18 to 28;
- crimes in wooded areas or fields rose from 6 to 13.

At the same time, the number of bias crimes against gays in private residences rose 16 percent, from 267 to 318.

In response to the troubling data, HRC leaders called on Congress to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998, introduced in November by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). President Clinton has endorsed this bill as part of his initiative, begun last year, to combat hate crimes in America.

"We applaud the Clinton administration for taking on the problem of hate crimes in America and are optimistic about the package of initiatives that came out of last [November's] first White House Conference on Hate Crimes," Stachelberg said.

Those initiatives included assigning 50 more FBI agents and prosecutors to work on hate crimes enforcement; establishing hate crimes working groups in the offices of all 93 US attorneys; and distributing to the nation's school districts a manual encouraging schools to confront hate-motivated behavior among students.

NGLTF sponsored a nine-city hate crimes tour through the heartland in 1997. During community forums, Lobel heard dozens of stories of hate violence targeted at GLBT people and got hundreds of people to sign petitions urging President Clinton to take additional steps to address the high number of hate crimes against GLBT persons. She delivered those petitions to the Administration at the Hate Crimes Conference.

Currently, only 19 states and the District of Columbia include sexual orientation in their state hate crimes statutes. Nineteen states have hate crimes laws that do not include sexual orientation and nine states have no hate crimes statutes whatsoever. Three states have laws that are unclear.

US Attorney General Janet Reno has recently joined President Clinton in pushing for legislation before Congress that would expand the definition of federal hate crimes to include those based on disabilities, gender or sexual orientation. Federal hate crimes now include only incidents based on race, color, religion and national origin. Reno said during a press conference that she had asked all 93 US attorneys to appoint coordinators who will meet in Washington in February to map out

strategy on combating hate crimes. She also said both the Justice and Education departments would soon distribute hate-crime prevention manuals to help teachers with anti-bias training among young people.

Only two federal hate crimes laws include "sexual orientation" as a protected group — the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, under which these data were collected, and the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act, which provides for tougher sentencing when it is proven that the crime committed was motivated by bias. ▼

## Gay community is "in the book"

### Charlotte yellowpages coming in July

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—Just as puberty brings distinctive signs of maturity for developing young men and women, similar changes can be expected for the "body" of any growing gay community. In the last month, one of them sprung up in Charlotte faster than the prom queen's bust when it was announced that the publisher of the Gay Community Yellow Pages would be producing a volume for the Queen City.

When its edition is issued in July, Charlotte (whose gay and lesbian community is estimated to be around 60,000) will join the ranks of just over a dozen urban meccas including Atlanta, Chicago, Las Vegas, Seattle and Washington, DC for whom Chapter 2 Publishing has printed a Community Yellow Pages.

Representatives with Chapter 2, the Phoenix-based corporation that has been producing the books since the beginning of the decade, arrived in Charlotte in November. In quick succession, they secured office space, hired sales and support staff and began setting appointments. Company officials say that the response has been very positive. "Thus far, things are going quite well," said Len Irving, manager of the Charlotte office. "The gay community support has definitely been there and we appreciate it."

Telemarketing manager Louise Priko, a resident of Charlotte, says that the hardest part of the venture hasn't been closing sales, but simply "catching people in."

The first edition of the Gay Community Yellow Pages was published in Atlanta in 1991. Marci and Sharon Alt decided to produce the book after overhearing a salesman make a derogatory comment about them as they shopped for a car. From then on, the couple wanted to make sure their money only went to supportive merchants. The problem was that they couldn't find a comprehensive guide that listed them — so they created one. With the success

of the book, the concept expanded into other regions and the Alts eventually moved their headquarters to Phoenix.

While the resource guides are tailored to the GLBT community, they aren't limited to marketing businesses owned by gays and lesbians. Ads are accepted from any company that wants gay and lesbian shoppers. Irving estimates that, depending on the market, anywhere from 40 - 60 percent of Community Yellow Pages ads are purchased by non-GLBT businesses.

He notes that the company's advertising contracts specifically contain a provision that allows them to prohibit advertisers from participating in future editions if they are found to be treating GLBT customers inappropriately. He encourages shoppers to report any problems with Yellow Pages advertisers.

According to a Chapter 2 promotional brochure, between 30,000 and 60,000 free copies of the Charlotte edition will be distributed. The books will reportedly be circulated as follows: 1000 - 10,000 handed out at Gay Pride festivities; 30,000 - 50,000 distributed in bookstores, professional offices, the Chamber of Commerce, nightclubs/bars and restaurants.

The wide circulation does more than ensure that the ads are seen. The Community Yellow Pages helps spread the word about the service and support organizations in each area through a directory printed in the back of the book. Inclusion is free for non-profit organizations.

Irving stresses that the Gay Community Yellow Pages is as much a tool for building unity as it is a business guide and says that he knew Charlotte was ripe for the project on the day he arrived. As he hit town, the media was abuzz with the news that a severed pig's head had been placed in County Commissioner Becky Carney's front yard along with a derogatory note about gays. Irving recalls that he got "excited" about it because he knew "the book was needed."

For more information on advertising or to have your non-profit organization listed in the community resource guide, call their corporate headquarters at 1-800-849-0406. ▼

## ADAP saved with emergency funds

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—On January 7, a state medical crisis was averted when the NC Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations unanimously voted to approve an emergency transfer of \$1.1 million within the Department of Health and Human Services to maintain the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) through March 31, the end of the current funding cycle. State Health Director Ron Levine made the proposal and Sen. Howard Lee (D-Chapel Hill) made the motion to concur.

For months, there had been concern in the AIDS community that ADAP might suspend services — buying life-saving medications for qualified clients — since it was technically out of money. Because HIV becomes resistant to drug therapy if doses are stopped for even a short period, the loss of ADAP would have been devastating to those dependent on the program.

Additionally, it would have created the potential for the spread of a drug-resistant HIV strain among the general population. Individuals exposed to the mutated virus would get no benefit from the most potent pharmaceutical weapons available. This would be a public health disaster.

Although activists were pleased that the Legislative Commission bailed out ADAP, they were disappointed that the group only provided enough money to keep it open to current clients. The appropriation wasn't enough to allow for any new ones. This means that the problem of providing adequate care for poor PWAs will now shift solely to the state's AIDS service organizations. The majority of these agencies do not have the budget to fill this gap in services. They will likely need to get as many of these people on Medicaid as possible — at a huge cost to taxpayers.

ADAP should resume regular enrollments on April 1, when NC gets its annual block grant from the federal government. The state government will issue its annual disbursement on

July 1. AIDS activists are pushing for an increase in ADAP funding from both to assure this situation doesn't happen again in '98.

On January 23, the State HIV Medications Task Force was scheduled to review changing state policy relative to the number of AIDS drugs available under ADAP. They were expected to discuss limiting them in an effort to control skyrocketing costs. Currently, NC has some of the most lenient ADAP policies in the nation. That will probably change. ▼



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report hate crimes based on their sexual orientation because of their fear of discrimination by police; lack of interest or diligence on the part of the police; and lack of training in many police departments in working with members of the GLBT community."

A comparison of the 1996 and 1995 reports found:

- reported arsons targeting gays increased from 3 incidents to 8;
- anti-gay crimes committed in gas stations rose from 2 to 8;