

Q Notes

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Members of the NC Pride Marching Band prepare to lead the parade

NC Pride weekend delivers a bevy of memorable moments

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

ASHEVILLE, NC—This year's NC Pride celebration, held June 5-7, had it all: workshops, gay comedians, guest speakers, commitment ceremonies — even an "oh-my-god-you-just-missed-it" moment when a tribe of aboriginal mud people squared off against a host of Bible-thumpers.

Friday's offerings began with the NC Pride Board Reception and included a concert by the Derivative Duo and a performance by nationally-known comedian and author Bob Smith. The evening ended with a candlelight ceremony at Trinity Episcopal Church. The gathering was scheduled for the outdoors, but had to be moved due to rain. The precipitation and venue change didn't seem to matter, though; spirits weren't damp inside the sanctuary. One gentleman commented, "Regardless of the weather, I am so happy to see this event taking place in Asheville again. We need this."

According to all sources, the city's gay nightclubs were up to their disco balls in patrons Friday night. Most were probably buoyed by the fact that the march wasn't scheduled to step off until 3:00pm Saturday (although the workshops began at 8:30am for the early birds).

The pre-march events were worth an early arrival at the Radisson. By, for the most part, circumventing the usual slate of workshop topics (can't we all debunk the Levitical Code by now anyway?), march organizers created opportunities to more deeply explore issues that have been treated like an afterthought in the past — an informative question and answer session on transgender issues springs to mind.

While the workshops were going on, outside the sky was crashing down in huge, wet drops. Thankfully, it cleared up by early afternoon and only *threatened* to pour for the remainder of the day. Emcee Bob Smith did his best to take everyone's mind off of the weather at the pre-march rally by sharing his terrifically-twisted observations on life (on coming out to his mother: "At dinner one night, I asked my mom to pass the mashed potatoes to a homosexual; she handed them to my dad.")

Along with the comedy, there was also an awards presentation (for the winning submission in the march logo contest), a number of

guest speakers, the introduction of the weekend's co-chairs, Nancy Baker and Jessica Britton, and the day's first taste of the anti-gay contingent that was setting up along the parade route.

More than a half-dozen men stationed themselves in the median across from the downtown park that was the rally site to rail against the "sinners" invading their community. Taking solo turns, each rotated to the front to shout for the souls of those enjoying the festivities across the street. Watching them ply their dubious trade made for compelling street theater, but what happened next escalated the whole thing to a surrealistic scene that couldn't have been more compelling if it was scripted.

The Pride attendees who were perched on the sidewalk enjoying the drama, including this reporter, began to hear a commotion wending its way up the street. Before anyone was quite sure what to make of the carnival-like sounds coming from the distance, a cry went up ahead of the pack: "The Radical Faeries are here!" And how.

Covered from crown to sole in mud an inch thick — and very little else — and moving like a pack of wild animals, the motley crew of about two dozen didn't stop until they were directly across from the Bible-beaters whose mannerisms they mocked and laughed at with abandon. As a drummer and flutist created a tribal rhythm, onlookers wrapped themselves in the sublime lunacy of the moment.

Not content to simply share the street with the protesters, the Faeries decided to share the median with them as well and streamed across the busy downtown boulevard to invade their turf. A look that seemed to be equal parts fear and disgust moved over the men's faces. This seemed to fuel the Faeries as they mugged like mad for the news cameras hovering all around. After a few moments, their interest waned and they bounded into the rally site, cheered by the crowd like conquering heroes.

As folks were being organized to walk the march circuit, a blustery, bone-chilling wind was whipping itself up. People braced themselves for the cold and stepped into the street with some hesitance. However, almost instantly the temperature seemed to rise — or maybe it

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Navy settles case with McVeigh

by Rich Klein
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The Department of Navy has dropped its appeal of the case involving Master Chief Petty Officer Timothy R. McVeigh whom the Navy had been trying to oust with no retirement benefits for alleged violations of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue." The Navy's action leaves intact a federal court ruling that the Navy violated McVeigh's privacy rights under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue." As part of the Navy's action, McVeigh has been made eligible for retirement with full pension benefits after 18.5 years of service. The Navy is also paying McVeigh's attorney's fees and costs.

"I have spent my entire adult life in service to our country," McVeigh stated. "While I will miss the Navy, I consider today's settlement a victory that leaves intact a strong legal precedent that may help to prevent others from being harmed in the future."

Chris Wolf, McVeigh's attorney from the law firm of Proskauer Rose LLP, said: "We are very pleased with the Navy's decision to change course. The Navy's initial plan was to discharge master Chief McVeigh based on information that was private, illegally obtained and irrelevant. Mr. McVeigh's stellar career has now been vindicated and he is able to leave the Navy on his own terms."

C. Dixon Osburn, co-executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

(SLDN) and co-counsel in the case, stated: "This case should serve as a warning to the Department of Defense to clean up its act, follow the rules and stop invading people's privacy."

The Navy had sought to discharge McVeigh (not related to the Oklahoma City bomber) based on information that he had allegedly used the word "gay" to describe his marital status in an anonymous America Online profile. The Navy obtained McVeigh's subscriber identity from America Online without a court order as required by federal law. At the time, McVeigh was the Chief of Boat, the senior enlisted position aboard the nuclear submarine, *USS Chicago*, based in Honolulu.

In a separate settlement, America Online, the nation's largest online computer service, apologized to McVeigh for violating his privacy and agreed to pay him damages. Under the settlement, both sides agreed not to reveal the amount of money paid to McVeigh. Also as a result of the case, the company announced new policies intended to guarantee the privacy of its users.

McVeigh filed suit against the Navy in federal court in January. On January 29, Judge Stanley Sporkin, a Reagan appointee, ruled that the Navy's action violated the 1986 Electronic Communications Privacy Act and the limits to investigations under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue," which is, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's political

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Gay Day spurs weeks of controversy

by Dan Van Mourik
Q-Notes Staff

ORLANDO, FL—The annual "Gay Day" at Walt Disney World was held on Saturday, June 6 with a week of activities leading up to the big day. Disney World does not sponsor Gay Days, but has said it will not discriminate by refusing to allow the event.

As is customary for those groups opposing the "homosexual agenda," protests, boycotts and other anti-gay events were planned to coincide with gays having fun at Disney's Magic Kingdom. However, this year's anti-gay turnout was less than spectacular. "In spite of all the publicity and hoopla, it had the feeling of a very normal day," Disney spokesman Bill Warren said.

Operation Rescue

Operation Rescue rallied just seven protesters and did little to disrupt the day. A larger number of Walt Disney World security officers and media representatives were on hand, but the predicted showdown between protesters and gays fizzled to a few polite conversations.

The group came to town with the hope of "saving" Orlando from homosexuality, abortion clinics and what it considers to be pornography peddled by Barnes & Noble bookstores. All week, fewer than 100 protesters showed up outside abortion clinics and Barnes & Noble stores. About 50 showed up at Orlando City Hall to protest plans to decorate the town with rainbow flags for June in observance of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month.

The numbers increased slightly Saturday morning when 120 to 140 protesters lined up along US Highway 192 outside a Kissimmee hotel, where gays and lesbians were staying, and at the Walt Disney World gates leading to the Magic Kingdom. For two hours, they bran-

dished signs reading "What Would Walt Think" and waved to motorists.

The group videotaped the gay crowd non-stop. The videos will be used to rally support against the gay lifestyle, the protesters said. For several hours, those inside the park approached men and women and quietly tried to convince them their lifestyle is immoral.

Pat Robertson — weatherman

Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson warned the city of Orlando that it risks hurricanes, earthquakes and terrorist bombs by allowing gay organizations to put up rainbow flags in support of sexual diversity. "I would warn Orlando that you're right in the way of some serious hurricanes and I don't think I'd be waving those flags in God's face if I were you," Robertson told viewers of *The 700 Club* on his Christian Broadcasting Network after a news report on "Gay Days" at Walt Disney World and the Orlando debate on the decision to dis-

"I would warn Orlando that you're right in the way of some serious hurricanes..."

— Pat Robertson

play the flags on lamp poles. "This is not a message of hate; this is a message of redemption. But a condition like this will bring about the destruction of your nation. It'll bring about terrorist bombs; it'll bring earthquakes, tornadoes and possibly a meteor," Robertson said.

A reporter for *The 700 Club* news department did a segment on Gay Days during the broadcast, saying the Christian Broadcasting Network had undercover video that was "too graphic to show."

Barry W. Lynn, director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State which monitors Robertson's statements, said,

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