

# Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

## The Latest Q-POLL Results

Is openly-gay Survivor winner Richard Hatch a good representative for the GLBT community?

Yes, he beat all the straight people	No, he is an evil queen	Who is Richard Hatch
68%	23%	9%

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## OutCharlotte provides a week of art, education

by Robert Marcus James  
Special to Q-Notes

OutCharlotte will celebrate its 6th Anniversary this October 4-8 by staging its annual cultural festival celebrating the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community. Fifteen events will be held over five days at various venues around Charlotte.

"If people are interested in learning who 'gay people' are, the festival is the perfect opportunity to meet us," said Dan Kirsch, executive director. "Come dine with us at the potluck dinner, come learn with us at the 15 free workshops, or come laugh with us at one of the many theatre performances."

The centerpiece of the weekend will be the world premiere of playwright Steve Willis' new work *Passing Ceremonies*. Last September, OutCharlotte commissioned Willis to write a play about any topic of his choosing, as long as it contained historical gay or lesbian figures.

The playwright has a long history with OutCharlotte; he gave a staged reading of his own *By Her Side* at the 1996 festival, and readings and performances in each subsequent year of *Good Sense*, *Tonya Talks*, *Fixing Things*, and *Me, Mama & Patti LaBelle*.

As he began to think about who he wanted to write about, Willis found the powerful words of poet Essex Hemphill speaking to him. As he researched other artists, he discovered writer and visual artist Richard Bruce Nugent. An idea began to form — have Nugent and Hemphill meet each other.

Nugent was best known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance, and Hemphill died of AIDS in 1995. In *Passing Ceremonies*, they meet somewhere between "earth life" and "paradise," and converse about what it meant to be black, gay and artists.

### Julie Goldman works it out!

Known for her in-your-face, no-holds-barred comedy shows, Julie is sure to provide a night we won't soon forget. Her high-energy, fast-paced performance "levels the karmic playing field with comedy and music" (*Timeout NY*). Laughing in the face of PC sensibilities,



OutCharlotte 2000 Festival Steering Committee (top, l-r) Stan Reardon, Amy Hartfield, Tim Tickle, John Stotler, Michaele Harlow, Al Webb, James Johnson and Lisa Speas

her fearless pursuit of comedy recently landed her a Broadway premiere when she hosted the London phenom *Sing-Along Sound of Music* at the world famous Ziegfeld Theatre.

Equipped with a unique sense of humor and her trusty six-string guitar, Julie adds original music and characters to her fold. As a co-founder of NY's hit comedy group Scary Little Town and a featured member of the monthly series Scapegoat Productions Presents, it is clear why Julie has been noted as "One to Watch" (*Paper Magazine*). So leave your PC sensibilities at the door and prepare for an evening with a "kick-ass comic" (*NY Press*).

Goldman is replacing the previously-announced Suzy Berger, who is unable to appear due to a family emergency. "We're very grateful to Julie for jumping in at the last minute," said Kirsch. "Suzy Berger had a family emergency, but wants to come perform in the future. As we were calling around for another act, Julie's name kept coming up, so here she comes!"

### Paul J. Williams dishes it out!

Paul J. Williams has long been known not only for his great comedic timing, but also his ability to create recognizable characters as a part of his show. In keeping with that tradition, his new show, *Dishing It Out*, is completely character driven, with Paul playing numerous personas throughout the entire show.

Set in a Southern cafeteria, the central character See *OUTCHARLOTTE* on page 15

## Dr. Laura show temporarily halted

by Wanda Pico  
Special to Q-Notes

HOLLYWOOD, CA — Paramount Television has stopped production of the Dr. Laura Show for four days to bring a new producer to salvage the embattled and ratings-challenged program. While Paramount is claiming the stoppage was pre-planned, critics of Schlessinger's anti-gay rhetoric suspect the show is in more serious trouble.

"Prejudice is bad for business, and Paramount is paying a price for its insensitivity to civil rights," said John Aravosis, co-founder of StopDrLaura.com. "Stopping production of the show after only two weeks is unprecedented."

After learning that Paramount is trying to retool the show to shore up ratings, some critics said no amount of tinkering will make it acceptable. "Paramount is rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic," said Aravosis. "Dr. Laura has sunk, it's time to let it go."

In the weeks since the Dr. Laura show launched on September 11, over 45 advertisers have told local TV stations to stop running their ads on the show. The list includes scores of big names such as Kraft, Kimberly-Clark, Unilever,

Geico, IHOP and, most recently, Coca-Cola.

Despite the production hiatus, Paramount indicated that the show would air as scheduled. Activists countered that the campaign against it would also continue until the show had been canceled completely. "Had Dr. Laura maligned Jews or Blacks, Paramount would never re-tool her TV show, they'd cancel her," said Aravosis. "It's time for Paramount to face the music: Dr. Laura is bad TV and bad business. Our campaign will continue until Paramount treats gays and lesbians as equal citizens."

According to the *Times*, Schlessinger blasted Hollywood on her radio show for being willing to defend TV shows with sex and violence, but not her. It was unclear whether she had inside knowledge that Paramount was no longer standing by her show, which some speculated might be the reason behind her statement.

Schlessinger was also criticized on September 21 by Garth Ancier, president of NBC's entertainment unit, at a panel of network executives. Asked if there were any TV programs the executives felt they couldn't defend, Ancier said: "I'm not embarrassed about anything on television, with the exception of Dr. Laura." ▼

## "Ex-gay" poster boy caught in DC gay bar; says he just "went to pee"

by Clay Ollis  
Q-Notes Staff

WASHINGTON, DC — John Paulk, the religious right's best-known spokesman for the "ex-gay" movement, was caught unaware in a Washington, DC gay bar on September 19 by Human Rights Campaign (HRC) staff members.

Paulk, the crown jewel of conservative Christian ministries that claim to help people "recover" from homosexuality through prayer, has been interviewed in *Newsweek* magazine and on *60 Minutes* and *Oprah* about his conversion from unhappy homosexual to happily married Christian husband and father. Earlier this year, he featured prominently (as did Carolina Panther Reggie White) in a major advertising campaign by "recovery" ministries offering homosexuals the opportunity to change.

Paulk has written a book entitled *Not Afraid to Change*. One HRC staffer suggested a better title might be, "Not Afraid to Be a Hypocrite."

The story began when Daryl Herrschaft of HRC decided to stop and have a drink to unwind. Herrschaft said he chose Mr. P's because he wasn't likely to see people he knew; the bar has a reputation in DC for being among the seedier clubs. But someone walked into the bar who looked very familiar — Exodus North America Director John Paulk. About 15 minutes later, Herrschaft said Paulk was standing right behind him and it was then that the importance of his presence impressed itself on him.

Herrschaft phoned fellow staffers Ryan Obermiller and Wayne Besen, who immediately headed for Mr. P's with camera in hand. Besen, HRC's Associate Director of Communications, spearheaded publication of HRC's ex-gay report *Finally Free: How Love and Self-Acceptance Saved Us From the Ex-gay Ministries*, a landmark document that features the personal stories of people who have survived "ex-gay" ministries.

Herrschaft engaged Paulk in conversation, and later said the ex-gay leader identified himself as "John" from Colorado Springs (where Paulk lives with his wife). Herrschaft said he asked if the man was gay and he said he was. Paulk then reportedly offered to buy Herrschaft a drink. When Herrschaft asked Paulk for his last name, he was told it was "Clint." But according to Herrschaft, "John Clint" was evasive, but kept him engaged and wouldn't let the conversation die.

When Besen and Obermiller arrived, both immediately recognized Paulk, and Besen attempted to photograph him. Paulk tried to hide as Besen was snapping pictures, and a bouncer told the staffer he could not take pictures in the bar. When Besen explained what was going on, he was told he could take pictures outside the bar, but not inside. Besen waited outside and photographed Paulk as he left the bar, walking quickly with his head down. It might be the first time Paulk has shied away from a camera — before his "recovery," he performed regularly as "Candy," a drag queen, and since his affiliation with Exodus, he has sought publicity for his cause.

In a telephone interview with *Q-Notes*, Besen said he was positive the man was indeed Paulk, and his certainty was confirmed when Paulk telephoned him later to explain that he had

merely stepped into the bar to pee.

Besen raised several questions in response: Why was Paulk seated at the bar, talking to strangers and offering to buy someone a drink? Why did he lie when confronted, claiming to be "John Clint?" And why would it take Paulk 40 minutes — the time he was in Mr. P's until Besen's arrival — to use the bathroom? Paulk claimed he was only in the bar 20 minutes, but admitted to ordering a drink ("water") and sitting at the counter to talk with other patrons.

Paulk's choice of "a place to pee" is surprising — even if, as he claims, he didn't know it was a gay bar. Mr. P's has an unappealing street presence with one small dark window. Located in the same block is a brightly lit coffee shop, several restaurants and two major hotels. Perhaps not coincidentally, Mr. P's sits diagonally across from P-Street Beach, a dark, wooded, park-like area that is DC's most infamous gay pick-up spot.

Besen said he talked at length with Paulk and encouraged him to come out as a gay man so he could "live with the dignity and self-respect that he is clearly lacking now."

Besen says Paulk's presence in Mr. P's is further evidence that ex-gays often lead double lives. "This is the latest in these ministries' long history of failures and scandals, and once again the 'ex-gay' myth promoted by anti-gay political organizations has been shattered," he said.

Recently, Besen was instrumental in helping another man leave the ex-gay closet of hypocrisy. Wade Richards came out in an interview with *The Advocate* magazine last month, further damaging the credibility of the "ex-gay" movement.

"Wade's experience echoes the opinions of every respected medical and mental health organization who say these ministries do not work and can often be harmful," stated Besen.

In *The Advocate*, Richards discussed how right-wing political organizations paid to have him traverse the nation to testify about his "change." Earlier this year, he spoke at a Washington press conference hosted by Americans For Truth About Homosexuality President Peter LaBarbera. The highlight of his "ex-gay" career came with his May appearance on the ABC newsmagazine *20/20*.

"I've been through so much in my life already," Richards, 21, told *The Advocate*. "But the one constant is I'm gay. I just want to spend some time being who I am."

Responding to the article, Exodus International issued a press release noting that the interview offered no explanation from Richards as to why he had publicly testified to being "ex-gay" and observed that he offered no biblical defense for his involvement in homosexuality.

"All these so-called ex-ex-gay stories sound the same," said Exodus International's Bob Davies. "In virtually every case, men and women abandon their previously-held view that homosexual behavior is sin. Ultimately, they go with their feelings, rather than submit to the authority of the Scriptures."

In addition to Richards' coming out, the "ex-gay" ministries have been dealt setbacks by the formation of groups of former "ex-gays" who say the ministries do not work and others who

See *CAUGHT* on page 27



Not afraid to cruise?