

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

Graying Lavender:
A new report from NGLTF entitled *Outing Age* talks about the issues facing GLBT people as we age. Profiled elders include the late Ms. Ruth Ellis.
See story on page 17.

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UNC students seek GLBT center

by Rachel Clarke and Stephanie Horvath
Special to Q-Notes

A group of University of North Carolina students working to organize a new resource center for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders on the Chapel Hill campus met November 14 to discuss the needs of the GLBT community and to begin planning efforts.

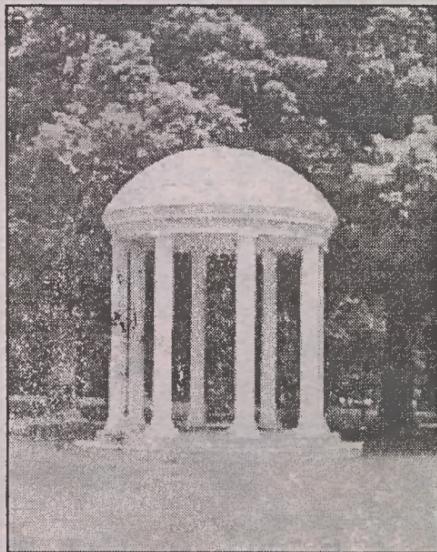
"We wanted to get an understanding for why people were here, whether there was a need, whether the University supported it and how to go about it," said sophomore Fred Hashagen, a philosophy and journalism major who helped lead the meeting. Attendees discussed the need for an GLBT center and outlined the needs they wanted the center to meet.

"UNC has a history of preferring the gay and lesbian students remain invisible," said Dean Blackburn, the coordinator of substance abuse programs for the University's Center for Healthy Student Behaviors. "A resource center will provide the visibility and education necessary to make UNC a welcoming community for all students."

At the meeting, graduate students Chantelle Borne and Christopher Strauss and undergraduates Kevin Brown and Jamie Sohn volunteered to help lead the movement for a resource center. "We identified people who are willing to commit their time, and that's a real step forward," said junior Rudy Kleysteuber.

The possibility of the center was presented to Chancellor James Moeser last week by the Student Advisory to the Chancellor Committee. "The committee mentioned the resource center to the chancellor, and he was very supportive of the idea," said Lerissa Rentas, student body vice president. A group of students from the School of Public Health visited the Center for LGBT Life at Duke University several weeks ago for ideas of what such a center could contribute. Duke's center provides support through activities such as sensitivity training, speeches and administrative work to co-sponsor events with other campus groups.

Such centers also are common at UNC's peer institutions, such as the University of California at Los Angeles, UC-Berkeley, the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia, said Sarah Stokes, a graduate student in the School of Public Health.



The Old Well
UNC-Chapel Hill

Stokes said there are several compelling reasons to form a center. "The needs of the GLBT community on campus are not well understood and certainly not well met," she said. "There certainly needs to be a support system for students who come to campus and are thinking about coming out." Stokes said the center also could be used to create a sense of unity among GLBT men and women in the area. "People come to campus knowing that there are other people like them here, but sometimes they're hard to find," she said.

Glenn Grossman, a member of the Carolina Alternative Meetings of Professional and Graduate Students, [a queer professional organization,] said a new center does not necessarily involve the construction of a new building because it could easily serve its function while occupying existing office space on campus. "For us, it's just trying to include ourselves as much in the campus as possible," he said.

Several students made reference to the struggle that ensued over the construction of the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center, stretching from the early 1990s until funding for the project finally was secured in September 1999.

"Anytime you're dealing with bettering the lives of minority students, you're going to have a struggle," Hashagen said. "While we are hopeful and think [the center] will be a reality, we won't kid ourselves into thinking it will be easy." ▼

[Reprinted with permission from the November 17 Daily Tar Heel, Chapel Hill, NC.]

Britain equalizes age of consent

by Clay Ollis
Q-Notes Staff

On the centenary of Oscar Wilde's death, Britain finally has an equal age of consent for everyone, gay or straight. The British queer activist organization OutRage! reports that the age of consent for gay sex was lowered to 16 on November 30.

A spokesperson for the Speaker of Britain's House of Commons reported to OutRage! that the Parliament Act was invoked, and the bill to equalize the age of consent for gay and straight teens received royal assent on December 1. Previously, the age of consent in England was 16 for persons of opposite sex, but gay teens needed to be 18 to legally have sex.

The House of Commons has approved the equalizing legislation before, but it has never passed the more conservative upper chamber, the House of Lords. The Parliament Act con-

tains provisions for passing legislation without the approval of the upper house.

Welcoming the news, OutRage! spokesperson Chris Morris said, "The long battle has finally been won. ... queer teenagers will be able to love and be loved without fear of prosecution and imprisonment."

"It is a symbolic step forward that I think will pave the way for bolder moves to increase our rights as equally valid members of society. There remains a lot to achieve, but we are making good progress," he added.

Morris was one of the teenagers who took their cases to the European Court of Human Rights in 1997 to demand an equal age of consent, contending that the inequality constituted discrimination against homosexual Brits, and therefore violated equal rights provisions of the European Union. He now edits the controversial British queer current affairs magazine *Outcast*. ▼

Columbia area HIV-infection rate ranks fourth in US, says study

by Clay Ollis
Q-Notes Staff

COLUMBIA, SC — Only three cities in the United States have a higher rate of AIDS infections than metropolitan Columbia, *The State* reported in an article on November 12. The SC capital ranks behind only three other cities in the US — Fort Lauderdale, Miami and New York City — in the number of AIDS cases per capita. And vastly disproportionate numbers of those cases are African-American. In the state of South Carolina, about 30 percent of the population is black, yet that group accounts for 71 percent of AIDS cases in the state.

The State interviewed several men of color — gay, straight and bisexual; single and married — for the article. The five gay men all refused to allow their real names to be published, fearing rejection by friends and family to whom

they are not out. They said they have no choice but to hide their sexuality. All the straight men quoted in the article also noted they would probably stop associating with a friend or colleague who came out for fear of being stigmatized themselves.

Many African-American men who are gay or bisexual, the article reports, work hard to present a straight, macho image, which they feel is needed to maintain both personal and professional relationships. Many continue to date women and some are married. State AIDS activists say the closet makes it a much harder task to educate both men of color and the women who love them on how to protect themselves. ▼

[A black gay man and Palmetto State native offers his analysis of the situation exclusively to Q-Notes. See related story, A community divided, on page 4 of this issue.]

Lambda Legal Fund issues 2000 World AIDS Day Report Card

SC Attorney General earns an F

by Peg Byron
Special to Q-Notes

NEW YORK — Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, with its fifth annual World AIDS Day report card, awarded a grade of F to Charlie Condon, Attorney General of South Carolina. The report described Condon as a "moralizing maniac on a misguided mission" against the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's AIDS prevention materials (which he declared illegal for tolerating premarital sex). Condon is now questioning each school district in South Carolina to ensure that they do not use the CDC's materials. Lambda also handed out dunce caps to Texas' top health official and the New York Catholic Diocese's new bishop for their failures in responding to the AIDS epidemic.

Top grades this year went to a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter, several lawmakers in California, New Jersey and New York, and activists including a crusading nun who operates the largest online database of AIDS resources.

For the first time since Lambda first issued its World AIDS Day Report Card in 1996, the annual report was dedicated to the memory of three activists — Kyoshi Kurosawa, Stephen Gendin, and Gary Bailey — who all died this year. Kurosawa was the mastermind behind the Critical Path AIDS Project (www.critpath.org), an on-line activist resource that provides free access to the Internet to thousands of people with HIV in the Philadelphia area. Gendin, a fearless writer for *POZ* magazine, was a driving force in many direct action groups, including ACT UP/New York and ACT UP/Rhode Island. Bailey was a long time HIV educator in Philadelphia.

"World AIDS Day reminds us of progress

and terrible losses in our battle against this international plague," said Lambda Executive Director Kevin M. Cathcart on the eve of the worldwide observance on December 1. "The fighters we have lost to AIDS are especially missed, and our determination burns with their memory," he said.

Some 20 individuals and institutions are graded this year, including:

- F for William Archer, Texas Gov. George W. Bush's health commissioner. Under his direction, Texas built an abysmal record by failing to provide adequate treatments for people with AIDS. Archer also blamed the state's high teen pregnancy rate on Latina women and dismissed concerns about the high number of people without insurance in his state.

- F for Edward Egan, the new Archbishop of New York. Bad news for a region with the country's most people with AIDS: the new spiritual leader of more than two-million New York Catholics in the past opposed sound prevention programs in city schools, saying one option was to "wait for AIDS to put an end to us all."

- A for Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Mark Schoofs. His series for *The Village Voice*, "AIDS: The Agony of Africa," heralded increased attention to the global AIDS epidemic, particularly in Africa, where the devastation is widespread.

- A for Rudy Galindo, the United States men's figure skating champion in 1996. The first Mexican-American and openly gay professional figure skater, he disclosed his HIV status in April and has since worked tirelessly to promote AIDS awareness.

- A for Internet crusader Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark. A former marine, this transgendered nun founded her own religious order. Now she singlehandedly runs the world's largest database

See LAMBDA on page 9

The latest Q-Poll results

Are you planning on cancelling your AOL account due to the recent funding controversy?

Yes, I will — 16% No, I won't — 33% I don't use AOL — 50%

To participate in our new Q-Poll, access www.q-notes.com