

north & south CAROLINA

Notes

noted . notable . noteworthy GLBT issues

ALL THE
CHERS
WERE
THERE!



VOLUME 17 . ISSUE 26

SINCE 1986

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MAY 10 . 2003

South Carolina carries it colors out in the open

"We will never achieve equality if we avoid the public arena. Until we can come out in the classroom as well as the chatroom, the boardroom as well as the bar, we won't change the culture. We have to venture into the public sphere as gay and lesbian people to make a difference for gays and lesbians in this state."

— Ed Madden, SC Pride Movement

"Sleepy, little, old Columbia didn't think it had any gay people 'til it saw them in the streets."

— Harriet Hancock, one of the organizers of South Carolina's first Pride march



Mother of Gay Charlotte
Oleen Love

1932 - 2003

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Q.POLL RESULTS: no

yes: mom; yes, dad
yes, 2 moms; yes 2 dads

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McGill Baptist Church expelled for baptizing couple

"Salvation is ours," sayeth Cabarrus Baptist Association

by Leah D. Sepsenwol

CONCORD, NC — A Southern Baptist church has been expelled from a regional group of Churches after its pastor baptized two openly gay men and the congregation welcomed them with open arms.

According to Rev. Steve Ayers, pastor of McGill Baptist Church (McGill Avenue Baptist, before recently moving to a new location), many in the congregation knew the couple from Kannapolis was gay when the baptism took place during a March 16 service.

The baptismal ceremony marks a believer's acceptance into the Church — and into a life devoted to

Christ. Deciding a person's worthiness was not up to him or the Church, Ayers said.

He told the *Charlotte Observer*, "I think salvation is between them and God.

"I'm not going to exclude anybody from God's kingdom. Our business is to love and follow His (Jesus') example. That's all."

In a closed meeting, delegates to the Cabarrus Baptist Association in Concord, voted 250 to 11 to expel McGill Baptist Church from its membership.

Rev. Randy Wadford, Missions Director for the Cabarrus Baptist Association read a statement after the vote, "The homosexual lifestyle is contrary to God's will and plan for mankind (sic) ... To allow individuals into the membership of a local Church without evidence or

testimony of true repentance is to condone the old lifestyle."

The regional group of about 80 Churches is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Rev. Ayers responded, "The kingdom of Christ is about love, about God's grace and mercy. When a Church becomes so judgmental that it can't accept people into their fellowship, it is a sad, sad day.

The McGill Baptist Church organized in 1902, now 800 strong, stands in full support of its pastor and of its fellow gay congregants. The Church still is in the Southern Baptist Convention, while belonging to the more liberal, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The two men, who did not want to discuss the matter publicly, expressed deep regret to the pastor for what has befallen the Church.

Rev. Ayers said, "This has only galvanized our congregation. We are stronger than ever in our resolve and our faith."

And on its web site home page, proudly proclaiming its centennial legacy, McGill Baptist proclaims something else — evolving and embracing.

"As we are in a very important point in the life of our Church, we are keenly aware of how different things are from the time McGill Avenue Baptist Church began, and yet how some things are the same.

"The need for a heartfelt Christian community is timeless. Community is what we are about. Our congregation is varied and diverse, young and old, native and newcomer, but we are one family in Christ."

info: website: www.mcgillbaptist.com

"Gay? Fine by me." at Duke University

DURHAM — Duke University was teaching tolerance. T-shirts began dressed for a different kind of success: appearing in all colors with the simple,

affirming phrase: "gay? fine by me."

Leila Nesson who is straight and Lucas Schaefer who is gay, partnered on the project.

One evening they were having dinner with a few friends discussing campus life and changes they would like to see.

Leila said, "About half the group was gay and the discussion turned to gay issues.

"We agreed that, while there was not a particularly threatening atmosphere for gays on campus, there certainly was a general perception the average Duke student who was not gay, did not really



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