

1984: Greater Year For LPC?

The following is an open letter to the gay/lesbian community.

By **BILLIE STICKELL**
President, Lambda Political Caucus

1984! The year of big brother. Orwell's threatening theme always sent chills down my spine.

The year he made so famous is almost on us, but it certainly looks different from his depressing predictions. Americans have always fought for freedom, refusing to allow the nightmares of Orwell's book to happen in our society.

At least, most of the population has been provided with a certain degree of freedom. But some groups have found that they are less equal, including gays and lesbians.

The fact that gays and lesbians enjoy freedom in some areas while being oppressed in others spurs many of us to action; others step back into bribed silence in hopes of not rocking the boat since the payoff for not causing trouble is that the compromiser "might" be allowed to keep a job or apartment.

The Lambda Political Caucus was born out of frustration with this division.

Dedicated to the educational and political integration of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's gay/lesbian community with that of the non-gay

community, the Caucus is finishing its third and best year. Having been part of the initiative to begin the Gay/Lesbian Caucus (Lambda PC's former name) three years ago, I have felt the frustration of too little help, an overabundance of apathy and helplessness in the face of a sometimes overpowering legal/political system that leans heavily against gays.

But for the first time since my involvement began, I am excited and optimistic about our future.

With fantastic help from a number of enthusiastic individuals and financial support from QCQ, the Caucus was involved in the city council and mayoral campaigns of 1983. During the Caucus/Acceptance Candidates' Forum this fall, we heard very encouraging remarks from a number of candidates who were elected to city council. As a result, despite its few numbers, the Caucus threw its support in the mayoral election to Harvey Gantt in the form of a gay phone bank, contacting as many gays and lesbians as possible to pull together the gay vote. We are very proud to report, and as most of you probably know by now, that Mr. Gantt will be our new mayor and we are convinced that he will lead us in a progressive and fair manner.

You may ask what this means to you.

Mr. Gantt has stated he will appoint with-

out question one or two people nominated by us to the Community Relations Council, which was created during the early integration years to deal with problems of discrimination by making recommendations to the city council to ease the pain of integration in housing and other areas. That purpose in recent years has included areas in addition to the racial. The Caucus sees this as the opportunity we've worked for to add "sexual orientation" to the present list of groups that legally cannot be discriminated against in Charlotte's housing ordinances, a recommendation which should come from the CRC.

The Caucus will begin a screening process shortly to select for Mr. Gantt's consideration the names of one man and one woman who can responsibly represent our community on the council. (Nominations should be sent with supporting material to P.O. Box 221841, Charlotte 28222).

In telephoning gay voters during this election, we discovered something very important — *many brothers and sisters are not registered to vote!* Not only does that make the nonregistered less effective as citizens, it also makes the Caucus's job of voter mobilization nearly impossible. For the sake of progress, we need each gay brother's and sister's vote! Don't let another election catch you unable to support a candidate that could make a difference in your life.

The Caucus will organize a voter registration campaign before the 1984 spring primaries in hopes of expanding the gay/lesbian voting block slowly developing in Charlotte. To register sooner, visit any of the county's library branches. Your vote counts and you won't find one of us in the Caucus ever taking that fact for granted.

Other projects under way include a survey of gay grocery purchasing habits. The survey will show the percentage of support from the gay/lesbian community should a grocery chain be found to be discriminating against gays in hiring, firing or promotion practices. Once these buying patterns and opinions are gathered, the management of every major grocery store in Charlotte will be asked about hiring/firing/promotion practices, and information will be released to them of the impact our spending dollars have in their stores.

1984 could be a great year for us all. We have a chance for the first time in years to unseat Jesse Helms, and this time a candidate (Governor Jim Hunt) has stepped forward who could actually muster the votes to do it. And, of course, Ronald Reagan will be with us for another four years unless we get off our duffs and do something about it.

I have always found political campaigns very exciting. That is why I am asking you to make this the year you do something for yourself.

You can make a difference whether you are "out" or not by working for the candidates of your choice, by urging friends to register to vote, by joining the Caucus, by volunteering for projects. We must pull together to be heard and it takes a lot of voices and all kinds of help, big and small. The Caucus cannot do it alone.

The thrill of winning with your candidate has to be experienced to be understood, and the rewards can be many for us all.

Think about it: isn't 1984 your year?

Lesbian Play Tryouts Dec. 8-9

Possibly for the first time ever, an out-of-the-closet lesbian play is going to be staged in Charlotte. And you can try out for a part.

Eight woman actors are needed for the beloved play "Last Summer at Bluefish Cove" by Jane Chambers, who died this fall after many years as the foremost lesbian playwright in the United States. The production will go on stage for six performances: 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, Jan. 17-21,

and the afternoon of Sunday, Jan. 22.

The setting is New England, a quiet coastal resort. The occasion is another year's vacation by these eight good friends, one of whom is dying. With warmth and good humor, poignancy and sadness, the other seven learn to deal with the pending death of a loved companion.

Director Margaret Kelso, a Charlotte playwright, will hold auditions at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Dec. 8-9, at UNCC's Rowe Arts Building Acting Studio (room 134). Call Kelso at 333-2830 for more information about auditions.

Women and men will also be needed for set building and backstage work.

Volunteers are needed Dec. 17 and 18 to build the basics of the set. Call 372-7121 to help.

The play will be produced by Progressive Players Productions under the auspices of QCQ. The same organizational duo staged a highly successful run of "P.S., Your Cat Is Dead" last August.

"Last Summer at Bluefish Cove" presents Charlotte-area lesbians with an excellent opportunity for breaking into acting and working with a director who wrote the award-winning "Bea" about a night nurse in an emergency hospital ward. Kelso co-authored "The Christmas Carol" which was performed in November at UNCC.

QCQ/PPP needs items for props: 1) boards that look like pier pilings (old phone poles, railroad timbers, etc.); 2) a load of sand; 3) seashells; 4) old carpet (to be painted and used as boulders). Call 372-7121 to donate items.

For ticket reservations, call 372-7121. Tickets will also be available at Friends of Dorothy Bookshop beginning Jan. 4.

Q-Notes is a monthly news/feature/advertising periodical published by Queen City Quordinators primarily to disseminate information about Charlotte gay/lesbian organizations, particularly groups affiliated with QCQ. Articles in Q-Notes do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of the QCQ Board of Directors.

DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Prepaid classified liner ads: \$1 per line. Allow 45 characters per line (count each number, punctuation mark and space between words or numbers as a character). Partial lines count as a full line. No advertising with sexual overtones accepted.

Q-NOTES

P.O. BOX 221841
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IN THE BARS Friday, Dec. 30
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