

Q-NOTES

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PFLAG Hotline, Charlotte (704) 364-1474
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MAP director forced out Critics charge Board is homophobic, racist

By Francois Pierre Nel
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE — Since the openly gay director of Charlotte's largest AIDS service agency was forced to resign July 8, public charges of homophobia and racism have been lobbed at the group's board, which is led by a Catholic nun.

The battle pits Metrolina AIDS Project's 18-member board against clients, staff, volunteers and some gay and lesbian supporters, who charge the action is only the latest in an ongoing effort to tailor the agency's image to the straight, white community.

Board president Sister Mary Thomas Burke denied the allegations, but said, "We are not a gay organization. We have gay clients....It's for everyone."

The turmoil isn't expected to end soon.

And many insiders, including the group's founder, fear the conflict may harm MAP's ability to execute its mission: providing services to people with HIV.

"What saddens me is that MAP was designed to provide services and most people didn't care who those (clients) were and what they believed in. Now people seem more concerned about that than about delivering services," founding director Les Kooyman said.

Kooyman and five other gay men started the agency in 1985; it currently serves over 400 clients. However, since he stepped down a year ago, several board actions have drawn fire from area gays and lesbians. They allege that because of homophobia the board has:

- censored gay-positive statements from the agency newsletter;
- deleted the agency's name from envelopes sent to donors;
- reprimanded the new executive director, John Conley, 40, for publicly acknowledging his homosexuality, and forced his resignation on Monday, July 8.

Nun's leadership questioned

"What is a nun doing as the president, anyway?" said gay-rights activist and MAP contributor Peter Boles. "The Catholic church thinks gays and lesbians are sick and sinful and the Pope doesn't believe in condoms."

Her position on MAP's board does not conflict with her personal beliefs or the mission of her order, the Sisters of Mercy, Burke said. "I see them as people who happen to be gay, or happen to be straight, or happen to be a nun....I am a nun, but I hope people will see me as a person first," she said.

Anonymous AIDS testing sites announced

RALEIGH, July 23 — State health director Dr. Ronald Levine announced the 17 counties where anonymous testing will continue to be offered after August 31. In addition to Mecklenburg County, they are Buncombe, Carteret, Catawba, Cumberland, Dare, Guilford, Halifax, Macon, New Hanover, Orange, Pasquotank, Pitt, Surry, Wake, Watauga and Wayne.

According to a report in *The Charlotte Observer*, Dr. Levine said he was complying with a February decision by the state Commission for Health Services to begin phasing out anonymous testing. Confidential testing, where names are recorded but kept private, will continue in all 100 local health departments. Names are not recorded for anonymous testing.

The commission authorized a study by state health officials on this issue. If the study shows the need for anonymous testing no longer exists, then the commission will eliminate it by 1994.

MAP: A year in review page 7
Carolinas Celebration proceeds as planned page 7



Sister Mary Thomas Burke, President, MAP Board of Directors

Burke said she supports all MAP's activities, including programs like "Man to Man," a series of safe sex workshops for gay couples

which advocates the use of condoms. "I think that if that's what we need in order to prevent AIDS — that's what we need to do," she said.

MAP supporters and staff say Burke was recruited to head the agency's board because, as a Catholic nun, she appeared above reproach and would be able to shield the agency from right-wing extremists, like Charlotte pastor Joseph Chambers. Also, Burke's position of chair of UNC-Charlotte's department of human services would help the agency gain United Way support, which in turn would help MAP's chances of winning government grants.

In those areas, Burke's leadership appears to have been successful. Right-wing critics seem to have turned their attention to other groups who support gays and lesbians (like Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians). And last fall, after Conley completed the application, the United Way agreed to make MAP a member agency.

Debra Arrington, who coordinates a regional AIDS consortium from the United Way office in Charlotte, refused to comment on how MAP's turmoil would affect the group's standing with her organization. "It's an agency matter," she said, abruptly.

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PFLAG Convention provides 'Ammunition To Dream' for parents and gays

By Don King
Special to Q-Notes

Marcia (pronounced MAR-see) Solomon has two adult sons. David Craig, 27, critiques scripts and books for movie potential and recommends buys for Haft-Nassiter, a Hollywood firm whose principals produced the movies "Dead Poets Society" and "The Big Chill." He and his male lover, Brian Binder, have been together for three years. The other son, 31, is a Christian fundamentalist estranged from his gay brother.

Solomon learned that David is gay his freshman year at college in Chapel Hill. He told her on a Friday night at the beginning of a weekend together. For two days she pretended it wasn't that important. She cried all the way back to Charlotte, learned all she could about homosexuality, and jumped at the chance to participate when Charlotte's PFLAG chapter came into being.

With her mother, Solomon operates a small bookkeeping and accounting business in Charlotte. She was valedictorian of her class at an American high school serving U.S. Navy families in Rota, Spain; graduated after her divorce with honors from UNC-Charlotte with a degree in English literature; has completed 40 hours of a mas-

ters program in industrial/organizational psychology; and sits on the board of directors of PFLAG/Charlotte, the Charlotte ACLU chapter and the Charlotte chapter of MENSA.



Solomon

only know that if you can find someone to let you love them, you go for it and you love that person and you let them love you. If you can experience that in your life, you'll have more than most people."

Marcia Solomon revealed much of herself during an interview about the Oct. 11-14 10th Annual Convention of the International Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays at the Omni Charlotte Hotel. Theme of the interview was why parents and gay people should attend.

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Last call changes permanently to 2:00 am

By David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

In the final days of its session, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a new law allowing the sale of alcoholic beverages until 2:00 am year-round, rather than stopping at 1:00 am when daylight saving time ends in the fall.

The old law, which had been attacked by members of the convenience/grocery store, nightclub and restaurant industries for years, had long outlived its usefulness. The old law was passed so long ago that now no one is sure why the time distinction was enacted in the first place.

The additional hours of alcohol sales will bring the state of North Carolina millions of

dollars in added revenue. The state will not be the only one to benefit from the General Assembly's surprise move; North Carolina's gay nightclubs should see a marked rise in revenue at year's end.

Q-Notes contacted Greg Bradford, manager of Oleen's Lounge and the Brass Rail levi/leather bar to get his thoughts on the time change. "I think it's wonderful. It will give us a chance to make some extra money on alcohol sales, and it will give patrons an extra hour to enjoy themselves. I think it's a good decision all the way around."

When asked to estimate how the additional hour year-round will translate to added revenue, Bradford projected a \$50,000 increase for Oleen's and \$25,000 increase for the Brass Rail.

Out & About

Meetings, Social Highlights,
Community News, Etc.

▼ Thursday/1-Saturday/10

That bitchin' Chicklet is back in Innovative Theatre's production of *Psycho Beach Party*, written by gay playwright Charles Busch. It's happening, dude, at the Pterodactyl Club, 1600 Freedom Drive, 8:00 pm. Tickets are \$4 on Thursday, \$6 on Friday and Saturday. Info: 704/342-1889.

▼ Thursday/1-Sunday/4

Birds of a Feather...the wilder side of pink is the theme of the Hotlanta River Expo 1991 in Atlanta. Registration fee is \$160 per person. Info: 404/874-3976.

▼ Saturday/3

The North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE) Anti-Violence and Discrimination Documentation Committee will meet from 1:00-4:00 pm at 1209 Forsyth Street, Winston-Salem. Info/Directions: Martha Wilson, 919/727-0915; Mab Segrest, 919/596-4862.

▼ Saturday/3-Sunday/4

The next organizational meeting for the April 1993 March on Washington will take place at the Allerton Hotel in Chicago. Info: MOW Hotline 1-800-832-2889.

▼ Tuesday/6

Democratic candidate Al Rousso makes his pitch to become Charlotte's next mayor to the folks at First Tuesday, 7:30 pm, St. Peter's Episcopal Church (corner of 7th and Tryon). Info: Dick Woodhouse, 704/334-1886.

▼ Tuesday/13

The Charlotte Gay/Lesbian Leadership Coalition will meet in MCC's Social Hall, 7th Floor, 4037 E. Independence, 7:00 pm. Info: Matt Chila, 704/532-8484.

▼ Saturday/17

Play ball! The Queen City Friends (QCF) go to the Knights Baseball Game. Info: Linda, 704/54-0845 or Switchboard, 704/525-6128.

▼ Thursday/22

A blood-and-thunder melodrama, *Law of Desire*, has its showing at Duke Power Theatre, Spirit Square, 8:00 pm, as part of the Charlotte Gay & Lesbian Film Series. Directed by Pedro Almodovar, this 1987 film is laced with black humor and a clear-eyed look at homosexual relationships. In Spanish with English subtitles. Tickets: \$5. Info: 704/376-9563.

▼ Friday/23-Sunday/25

The OWLS (Older Wiser Lesbians) get away to Charleston/Folly Beach. Info: Jackie, 704/525-8121 or Carol, 704/531-1200.

▼ Saturday/24

The Concerned Charlotteans have called for a city-wide march in downtown Charlotte - "Strengthening The Family, Protecting Our Children." Local activists are considering a counter march.

The Opera Training Company of Charlotte makes its debut with its premiere performance of a fully-staged and costumed evening

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