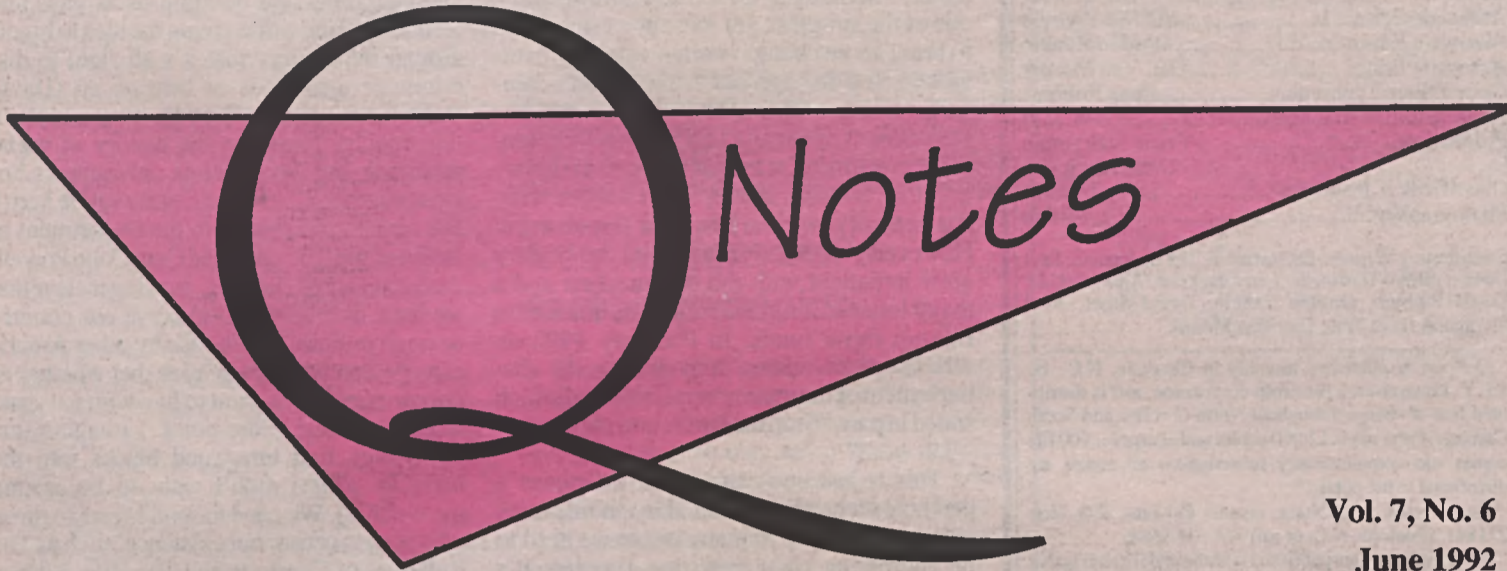


P R I D E

NC Pride
Asheville
June
13

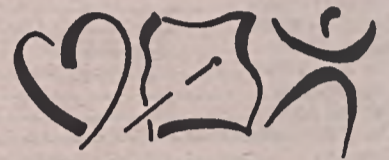
Q-Notes
Picnic
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MCSP fund raiser shut down

by David Prybylo
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE - Metrolina Community Service Project had planned a gala evening for Saturday night, May 16. Masters Inn on North Tryon was secured, 55 volunteers had been assigned, food was prepared, and beer, wine, and soft drinks were purchased for a crowd expected to number in the hundreds. It was to be their fourth annual Casino Night, an evening of simulated Las Vegas style gambling.

Plans changed, however, when David Parsons, MCSP board member and chairperson of Casino Night, was contacted on Friday, May 15, at 4:40 in the afternoon by Ron Kaylor of the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement division. Casino Night, he told Parsons, was against the law in North Carolina, and if MCSP continued with their plans, he and the other board members would face arrest.

"At first," said Parsons, "I thought it was a joke! I thought somebody was doing this because they knew I was a little nervous about Saturday night, you know, coming together smoothly."

It wasn't a joke. Kaylor told Parsons that gambling in North Carolina was against the law and that he had been instructed by his

department to ensure that the MCSP function would not occur. Parsons spoke to George Basnett, Kaylor's supervisor, and explained that Casino Night was not truly gambling because no money or valuables would change hands. Furthermore, Parsons told Basnett, this type of event occurred all the time, and that in fact this was MCSP's fourth Casino Night. Basnett remained adamant that Casino Night was illegal.

Parsons then contacted the A.L.E. office in Raleigh where he spoke to Ann Fulton. He said Fulton told him that despite the fact that no real gambling was to take place, the event was still illegal because of the gaming equipment that would be used.

"The issue is not gambling," Fulton said when contacted by Q-Notes. "The issue is the actual tables, whether they are felt cloths that can be tied on a table or the table itself." She referred to a 1791 statute prohibiting possession of gaming tables which she says was changed in 1931. Fulton said that a judge in a 1986 case ruled that actual use of a gaming table does not need to occur in order for possession to be a violation.

Parsons said that Fulton told him that her office had been aware of Casino Night since at least the previous week and had told Kaylor to contact MCSP. Fulton confirmed this,

saying that she heard of Casino Night from a group in Asheville who had called several weeks earlier to find out about having a casino party and that she advised them against holding the event. She says the group called later and told her about MCSP's event in Charlotte, so she contacted the A.L.E. office in Charlotte on May 8, but heard nothing more until Parsons contacted her a week later.

"I can't believe they knew about this and

waited until the last minute to call," complained Parsons. "It's as if they deliberately waited so that we wouldn't be able to do anything about it."

Parsons' next step was to contact an attorney, who advised him to cancel the event. "The lawyer I first talked to said that if there was a way for the A.L.E. to hassle us, they

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NCCGLE report indicates crisis

RALEIGH—At a 10:30 am press conference here on Wednesday, May 20, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE) released its

annual report, *Homophobia and Human Rights in North Carolina*. The report contained the organization's data from 1991, gathered by a network of lesbian and gay agencies across the state. The document addresses the following issues: the needs of gay and lesbian youth, the abuse of lesbians and gay men in the military, AIDS policy, child custody, employment, police policy, and hate crimes.

Participating in the press conference were Mab Segrest, NCCGLE spokesperson, Rev. Jimmy Creech, founding member of the Raleigh Religious Network for Gay and Lesbian Equality, Beth Harrison of The Database, and Bill Brantley, AIDS activist.

The total of 680 homophobic, or anti-gay, incidents in 1991 put North Carolina once again at the top of the list nationally, according to the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that gathers national data on anti-gay violence. "North Carolina for the fifth year in a row reported more incidents than any other state," said Kevin Berrill, director of NGLTF's Anti-Violence Project, "although other states reported more violent incidents. Clearly, North Carolina has a severe problem."

The majority (375) of the incidents in the report involved harassing calls to gay/lesbian hotlines. However, 61 involved violent or illegal acts that qualify as "hate crimes" under federal guidelines. The U.S. Justice Department defines "bias crime" as a "criminal offense committed against a person or property which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, ethnic/national origin group, or sexual orientation group."

Mab Segrest commented, "As with all

injustices, each of these incidents hurt not only the lesbians and gay men against whom they are aimed, but the fabric of human community. When homophobia determines AIDS policy, the public health of every North Carolina

linian suffers. When ministers use the narrowest interpretation of scriptures to demonize lesbians and gay men, they lose the spirit of love. Surely when a father banishes a gay son from the household, everyone in that family hurts from the separation. When politicians use fear of

AIDS and bigotry towards homosexuals to try to poison the political atmosphere, citizens lose sight of the real issues that affect them and, therefore, their ability to affect those issues."

The report also cited positive developments in rights for gays and lesbians. These included the North Carolina Council of Churches' resolution condemning anti-gay violence and calling for repeal of the sodomy laws, the actions of Pullen Memorial and Binkley Baptist churches in allowing a gay minister, Orange County District Attorney Carl Fox's decision not to prosecute two gay men arrested in Chapel Hill on sodomy charges, a decision at UNC-Asheville to add "sexual orientation" to its employment discrimination statement, and the decision of the Durham schools to allow members of an advocacy group for lesbian and gay youth to offer training to school guidance counselors.

"The tide is beginning to turn against homophobic abuses of human rights in North Carolina," Segrest said. "The kinds of incidents catalogued here have, we believe, gone on in this state for a long time. But gay men and lesbians are no longer willing to tolerate this treatment. Likewise, people of conscience across North Carolina are beginning to speak out for our civil and human rights. We trust that this report will contribute to a growing movement for justice."

Gays, Police to hold first town meeting

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—On Wednesday, June 3, members of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County gay and lesbian community will have their first open dialogue with local law enforcement personnel.

This meeting promises to be an historic exchange, providing the opportunity for gays and lesbians to publicly express their feelings for the first time.

Representatives from the Charlotte Police Department, Mecklenburg County Police, Park Rangers, and District Attorney's office are expected to attend.

The forum will be held at the Unitarian Church of Charlotte, 234 N. Sharon Amity Rd., at 7:30 pm, and will be open to all members of the gay and lesbian community and its allies.

No general interest media will be allowed to take part in the proceedings, but Q-Notes will be on hand to cover them.

Topics of discussion may include, but will not be limited to, the recent wave of arrests for soliciting a crime against nature, anti-gay hiring practices for law enforce-

ment applicants, treatment of gay crime victims by law enforcement personnel, or non-compliance by area law enforcement agencies in collecting data on "hate crimes" as requested by the federal government in 1991.

Since there is no formal agenda for the meeting, people should come prepared to introduce the topics they want to have addressed.

It will be extremely important to have a large turnout for the meeting to underscore the fact that many Charlotte/Mecklenburg County citizens are affected by law enforcement practices as gays and lesbians and that they are concerned about how their lives are being impacted as such.

If few people attend the meeting, the assumption will be that no one views this issue as pressing and law enforcement agencies will continue to conduct business as usual. Community support is vital in this initial effort to better educate law enforcement personnel.

For more information about the meeting or to discuss potential topics for the meeting, call Don King at (704) 332-3834.



Kim Fisher