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Creating Change Conference set for Durham

by Darryl R. Williams
Special to Q-Notes

DURHAM—This November, about 1200 gay and lesbian grassroots activists from the United States and other countries will attend the 6th Annual Creating Change Conference in Durham, NC. The conference, sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Policy Institute, is a forum for organizers and activists to share skills and dialogue about the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement and to discuss strategies for the coming year, according to conference organizers.

While the conference is sponsored by the NGLTF Policy Institute, it is hosted by a committee of North Carolinians representing several organizations from across the state.

The fact that the NGLTF Policy Institute chose to hold the conference in the Triangle (a.k.a. Jesse Helms' back yard) has invited a question that NGLTF Conference Director Ivy Young has heard from activists around the country: "You're having it *where*?"

Conference organizers originally planned

to hold the conference in the Washington, D.C. area; however, contractual problems with the hotel they were planning to use sent them into a last-minute scramble to find a site that met two primary criteria: space to accommodate the activists and a community able to host the conference. Durham fit the bill and its selection marks the first time the conference will be held in the South.

The conference, which is being held at the Omni-Durham Hotel and Convention Center, will be preceded by three day-long institutes beginning Wednesday, November 10, and including The Diversity Training Institute; The People of Color Organizing Institute; and The Race, Class, and Gender Institute. The institutes, organizers say, are designed to give organizers and activists insight into the critical issues affecting the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement. The conference itself, which officially commences on Friday, November 12, consists of day-long "intensives" and skills-building workshops.

Using "intensives" is new to the conference this year, and, much like the pre-confer-

ence institutes, they are designed to allow activists and organizers to focus on particular issue areas. The ten intensives being offered are Fight the Right, Civil Rights/Privacy, Health Care, Southern Organizing, Age and Aging, Youth Organizing, Work and Family, Anti-Violence, Sex and Sexuality, and International Issues/Organizing.

Skills-building workshops remain a core part of the conference and include Media, Fund Raising, Campus Organizing, Organizational Development, Lobbying, Diversity Training and Education/Information Programs.

Three plenary speakers are also being featured at the conference. North Carolina author and activist Mab Segrest will speak at the opening plenary; Segrest currently serves on the board of the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE) and is the Coordinator for the U.S. Urban-Rural Mission of the World Council of Churches. Dr. Franklin Kameny, a founding member of the National Gay Task Force and the Mattachine Society of Washington, will speak

at a luncheon plenary on Saturday. And Dr. Marjorie Hill will speak at the closing plenary; Hill is currently the Assistant Vice President for Special Populations with New York City's Health and Hospital Corporation and formerly Director of the New York City Mayor's Office for the Lesbian and Gay Community.

At least two events will be open to those not attending the conference. A community dance, sponsored by the Host Committee, will be held on Friday evening, and the Stand Up For Your Rights III Performance Gala will be held Saturday evening. The gala will feature various gay and lesbian artists and performers.

North Carolina Host Committee Co-Chair Mark Donahue believes that the benefits of the Triangle's hosting the conference will be significant. It will mark the second time in the past year that the Triangle has hosted a major national gay and lesbian convention. In November 1992, approximately 300 elected and appointed openly gay and lesbian officials

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1994 Pride March to be held in Charlotte

by Kathy Staley
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—Between 3,000 and 5,000 gay and lesbian North Carolinians are expected to converge in the city of Charlotte next year, June 3-5, to celebrate gay, lesbian and bisexual pride and to call for equal treatment under the law.

North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. informed Charlotte organizers on July 24 that the city's initial bid to sponsor the Ninth Annual North Carolina Lesbian and Gay Pride March and Rally was accepted.

Jim Duley, the executive director of NC Pride, said, "I've been wanting to have the march in Charlotte. The location is real central to every-



Dan Kirsch

one. Symbolically, Charlotte is the largest city in the state and the economic capital." NC Pride is the Durham-based not-for-profit corporation which sponsors the Lesbian and Gay Pride March and Rally providing support such as minimum financial backing and mailing lists to the local organizing committees that plan the actual event.

"1994 is an important year in gay and lesbian history," said Dan Kirsch, co-chair of Charlotte's Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and Operations Manager of North

Carolina Dance Theatre. "June 1969 marks the 25th anniversary of New York City's Stonewall riot, the event that started the modern gay equality movement." A massive march is planned for June 26, 1994 in New York City to commemorate the riots. The NC, SC and Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Pride Marches have shifted their 1994 march dates so that participants may also go to New York.

The Charlotte LOC has formed a Steering Committee and several sub-committees, selecting Sue Henry and Dan Kirsch as co-chairs. Other Steering Committee members are Brad Caldwell, Donna Hilbert, Don King, Mike Larson, Kimberly Melton, Jan Walsh, Jay Williams and

Dick Woodhouse.

The Steering Committee consists of only "out" persons; however, sub-committee participation is open to any interested persons. Committees available include Fundraising, Marketing (Publicity and Merchandising), Pride Guide, Rally Set-up/Clean-up, March/Parade, Recreational/Sports Events, Special Services (i.e., community housing, child care, services for the differently abled), Political Action, Stonewall 25 Organizers, Building

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Openly gay candidate runs for Asheville City Council

by Brent L. Pack
Q-Notes Staff

ASHEVILLE—The winds of political change have recently been blowing across local precincts, districts, states and even the nation, paving the way for gay and gay affirming candidates to enter and win political races. Sensing this change, Ron Lambe declared his candidacy to become the first openly gay candidate to seek a seat on the Asheville City Council.

Although surrounded by conservative and fundamental Democratic and Republican influences in Western North Carolina, the political base of Asheville has recently been changing to a more middle-of-the-road political stance. In the most recent city council races, successful candidates have recognized

the power of the gay and gay affirming voting base, often appealing to them for support.

Ron Lambe recognizes this strong emergence of gay, lesbian and bisexual influence; however, his political activity did not begin as a result of this change. Lambe began his political activity when being openly gay was not as easily tolerated or accepted. Working his way up through the political hierarchy of Asheville's Democratic Party, Lambe achieved election to the 2nd Vice Chair of the 15th Democratic Precinct in West Asheville. He has also served as Co-Chair of Citizens for Safe Drinking Water, Vice President of Citizens for Public Accountability, Co-Chair of the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council, Chairman of West Carolina Coal-

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Lowcountry basher found guilty in SC

CHARLESTON—"I had nothing to do with it, sir," were the last words former Citadel Cadet James T. Hill said before Judge Arthur MacFarland, Charleston City Municipal Court, found him guilty of simple assault.

According to the victim, William Munn of Charleston, he was leaving a well-known gay bar when the suspect and three others confronted him and asked, "Are you a faggot?" As Munn tried to leave the scene, Hill punched him in the mouth and the three others began to beat him in the face, head and ribs. Munn managed to run from the scene to call for help.

Hill told the judge that he wasn't "the one that hates gays," but admitted he did see the victim get beaten up outside the nightclub. The judge's verdict stood and Munn's attorney, Edmund Robinson, asked him to use this case as an example when sentencing Hill. "Mr. Hill needs some time behind bars to let him think about what he's done and also to let the rest of the community know that the police will protect people walking the streets

of this town whether they are gay or straight." But the judge said there is no hate crime statute in South Carolina and the charge was simple assault and ordered a \$200 fine and 30 days suspended.

While members of the Lowcountry Gay and Lesbian Alliance (LGLA) were happy about the verdict, they are disappointed this case was not accepted in a higher court. "It is perfectly clear to me that the solicitors office has their own agenda and the scales of justice do not include gays and lesbians," said Kevin Campbell, Co-Chair of LGLA. The LGLA, Munn and the ACLU begged Assistant Solicitor Kate Cunningham to bump this case to general sessions because it was clearly more than simple assault. Cunningham refused citing she saw no aggravating circumstances.

However, many are happy the judge in this smaller court saw it their way, and are hoping Hill's guilty verdict will send a message that crimes of hate should be crimes of the past.