

The gospel accordian to Judy NC Mobilization '96 under way

by Jonathan Padget
Q-Notes Staff

Elvis is alive and well and when he gets stuck at the airport, he calls Judy Tenuta for a ride. I know this, because I was on the line with Judy when he called. (Talk about a brush with greatness!) So, in the course of an interview with Judy Tenuta, I not only talked one-on-one with the "greatest female comedian who ever lived" — if you don't believe it, just ask her — I also got the dish on the King. According to Judy, he doesn't do much these days other than get stuck at airports, and not having word yet of the breakup of the Jackson-Presley marriage, he was still distressed about his daughter. "Judy," he said — while on the other line — "why did my Lisa Marie take off and marry a black girl?" Go figure.

For the "pigs" (Judy's affectionate term for her audience) who don't know or haven't kept up, Judy Tenuta has been an offbeat, accordian-wielding force in comedy since she began touring in the early 80s. Her national exposure has grown since her debut comedy album, *Buy this, Pigs*, in 1987, followed by her first HBO special. Judy is also a favorite performer at gay pride festivals, where gay and lesbian audiences seem enamored with her irreverent treatment of, well, just about anyone and anything. Judy's second album, *Attention Butt Pirates and Lesbiterians*, was recorded live at the 1993 Los Angeles Gay Pride Festival and earned her first Grammy nomination in the Comedy/Spoken Word category. Her third album, *In Goddess We Trust*, was released in late 1995, got her second nomination. I had questions for Judy when I called her California home, but once



our conversation started, they became so irrelevant upon realizing that one doesn't really ask Judy questions; one listens to Judy expound on whatever topics cross her mind. But that's cool, I think. I liked what she had to say.

First off, Judy was intrigued that I was writing for a gay newspaper in Charlotte. "I didn't know there were gay people in Charlotte," she pondered, "because isn't Jesse Helms from around there — that pig?" (Note here the fine distinction between the plural pigs, a term of endearment, and the singular pig, which is not.) Technically, yes, I explained, and offered a flimsy explanation of Tar Heel voting habits as well as the cosmopolitan flair of the Queen City that allows gay people to flourish. Judy seemed skeptical, but satisfied enough to jump to the next pressing matter in her life: The Grammy Awards.

After losing last year's award to the late Sam Kinnison, Judy's plan of action for this year's awards went something like this: "No matter who wins, I'm going up there. I mean — look at the competition: Jonathan Winters who hasn't had an album since the Boxer Rebellion; Martin Lawrence; and Jeff Foxworthy — you might be a redneck if... Nice. I was thinking of changing the title of my album to *You Might be a Goddess* if... and selling half a million copies. And then there's also some other guy who I've never heard of. I think I can win."

Judy is also concerned with another awards-fest, the Golden Globes, which were broadcast just the day before our interview. She is amazed by Jane Seymour, fondly described as "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Slut."

"This dykelet just had twins two months ago — who sucked her belly out? They have to give her an award

Continued on page 21

by Eagle White
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—Under the able guidance of human rights advocate Mandy Carter, NC Mobilization '96 (MOBE 96) is up and running in its quest to ensure that North Carolina's next US Senator will be responsive to the needs and concerns of the gay and lesbian community. Carter, recipient of a 1995 Stonewall Award, for her outstanding work in the area of LGBT rights, is optimistic about the potential for MOBE 96, which picks up the work started in the 1990 Senate campaign by "NC Senate Vote '90."

"NC MOBE 96 will not simply be about unseating Senator Helms," says Carter. "Maybe five years ago, the 'anyone but Helms' idea would have flown, but that's not where we as a community are now, in 1996. We must have a candidate to vote for, not simply a vote against Helms."

MOBE 96's first "statewide" meeting, held February 10 in Raleigh, drew more than 120 attendees, some from as far away as Asheville and Wilmington. Carter was pleased with the turnout, saying, "We had a good cross-sectional representation from North Carolina." The initial meeting addressed topics and questions about how the group would proceed to overcome the "built-in" support Helms enjoys from right-wing forces in North Carolina and nationwide. After debating whether or not to support a candidate in the primary elections, MOBE 96 decided it would, indeed support former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt in the May 7 primary.

MOBE 96 will be set up as a statewide network of volunteers. The beginnings of a "coordinating committee" are currently holding weekly meetings in Durham to help initiate approximately 25 subgroups of MOBE 96 to handle tasks such as phone banks, fundraising for the group, and MOBE 96 merchandising efforts. The first MOBE 96 Triad regional meeting, held Wednesday, February 21 in Greensboro, brought 20 people, two of whom have tentatively agreed to spearhead MOBE 96 efforts in Guilford and Forsyth

counties. A meeting is currently being scheduled in the Charlotte metro area for March (no date at press time).

Success of NC Mobilization '96 will depend upon North Carolina's LGBT community giving of its time, talents and financial resources. "There are many ways to become active in this group," says Carter, "and there are plenty of volunteer spaces open for members of our community to make a great difference in this campaign."

The next statewide meeting for MOBE 96 has been scheduled for May 11 in Raleigh. The day will include planning and strategy sessions followed by some type of evening "fun" activity.

Carter says she learned a great deal during the 1990 Senate campaign, "As I began to do this [MOBE 96], I said, 'what were our lessons from '90?' I think one of the most important and valuable lessons was that we were very single-focused, and as we kept going [in Senate Vote '90] we realized there was something much bigger than getting rid of Helms... what do we [the LGBT community] as a constituency, as a body of people who are very visible and viable, want in the long run?" Carter hopes the answer to this question will eventually be to run more gay and lesbian candidates for public office. "When the '96 election is over, I hope many of the people who worked with MOBE 96 will stay active in politics and maintain visibility of our community in party politics. We need to take ourselves more seriously, and become more of an institution within the state."

To contact NC Mobilization '96 by mail, send correspondence to NC Mobilization '96, PO Box 28718, Raleigh, NC 27611-8718. Phone (919) 828-3311, Fax (919) 828-0032, e-mail ncmobe96@aol.com.



Mandy Carter

Clinton and Justice Dept. say HIV ban is unconstitutional

by Dan Van Mourik
Q-Notes Staff

WASHINGTON, DC—As reported in the last issue of *Q-Notes*, President Clinton was expected to sign the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996 (S. 1124), and did so on February 10. People across the nation were outraged because of a Republican-instituted provision which instructs the Pentagon to discharge all service members who test positive for HIV within six months. In addition, such discharge would deny all health care benefits to service members and their dependents.

"GOP presidential candidate Bob Dornan [R-CA] and Senate Republican Whip Trent Lott [R-MS] pushed this outrageous measure through, despite the protests of more moderate members of their own party," said Daniel Zingale, Human Rights Campaign (HRC) political director. "The blame for this ugly amendment belongs squarely with them."

"There is absolutely no reason to treat people with HIV any differently from service members with other chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes," Zingale said. "This measure will remove

trained, experienced, healthy and productive people from the armed forces. Even the Pentagon has said it doesn't want this provision."

A preemptive strike was launched against the HIV measure in case Clinton signed the bill. On Thursday, February 1, a bill to overturn the HIV provision was introduced in the House. As of mid-February, the repeal bill has 74 cosponsors in the House and 35 in the Senate. Clinton himself has taken a strong stance against the measure.

"The president doesn't believe it [the HIV provision] should be in the defense authorization bill and will look for a way to try to take it out prior to the effective date in June," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry.

In support of the repeal measure, NBA basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson sent an urgent request to Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole [R-KS] and House Speaker Newt Gingrich [R-GA].

When Gingrich was asked what he thought about Johnson's letter, he stated that Johnson doesn't understand "the nature of being in the military and the danger of being in combat

Continued on page 21

Gay-affirming Anglican church takes root in North Carolina

by Wynn Bone
Special to Q-Notes

GREENVILLE, NC—The Reverend Thomas Farmer, minister of Good Shepherd Anglican Church in Greenville, NC, has recently been appointed to head development of the Evangelical Anglican Church in America (EACA) in the eastern United States.

The EACA, a gay-affirming denomination based in California and founded by Bishop Craig Bettendorf in December 1994, has grown from one to five congregations in less than a year and a half. Of those five congregations, the Greenville, NC congregation is the only one located in the eastern United States. The other four are located in California, Oregon, New Mexico and Michigan.

"The reason why there are so few churches at this point," explains Farmer, "is because whenever you are part of a liturgical church, especially of the Anglican or Roman Catholic traditions, you have to have priests and or-

dained clergy before starting a parish — which is the opposite from how it works with most Protestant denominations. So right now the EACA is focusing on clergy development — recruiting clergy to go out and start parishes."

Currently, the EACA has 42 clergy candidates nationwide. "And to have 42 clergy candidates within a year," asserts Farmer, "that's significant progress."

Of the 42 clergy candidates, six live in North Carolina. Those six are located in Gastonia, Hickory, Greensboro, Durham and Greenville. According to Farmer, their interests range from parish-based ministry to hospital chaplaincy work.

Farmer's parish in Greenville, which will be celebrating its one year anniversary next month, actually started as an unaffiliated Bible study class in July 1994. In October of that year, the group arranged for Associate Pastor Wanda Floyd of St. John's MCC in Raleigh to

Continued on page 21