

Q Notes

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Gay youth plan for national conference

by Susan Tedder
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WASHINGTON, DC—Nearly 500 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth are expected to attend the 2nd annual IYG National Youth festival in Washington, DC October 11-13, 1996. The festival will once again run concurrently with the Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) conference, since, as conference organizer Michelle O'Mara said, "the youth really enjoyed being around the P-FLAG group."

O'Mara noted that last year's joint effort proved to be surprisingly successful, and this year's festival is the outgrowth from "an obvious need." Young people from all over the country made the journey to Indianapolis last fall to take part in an opportunity to find support and socialize with others like themselves. It is an invaluable opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people under age 21 to enjoy the peer support often found by heterosexual adolescents in everyday activities, in a safe environment.

The theme for this year's conference is "Free 2B Me," and it will be held at the Ramada Inn in nearby New Carrollton, MD. The goal is to create a supportive context for youth to share their stories and experiences, while gaining strength, hope and support from their non-gay friends, relatives, and allies. Workshops, socials, tours of the Names Project AIDS Memorial



Quilt, the Holocaust Museum and the Smithsonian will fill the weekend, with the awareness raising Youth March on Washington scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

The cost for the conference ranges from \$120 to \$225 depending on the number of young people sharing a room. Some scholarships are available to offer financially disadvantaged youth the opportunity to attend. This cost includes registration, hotel, all meals, and a conference t-shirt. Conference attendees must complete a registration form, and those under 18 must submit a completed consent form signed by a parent or legal guardian, and notarized, with the registration.

For more information, to register, or to contribute a scholarship, contact Michele O'Mara or Carrie Ann Fisher at (317) 541-8726, e-mail IYG@Indy.net, web site <http://www.youth.org/loco/iyg>. Local P-FLAG chapters or youth organizations should also have information about the conference available. ▼

City Council cuts support for AIDS agency to meager \$7K

by Eagle White
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—A week before Raleigh's AIDS Service Agency (ASA) presented the City Council with a plan to build affordable housing for PWAs, Mayor Tom Fetzer and his conservative minions on the council sent the agency a message of their own — in the form of a 30 percent cut in city funds allocated to ASA. For the upcoming fiscal year, Raleigh's already meager \$10,000 contribution to the agency has been cut to \$7,000. The city allocation is to assist ASA in the maintenance of Husted House, a group care home for PWAs. Since opening in 1990, Husted House has provided shelter and care for over 50 persons living with HIV/AIDS.

ASA wasn't the only organization to suffer from the cuts, which were announced June 13 — the day the Council voted on Raleigh's \$246 million budget. Planned Parenthood saw all \$20,000 of its funding cut. Regarding the elimination of Planned Parenthood's subsidy, Fetzer told the *Raleigh News & Observer*, "They provide birth control devices to minors without parental consent. I don't think taxpayers ought to be paying for that. And there are many other organizations we could be funding that are not controversial."

The city's Human Resources and Human Relations Advisory Commission studied the requests of human services organizations and made recommendations to the council regarding funding — recommendations which were virtually ignored.

Mayor Fetzer responded to complaints about funding reductions to human services and arts programs with disdain. According to the *News & Observer*, he commented, "I just never cease to be amazed at the audacity of the people who think they have a constitutional right to get into the taxpayers' wallet." Councilman John Odom was also vocal about city funding for organiza-

"I never cease to be amazed at the audacity of the people who think they have a right to get into the taxpayers' wallet." — Raleigh Mayor Tom Fetzer

tions which assist the less fortunate. "Human services are not a part of what the city of Raleigh ought to be doing. I'd like to see, over a period of time, the whole thing eliminated."

In the wake of this hostile climate at City Hall, ASA has, for the second year, submitted a housing proposal for city certification — a project which requires no city funding. The proposal, which was delivered to the council on June 21, involves construction of a 24-unit, independent-living apartment complex for low income persons with disabilities — specifically those living with HIV/AIDS. The proposal, which could provide housing for up to 68 persons, requires city certification before it can be submitted to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for funding consideration. The plan would fall under HUD's Section 811 grant program, which would provide money for land purchase and
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UFMCC purchases headquarters

by Susan Tedder
Q-Notes Staff

LOS ANGELES—For more than a year, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) has been in the dreaming, planning, and praying stages of obtaining a facility to house the denominational headquarters and the historic "mother church," MCC Los Angeles. On June 7, that dream finally became a reality.

The capital campaign, "For the Next Generation," led founder and moderator Rev. Elder Troy Perry to member churches all over the world in an attempt to raise the \$1 million down payment, while other denominational officers worked on clearing hurdles such as financing the remaining \$2.8 million balance on the buildings and working with the West Hollywood Planning Commission to get a permit to use the facility as a place of public assembly for worship.

The Fellowship's current headquarters became too small for the denomination years ago, and MCCLA was irreparably damaged in the 1994 earthquake. This new facility could eas-

ily meet both needs, and offer opportunity for future growth. The Fellowship headquarters, a five-story structure, will house a memorial chapel, denomination offices, resource center, international services and the UFMCC Technology Center, to guide the church into the information explosion of the 21st Century. MCCLA will have office, classroom, meeting and worship space, child care area, and an audio/visual area. Both spaces are designed for efficient use and are easily adaptable as the needs of the Fellowship or the mother church change with time.

On the day escrow was closed, Rev. Elder Troy Perry said, "This is a great day for UFMCC, and for lesbians and gays everywhere. As conservative religious groups of the far-right continue their relentless assault on our dignity and freedoms, our Fellowship is preparing to consolidate our gains and strengthen our network of churches to position ourselves in the forefront of the struggle. This West Hollywood property is ideal for us. Once established there, our new Global Headquarters and the new MCC Los Angeles will be a highly visible symbol of the maturity, stability, decency and permanence of the gay/lesbian community."

UFMCC has over 300 churches in 18 countries, and is the fastest growing Christian denomination. Visit the UFMCC website at <http://www.ufmcc.com> for more information. ▼

Community ally moves away, legacy of integrity remains

by David Stout
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RALEIGH—After fighting the good fight for a long time, Rev. Jimmy Creech has moved on to his reward — in Nebraska

Creech, a 51-year-old, heterosexual, Methodist minister, was drummed out of his pulpit at Raleigh's Fairmont United Methodist Church in 1990 for supporting gays and lesbians. After serving as program associate for the NC Council of Churches since 1991, he was called at the end of June as the new senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Omaha, Nebraska. First United's decision returns Creech to congregational pastoring, his first ecumenical love. He described the situation as "...the chance of a lifetime."

Creech's removal from Fairmont arose from his active and visible participation in a clergy organization created to dialog on the complex issues between gays and mainline churches. Creech saw his involvement with the group as an extension of his commitment to minister to the oppressed. Unfortunately, his congregants did not make that connection. They decided to fire Creech after he participated in a statewide gay Pride march with the Raleigh Religious Net-

work for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

Losing his ministry at Fairmont was a severe blow to Creech, but it was only the beginning of his difficulties. Since he had been living in the church rectory, he was soon homeless and in financial disarray. Because of his stand on homosexuality, none of the available Methodist churches in the area would consider him for their vacant pastorates.

Despite the hardships, Creech never backed away from his beliefs. In fact, when he was hired by the NC Council of Churches, his social justice work escalated. He successfully campaigned for the Council to recognize Metropolitan Community Churches — which caused the Council to lose funding from the Methodists — and became one of the state's most outspoken critics of capital punishment. He told one reporter, "The church has to respond to

the problems of injustice in our society and all over the world. As long as there's someone facing oppression, the church has to be at the forefront advocating for their salvation."

It appears that Creech has found a good fit in First United Methodist; the church is known for its progressive social leanings and even hosts a chapter of Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG). ▼



Rev. Creech

