

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

Clintons serve as chairs
for Quilt display Page 4

Crape Myrtle provides
fun and funds Page 11

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Group wants to see Helms all washed up

by Wynn Bone
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—While many of the anti-Helms forces around the state are focusing their election year message on the Senator's infamous brand of mean-spiritedness, bigotry and extremism, Clean Up Congress, a political action committee staffed mainly by college students, is using a different approach. The organization hopes to influence the upcoming election by exposing Jesse Helms' environmental record.

Though it is a newcomer to North Carolina, Clean Up Congress has been running and winning campaigns since 1990, including a crucial effort in Virginia against Oliver North in 1994. From its recently-opened offices in Raleigh and Charlotte, volunteers are already being sent out daily to canvas neighborhoods.

"We target swing neighborhoods," explained Todd Foreman, campaign director of the Raleigh office. "We go door-to-door in neighborhoods where Helms has 50 percent or less support and talk to people about Helms' environmental record."

One of the main pieces of ammunition that the canvassers use on their door-to-door campaign is an environmental scorecard that Clean Up Congress has put together based on the Senator's poor environmental voting record. According to the scorecard, Helms ranks with an environmental score of zero percentage points for 1995. Among other things, it points out that Helms has voted to weaken restrictions on toxins, to prohibit the protection of any additional endangered species and to allow polluters to continue dumping contaminants while tying regulators up in court.

"Though I think everything that Jesse Helms does is just way out of line," said Foreman, "I believe that the environment is an issue where we can swing a lot of voters."

Foreman and his organization consider Helms to be vulnerable on the environment issue because, unlike the Senator's voting record, most North Carolinians are supportive of protecting the environment. In order to mobilize as many of these voters as possible in November, Clean Up Congress plans to distribute 250,000 of the Helms environmental scorecards throughout the state. Additionally, the group plans to register 15,000 new voters and help those who need assistance in getting to the polls.

The Raleigh and Charlotte offices, which are already buzzing with activity, will intensify their efforts when the fall semester begins on college campuses in the coming weeks. Organizers will focus on mobilizing campus support as well as the 1,000 volunteers who have pledged their time. Door-to-door canvassing will increase and phone banks will be in operation ten hours a day.

"We hope in November that voters will think twice," stated Foreman, "and ask themselves: Do I want to vote for Jesse Helms or do I want to vote for environmental protection and for my future?"

For more information about Clean Up Congress, call the Raleigh office at (919) 828-4400 or the Charlotte office at (704) 333-1776. ▼



Fundraiser site causes concern

by David Stout
Q-Notes Staff

BELMONT, NC—Three AIDS service agencies may have placed themselves in the center of a controversy by choosing to wrap up their largest annual fundraiser on the grounds of an institution which opposes condom use, the primary weapon in the safer-sex arsenal, and gays, who comprise the largest HIV-infected population in the nation.

Belmont Abbey College, a Catholic-affiliated school founded and operated by the Order of Saint Benedict, is the site of the reception following the Red Ribbon Dinner fundraiser, a series of simultaneous dinner parties held throughout the Gaston County area at which donations are collected to support local AIDS charities. This year, proceeds from the event will be divided among AIDS Council of Gaston County, Gaston Hospice and House of Mercy.

One man living with AIDS who will not be at the reception is Larry Jackson. "I wouldn't feel comfortable going there. Our money shouldn't be used to help further the crappy Catholic propaganda about condoms and homosexuality."

Michael Case, the gay and bisexual men's AIDS educator at Metrolina AIDS Project, is a former AIDS Council of Gaston County employee. His primary responsibility was overseeing the Red Ribbon fundraiser. He is also a Belmont Abbey graduate who does not financially support the school — due to its positions on HIV education and sexuality. His disenchantment with the school came in 1994 when a colleague attempted to speak there. "Beth Maren [an HIV/AIDS educator] was going to lead a discussion on sexuality with a group of students at the Abbey. Administrators told her that she could not mention condoms, safe sex nor homosexuality during her presentation. They wanted the message to be completely abstinence-based — and we know how realistic that is with a group of college students. I thought it was a very irresponsible position and decided that I wasn't going to give the school any more money." In spite of his personal stand, though, Case supports the fundraising

committee's decision.

Belmont Abbey rankled others in the community in 1994 when they forced a gay Christian newspaper to retract an ad placed by an individual. Jim Bailey, publisher of *Second Stone*, printed a paid advertisement which read, "Honoring the courage and faith of the gay and lesbian clergy, administrators, faculty, staff and students of Belmont Abbey College, North Carolina's Catholic College, Belmont, North Carolina." When school officials found out about the ad, they threatened to sue Bailey if he did not run a retraction. Because he did not have the money to fight the college, Bailey acquiesced and ran the submitted ad, "Belmont

"Our money shouldn't be used to help further the crappy Catholic propaganda about condoms and homosexuality." — Larry Jackson

Abbey College, Belmont, North Carolina does not condone the gay and lesbian lifestyle, nor did it request, pay for, or in any way authorize the printing of the advertisement found on page 9 of the November/December issue of *Second Stone*."

According to Patty Busch, a coordinator with AIDS Council of Gaston County and a member of the Red Ribbon Dinner Committee, the decision to move the reception to Belmont Abbey was necessitated by the fundraiser's growth over the last three years. "We didn't really have any choice. Last year we completely filled the Schiele Museum of Natural History and we expect an even larger turnout this year. Plus, the Museum has added more permanent exhibits, making the space even smaller."

While few would argue that venue constraints are a primary concern in organizing an event like the reception, was it appropriate to select the college as the new host site? Busch says "yes." "You have to understand that here in Gaston County there just aren't a lot of suitable spaces available. We looked every place and finally went to Belmont Abbey — on a purely rental basis."

While Belmont Abbey is not sponsoring the event, simply holding it on their campus might
See FUNDRAISER on page 7

Gantt office opens in Raleigh

by Eagle White
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—On Monday, July 29, amid a cheering and chanting group of supporters, US Senate candidate Harvey Gantt cut the red ribbon across the front door of his Raleigh campaign office — officially opening the capitol city facility. The crowd of about 200 chanted, "Har-vey, Har-vey!" as Gantt wielded the ceremonial scissors.

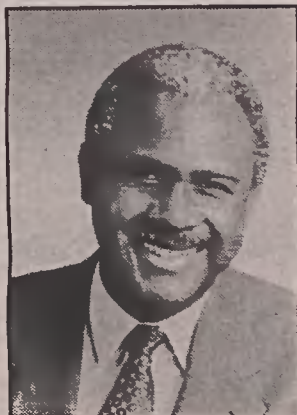
The 5:30pm gathering was a virtual "who's who" of Triangle-area Democrats with candidates for local elections, the General Assembly, and several statewide offices represented in the crowd. Gantt's opponent in the primary race, Charlie Sanders, was also in attendance to show his support for the former Charlotte mayor.

Former judicial candidate Jim Fuller handled the introductions of the politicians in the crowd, including a good number of candidates endorsed by NC Pride PAC for Lesbian and Gay Equality. Fuller then spoke briefly of North Carolina's senior Senator, leading the crowd in a chant of "Time for him to go, time for him to go!" Fuller then introduced Gantt who took the podium while his supporters cheered and applauded.

Mr. Gantt's remarks began with the statement, "Twenty-four years is enough!", referring to Helms' term in office. Gantt mentioned that he was by trade a builder, and that he "want[s] to work building relationships across lines that keep society divisive." Referring to his unsuccessful

1990 race against Helms, Gantt said he looked forward to meeting people whose attitudes had changed since the 1990 race. "I want to shake the hands of people who say, 'I'm going to support you — this time.'" Gantt included everyone present when he said, "We're in it to win it."

After the ribbon-cutting, Gantt went out into the crowd to meet his supporters who represented quite a cross-section of North Carolinians. With enthusiastic handshakes and hugs, he mingled with members of the crowd, including a large number of supporters from the gay and lesbian community. Several leaders of the GLBT community were present — Concetta Caliendo, of Charlotte's MECKMOBE; human rights activist Mandy Carter; NC Pride PAC Executive Director MK Cullen; and NCCGLE's Director-on-leave Kenda Kirby. Gantt's friendly and inclusive demeanor toward



Harvey Gantt

everyone — including children who were years from voting age — illustrated the vast differences which separate Gantt from the incumbent Senator's often hateful rhetoric.

The opening of the Raleigh campaign office was the first in a number of satellite office openings scheduled in the near future. The Raleigh celebration indicates that Gantt has a solid, enthusiastic and formidably talented base of support in the Triangle — a scenario which will no doubt repeat itself across North Carolina in the weeks and months to come. ▼

Court keeps anonymous testing

by David Jones
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—The North Carolina Supreme Court has issued a temporary stay of an earlier decision by the State Court of Appeals that gave the state the authority to end anonymous HIV testing immediately. After the appeals court decision, the state announced that all anonymous testing would end August 5, 1996. ACT UP/Triangle, the plaintiff in the suit, immediately appealed the Court of Appeals decision to the State Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has not decided whether to hear ACT UP's appeal or not. But on July 26, 1996, the court took the unusual step of issuing a stay of the lower court decision while it decides whether to hear the appeal. The stay means that anonymous HIV testing will continue to be available at county health departments while the Supreme Court decides whether to hear the ACT UP case.

ACT UP estimates that it could take three

to four weeks for the court to decide whether to hear the appeal. If the court decides not to hear the appeal, anonymous testing will end at that point. If the court hears the appeal and keeps its stay in place, anonymous testing would remain available during the course of the appeal which could take a year or more.

According to ACT UP's Steve Harris of Durham, a main thrust of the appeal to the Supreme Court is the basis of the appeals court decision to let the state end anonymous testing, as reported in the July 27, 1996 edition of *Q-Notes*. The Court of Appeals ruled that no one can go to court to challenge the state when it creates new regulations as long as proper procedures were followed. ACT UP argued to the Supreme Court that this decision constituted a "major challenge to the authority of the courts" to rule on Constitutional issues, according to Harris. No further court hearings will be held while the Supreme Court decides whether to proceed to hear the ACT UP appeal. ▼