

PRIDE 1997

Carrboro, North Carolina • June 6 - 8

Sugarsmack kicks out the jams on '97 Pride tour

by Shane Wolf
Q-Notes Staff

"I'm a drag queen trapped in a woman's body," said Hope Nicholls, who fronts Charlotte band Sugarsmack. "I'm a fag hag from hell. I was always brought up that way. I think it's a carryover from the sixties, or something."

Sugarsmack, while not a gay band by brand, is leading the way to bridge the gap Nicholls sees between the East coast's "alternative" and "gay" scenes. "There's this huge chasm between the gay and rock/alternative communities on the East coast that you don't see in other parts of the US. In San Francisco for instance, the Pride celebration has two stages with all kinds of bands, not just gay, and you don't see that on the East coast. There's a real lack of scene in Charlotte — and no gay rock scene."

We met at Superior Feet, a funky clothing store, which Nicholls manages when she's not on stage. "This store is like Sugarsmack because we try to integrate. I think there are a lot of people who are not into Melissa Etheridge or techno. We're not for the skate kids and not for the Myers Park rich people."

Nicholls is wearing her Evel Kneival sunglasses, the white ones with the red and blue stripes and as she finishes her sentence a preg-

nant African-American woman comes out of a dressing room with three-by-six platform sandals and a slinky sundress complete with jacket ensemble and begins to model it for a friend. Very surreal.

Sugarsmack is true alternative rock and roll. It's very diverse with ballads in the '70s punk tradition. "We're more like Bikini Kill than Green Day. Definitely *not* Green Day," said Nicholls.

When Elektra Entertainment President Seymour Stein, one of the world's top music-industry figures — who signed the likes of Madonna, the Talking Heads, and the Pretenders — showed up to one of their concerts, it was not unexpected. "We have had a long courtship with them and finally signed with Sire Records for a two album deal with options for more. Our first one is already recorded. It has fifteen tracks. Our fans should recognize a lot of the material. *Josephine* will probably be our first video — we should start shooting this summer, and everything should be out this fall.

"In fact, Muscadine, who are good friends of ours, got signed also. Their first album will be called *The Ballad of Hope Nicholls*. I guess they called it that in tribute. They are a lot younger [band] and they recognize that we

haven't given up and were acknowledging our longevity and perseverance."

Cyndi Elliot, *Alternative Press*, said of Sugarsmack's recent release *Spanish Riffs*, "Nicholls twists her solid yet unaffected voice around the guitar lines as if she's a prizewinning snake charmer for belly-dancing snakes. Dynamic shifts echo and contrast with deep rhythms and pellets of shrapnel guitar. Equally compelling is Nicholls' indescribable and indispensable sax work on "Creme Horn." The punk-squonk meltdown of the millennium, "Stuff" engulfs the listener in the quicksand of consumerism with its crackling patch chords and existentially starving vocals."

Such raving reviews have led to local stardom to the degree that legends are made. Since 1991, Sugarsmack has been involved with Pride celebrations in Atlanta. This year, organizers asked if they could foot the bill to sponsor Sugarsmack's appearances at other Pride celebrations in San Francisco, Boston, and Jacksonville (FL) during June. Their nearest upcoming performance will be at Atlanta's nightclub MJQ, on Ponce de Leon under the old Claremont Hotel, on June 16. You can also catch them at Atlanta Pride on June 28 at Piedmont Park. ▼



Sugarsmack, a North Carolina legend with an album and video to be released in the fall, recently signed a multiple record contract with Sire Records. Pictured left to right: John Adamian, Uber Diva Hope Nicholls, and Aaron Pitkin (not pictured, Calvin Florian)

NC Pride 97 Weekend Schedule

Friday June 6

4 pm - 6 pm
Cocktail Reception
Omni - Chapel Hill Ballroom Foyer
Hosted by:
NC Pride Board of Directors
NC Pride Local Organizing Committee
NC Pride PAC
National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum

8 pm & 10 pm
Marga Gomez, Stand-up Comic
OMNI-Chapel Hill
Ballroom
*ASL Interpreted

8 pm - 11 pm
Coffee House Performances
Silk Tea House
456 W. Franklin St.
Performances by GLBT artists from across NC

10 pm
"Step into the Weekend"
The Friday night Pride Dance
Power Company
315 W. Main St., Durham

Saturday June 7

8 am - 9 am
Yoga & Morning Stretch
OMNI - Chapel Hill Paris I

9 am
Fun Run and Walk
Carrboro Community Park, Hwy 54 West

9 am
"Gay Golf"
UNC Finley Golf Course, 15-501 Bypass

9 am - 3:45 pm
"One Voice Out of Many" Workshops
OMNI - Chapel Hill

9 am - 4 pm
"Community Market"
OMNI - Chapel Hill Europa Ballroom

1 pm - 2:30 pm
Open MIC Readings
OMNI - Chapel Hill Kings Club

3:45 pm - 4:30 pm
"Good Sense"
Steve Willis monologue for one man

OMNI - Chapel Hill Kings Club

4 pm
"Bowl-a Rama"
AMF Bowling Center
Durham - Chapel Hill Blvd.

7 pm
Ecumenical/Interfaith Service
OMNI - Chapel Hill Terrace
(Rain Site Paris I and II)

9 pm - 2 am
"States of Being" Dance
OMNI - Chapel Hill Ballroom
Tickets \$12 advance, \$15 at the door

Sunday June 8

9 am - 9:45 am
Bike Trek
OMNI - Chapel Hill

9 am - 10 am
Water Aerobics
OMNI - Chapel Hill Pool

12 pm - 2 pm
NC Pride 97 Pre-March Rally

Carrboro Town Commons
Mike Nelson, Mayor of Carrboro
Patsy Clarke & Eloise Vaughn - MAJI
Bill Brent - ASA NC
Crystal Chanté
Z up
The Voices of St. John's MCC
Tom McCormack
John Harrison
Sarah's Naked Salad
Pride Marching Band

2 pm - 3:30 pm
NC Pride 97 March
Gather in front of Carrboro Town Hall
W. Main St. in Carrboro

3:30 pm - 5 pm
NC Pride 97 Post-March Rally
Carrboro Town Commons
Featuring:
NC Pride Board Awards; disappear fear;
Donna Red Wing; Inside Out; Sue Witty &
Fair Play

5 pm
Pride 97 Tea Dance
Boxer's, Durham

Call the Pride Line at (919) 990-1005 for updates and changes.

Don't Get Left
In The Dark!

We are updating the Q-Notes Organizations List (see page 20 of this issue) so it can be accurate and up-to-date. Please confirm your Community or Service Organization contact information as soon as possible by mailing, calling, faxing or emailing the following information:

1. Organization Name, Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website
2. Contact Person(s) (for our internal records only)
3. Purpose of the Organization
4. Regular Meeting Schedules

Q-Notes Organizations • PO Box 221841, Charlotte, NC 28222
(704) 531-9988 • Fax (704) 531-1361 • Email priddtype@vnet.net

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