### 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 Greenday. Definitely not Greenday," said

When Elektra Entertainment President Seymour Stein, one of the world's top musicindustry 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

"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.

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

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

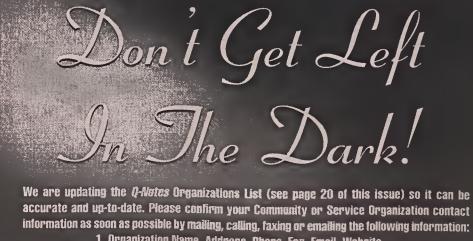
Carrboro Town Commons Mike Nelson, Mayor of Carrboro Patsy Clarke & Eloise Vaughn - MAJI Bill Brent - ASA NC Crystal Chanté The Voices of St. John's MCC Tom McCormack John Harrison Sarah's Naked Salad

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

Pride 97 Tea Dance Boxer's, Durhan



- 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

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