

# Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

## The Latest Q-POLL Results

If the post office announced plans for a GLBT commemorative stamp featuring one of the following, which would you choose?

Richard Simmons	Divine	Susie Bright
5%	64%	31%

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## Uniting AIDS groups select name, director

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

RALEIGH—Three Triangle-based AIDS service groups that have been working toward consolidation into a single agency since last year have officially announced the name of the new combined organization: Alliance of AIDS Services — Carolina (AASC).

When the unification process is complete, AASC (comprised of the AIDS Service Agency of North Carolina, AIDS Service Agency of Orange County and Triangle AIDS Interfaith Network) will be the largest AIDS service organization in NC with service delivery sites in three counties, a staff of more than 35 and a budget approaching \$1.7 million.

The stated goals of AASC are to "provide compassionate and non-judgmental care, prevention, education and advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS, their loved ones, caregivers and communities at large."

William K. (Bill) Brent, Jr. will become executive director of AASC when the legal incorporation has been completed in late fall. He currently serves in the same capacity at the AIDS Service Agency of North Carolina — a position he has held for nearly four years.

Before arriving in Raleigh, Brent was the founding executive director of the South Mississippi AIDS Task Force. Prior to that, he held several increasingly responsible positions with the American Heart Association, ranging from



William (Bill) Brent, Jr.

Program Director to Vice President of Programs and Research Development.

The consolidation model adopted for the unification offers flexibility for taking on additional member agencies in the future. "We have intentionally designed a system that will be inclusive, that will improve and provide for the expansion of services and that will signal a new era of cooperation in service delivery to people living with HIV and AIDS," Brent stated.

Additional AASC appointments include Debra Long, Director of Programs; Karen Moore, Durham/Orange County Director; Jacquelyn Clymore, Wake County Director; Nancy Daniel, Director of Development; and Sandra Simpson, Human Resource/Operations Manager. ▼

## Come out responsibly on NCOD

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

Before his untimely death in 1995 at the age of 50, gay visionary Robert Eichberg established two lasting institutions within the GLBT community: The Experience, a community-based personal empowerment workshop, and National Coming Out Day (NCOD).

Through The Experience, Eichberg encouraged tens of thousands of GLBT participants, over 17 years, to take responsibility for their well-being, relationships and community. As a co-founder of NCOD, he provided the vehicle to exercise these skills.

In an insightful interview recorded the year before his death, Eichberg, a licensed clinical psychologist and the author of *Coming Out, An Act of Love*, spoke at length about his work and the debilitating effects of living in the closet.

Describing the impetus for NCOD, he recalled, "The genesis of NCOD for me was at the March on Washington on October 11, 1987. I walked up to a number of people marching and said, 'I think it's great that you are here. I'm curious, are you out to your parents?' I almost consistently got 'no.' I thought it was a shame; here we were, 600,000 strong and our success would only be determined by the media. If everyone here would go home and come out to their parents, brothers, cousins, friends and co-workers that 600,000 would turn into many millions."

Eichberg said his experiences at the March sent him to a February 1988 meeting of national GLBT leaders determined to gather support for a national day of coming out. The idea was an immediate hit.

With his reputation as the guru of gay self-disclosure well established, Eichberg often had his ear bent by closeted folks who needed to unload. Despite hearing every reason under the sun, he came to realize that what really kept individuals enslaved were their own fears. "When people give me all the reasons they give me for not coming out, I also know there is somebody there who is really scared. They are afraid they will lose love, lose a job — things

they may eventually lose anyway. They place things above their self-esteem, self-worth and integrity. Sometimes I get frustrated by that. [But,] most of the time, I have a tremendous amount of compassion. I know how hurt and abused and scared most of us were while we were growing up."

Still, the onus of changing attitudes about homosexuality rests squarely on the shoulders of gays and lesbians, Eichberg felt. "The only people who can disabuse society of its beliefs about homosexuality are those of us who are homosexual. I want the truth about us to be told; we are the ones who can do this."

If Eichberg was alive today, this call to honesty would still be his challenge to the GLBT community. To mark the 11th anniversary of NCOD — and honor the contributions of its founder — here are some simple things you can do to help foster change.

1. Participate in enLighten Charlotte, a community-wide display of rainbow-colored luminaries (contact the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Charlotte, MCC Charlotte, One Voice or OutCharlotte for details).
2. Come out to a family member or friend. Explain that it is NCOD.
3. Fly the rainbow flag — or one of the other gay-subculture flags (leather, bear, etc.) — from your flagpole at home.
4. Stick gay-identified decals or clings on your vehicle.
5. Wear buttons or clothing proclaiming gay-positive messages.
6. Put a photo of your boyfriend/girlfriend on your desk at work.
7. Volunteer with (or make a donation to) a gay or supportive organization. State that your benevolence is in honor of NCOD.
8. Write a letter to your congresspersons asking them to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA). Note that you are writing on NCOD.
9. Write a letter to media outlets asking them to provide appropriate coverage of GLBT issues. Note that you are writing on NCOD. ▼



Rob Eichberg

## Gay journalists hit; Floyd misses

by Paul Harris  
Special to Q-Notes

ATLANTA—In spite of the best efforts of Hurricane Floyd, gay and lesbian journalists from across the nation converged in sunny Atlanta September 16-19 for their 8th annual gathering.

The National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA) has well over 1000 members working at the smallest local gay and lesbian newspapers — literally put together on kitchen tables — right up to the largest national television and radio programs and major daily newspapers.

The conference gives gay and lesbian jour-

nalists an opportunity to meet and discuss issues of professional development as well as how to better serve the GLBT community.

The keynote speaker for this year's opening session was NBC *Today* show co-anchor Katie Couric. She joined the conference via satellite link-up because her flight from New York was cancelled due to the hurricane. She talked candidly about broadcasting issues and displayed a clear understanding of the difficulties facing GLBT journalists, including awareness of the "lavender ceiling" that makes it tough for on-air presenters to come out.

A conference highlight for many attendees  
See *JOURNALISTS* on page 22

## Gay October

National Gay and Lesbian  
History Month



October 1 - 31

National Breast Cancer  
Awareness Month



October 1 - 31

OutCharlotte '99  
Cultural Festival



October 5 - 10

National Coming  
Out Day



October 11