

# Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

## The Latest Q-POLL Results

Actress Sharon Stone kick-started her career as a bisexual in *Basic Instinct*, recently appeared as a lesbian in HBO's *If Walls Could Talk II* and is considering a lesbian role on Broadway in David Mamet's play *Boston Marriage*. Do you think Ms. Stone is a closet lesbian?

Yes	No	Undecided
3%	78%	19%

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## MeckPAC gets ready for elections

by Dan Van Mourik  
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—The Mecklenburg County Gay and Lesbian Political Action Committee (MeckPAC) was formed three years ago in response to a vote by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to cut arts funding due to the gay-themed play *Angels in America*. The action, on April 1, 1997, came as a result of five county commissioners who became known as the "Gang of Five." Funding was restored the following year when four of the five were either not re-elected or did not run again in 1998. The fifth member, Bill James, currently serves on the board.

MeckPAC is urging all GLBT voters and our allies to make our voices heard again this year as three of those five commissioners are running for office.

MeckPAC has sent a seven-question survey to all 11 county commissioner candidates who have competition in the primary election. Once the surveys are returned, they will make endorsements a few weeks before the May 2 primary.

The survey asks candidates to take stands on some potentially touchy issues, such as domestic-partner benefits for county employees, prohibiting discrimination against county employees on the basis of sexual orientation, and funding for arts groups with programming with gay and lesbian themes.

MeckPAC co-chairman Connie Vetter told *The Charlotte Observer* that she knows these are issues many politicians would rather avoid. In fact, the questionnaire asks candidates whether they would even want the group's endorsement or money.

"There are candidates who don't want our endorsement," Vetter said. "There are some that say 'I'm in your corner, but not publicly.' They think they are going to be harmed by it."

The three "Gang of Five" members running for the board this year are current District 6 representative Bill James and former commissioners Joel Carter and Tom Bush.

Vetter said MeckPAC endorsed commissioner candidates informally in 1998 and adopted a more formal endorsement process that was used last year in deciding which Charlotte City Council candidates to back. They'll make endorsements again before the November general election.

Maggi Markey, an incumbent Democrat running for re-election in heavily Republican

District 1, told the *Observer* that she hasn't settled on her answers to the questionnaire yet. While she expects some conservative candidates will make it an issue, she'd accept the group's endorsement.

"I'm sure [Commissioner Bill James] will try to make a fuss over anything that involved the word gay or lesbian," Markey said. "But I have intelligent people in my district who know better than to fall for that."

James said he would make it an issue if other candidates said they'd support domestic-partner benefits for county employees or protection for county employees from discrimination on the basis sexual orientation. He vehemently opposes both.

Carter, who is seeking his party's nomination to run for one of three at-large seats, said he hasn't gotten the survey, and he doesn't plan to answer it if he gets one. But he says he is curious to know other candidates' answers.

"I certainly hope they don't endorse me," said Carter, who was defeated by Markey in 1998 for his District 1 seat. "And for those people who do get the endorsement, I will make public note of it."

Commissioner Tom Cox, who is also running at-large, says he wouldn't reject a MeckPAC endorsement, though he believes it could hurt him with some conservative voters.

"I'm not hostile to gays and lesbians. I am openly, unabashedly neutral," said Cox, a Republican. "I just don't think it's something we should be spending any significant amount of time on."

Former commissioners' chairman Tom Bush, who figures there's little chance he'd get MeckPAC's endorsement, said he wouldn't make its endorsements an issue unless other candidates do.

"This is probably one of the most polarizing issues for a community," Bush said. "I just think it would be best not to go there."

If you would like to make a donation to MeckPAC, send your contribution to MeckPAC, PO Box 18804, Charlotte, NC 28218. Remember, donations to a political action committee are not tax deductible and donations over \$99.99 in an election cycle must be reported to the state.

If you cannot make a donation but would still like to help the cause in some way, MeckPAC needs volunteers and other non-monetary assistance. For information on how you can help, call (704) 567-5530. ▼



The Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village

## Community gets national landmark

by Dan Van Mourik  
Q-Notes Staff

NEW YORK, NY—Whether a history buff or not, most every gay or lesbian has at least heard of the Stonewall riots. They took place in June 1969 when patrons of New York's Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, fought back. They were tired of the routine police raids and resisted. Days of rioting and protesting followed. That event is considered the birthplace of the modern gay rights movement.

Now, the Stonewall Inn has been named a national historic landmark — the first gay site given that status by the Department of the Interior. The landmark designation is given to places meaningful to the history and culture of the United States.

"I think it's a really key site in the 20th century history of America," said Andrew S. Dolkart, a historian at Columbia University and one of the people who pushed for the designation. "It's where the gay and lesbian rights movement began its activist phase."

Stonewall first was added to the National Register of Historic Places, which lists sites of local or state significance. Only three percent of those sites are deemed significant to the entire country — national historic landmarks. The Interior Department gave Stonewall that designation March 1.

According to the nomination prepared by Dolkart and others, the Stonewall Inn was origi-

nally two stables built around 1843-1846. In 1969, it was a gay bar in Greenwich Village. At the time, selling a drink to a known homosexual was illegal, so the Stonewall Inn was unlicensed. Police raids were routine and patrons usually left peacefully. Until 1969, that is.

"There had been decades of petty harassment and bar raids," Dolkart said. "This was the first time that people actually fought back. People were fed up and they weren't gonna take it any more."

John Berry, an assistant Interior secretary, said: "It was a galvanizing event and led to the creation around the country of a number of other organizations that began the effort of recognition by gay and lesbian Americans."

In June 1969, there were fewer than 100 gay groups in the country, according to the national historic landmark nomination. One year later, there were at least 1500, and two years later there were 2500.

Just one negative letter was received in response to Stonewall's nomination as a national landmark, said Patty Henry, a historian for the National Historic Landmark Survey. The letter arrived after the review board had recommended Stonewall for the designation. The writer did not understand why Stonewall was considered historically significant.

"I think that no one would argue that Stonewall is an integral part of the story of modern American history," Berry said. ▼

## 3rd Annual Better Homos & Gardens Tour to benefit OutCharlotte

by Dan Kirsch  
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—A turn-of-the-century home, semi-tropical plants and artifacts from Asia and the South Pacific, a 1929 historic bungalow and an 'old lady's garden' will be on display at the 3rd Annual Better Homos & Gardens Tour. Organized this year by Diana Travis, MaryAnn Mueller, Abby Hastings Kerr and Chris Turner as a benefit for OutCharlotte, the tour will take place on Saturday, April 8 from 10:00am - 7:00pm.

The tour includes six homes and/or gardens, and is hosted by John Bean & Robert Boyd, John E. Denti, Jeff Drum, Steve Duprey, David McDaniel, and Michael Pinson.

Created by Travis and friends for OutCharlotte in 1998, the tour is used as a way to relate non-gay people to gay and lesbian people. "Whether gay or non-gay, I find people are passionate about their gardens, and so there is a commonality," said Travis. "Gardeners appreciate the work it takes to maintain a yard or garden, and the tour allows new friendships to develop through the common language of na-

ture."

This is the second time that John Denti's home and garden are on the tour. His love of orchids is evident throughout his home and garden, and he's even found a job tending orchids for UNC-Charlotte.

"Flowers are a wonderful way to communicate with people," said Denti. "Their beauty, their fragrance, make people stop and smile and say hello. A garden has a way to break down barriers that people may have about each other, because they want to learn from each other about various flowers and plants — it gets people talking and people realize how many similarities they have."

Items within a home can also begin conversations and encouragement that lead to sharing a new talent. John Bean and Robert Boyd's home was on the Elizabeth Home Tour in 1998. It was comments from friends and neighbors about Robert's interior design skills that has led him to start his own home furnishings store, City Supply Co., which will open in April. "The store will have lots of things you can't find in Charlotte anywhere else," said Boyd.

The tour has featured gay and non-gay homes and gardens in the past and the non-gay community should feel welcome to participate.

Ticket holders will visit five homes and gardens from 10:00am - 5:00pm and end up at a garden party from 5:00 - 7:00pm. The garden party includes a plant sale, wine, beer, hors d'oeuvres and a chamber music group.

The 2000 Better Homos and Gardens Tour is generously sponsored by the home and garden owners, with additional support provided by Keren Boyan; Roxann Brunhart and Jeanne Downs; City Supply Co.; John E. Denti; Sue DuChanois and Kate Blackburn; Marsha Ford; Ted Fraley and Rick Grayson; Georgetown Bodyworks; Bill Gillis; Lisa Griffin and Sherrie Ingram; Nadene Hammond and Janet Marrs; Lynn Kennelly and Carrie Gault; Abby Hastings Kerr; Linda Lawyer and Sally Duffy; Darryl Logsdon and Darwin Stanley; Dell Martin; Tim Mattox; Joe O'Connor and Marty Musselwhite; Bob Oltz; W. Riley Owens and Kenneth Tynch; Nita Rochel; Rebecca Stone; Diana Travis and MaryAnn Mueller; Chris

Turner; and Stephen Wylie. The original event logo was designed by Mervil Paylor Design.

Advance tickets for the five garden tour are \$10.00, and with the garden party \$22.00. Advance tickets are available from White Rabbit Books & Things, 834 Central Avenue; Royal Gardens, 1733 E. 7th Street; and from OutCharlotte at (704) 563-2699. Tickets the day of the event are \$15.00 and \$25.00, and are available at the first stop of the tour, the home of Michael Pinson, 1533 Belvedere Avenue or at White Rabbit Books. The "Get Ready for Spring Plant Sale" will begin at 1:00pm at the home of John Denti, 651 Louise Avenue.

Proceeds will benefit OutCharlotte, which produces cultural programs celebrating the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, including an annual cultural festival, the Charlotte Gay & Lesbian Film Series, and OutMedia.

Dozens of volunteers are needed to help with this event. Call OutCharlotte at (704) 563-2699 to volunteer or for more information on the tour. ▼