

Judy Collins cancels concert to protest lack of church policy

by Laura Montgomery Rutt
Special to Q-Notes

Legendary singer and social activist, Judy Collins cancelled a July 10 performance before the hierarchy of the Episcopal clergy at the National Episcopal Church Convention as a protest of their anti-GLBT policies.

A statement by Ms. Collins, released prior to the concert, said, "On Wednesday, July 5th, I was shocked to learn that the Episcopal Church, of which I'm a member and in which I was married, does not have an official, national church policy allowing ministers to officiate at same sex unions or ordain openly gay people. Allowing each Diocese to determine whether or not to ordain gays and lesbians or bless same gender couples on a local level, rather than making a church wide decision, I feel is tantamount to accepting and supporting discrimination. Based on this indecision of the Episcopal Church, to fully accept all persons into the Christian faith, I must, in good conscience, cancel my performance at the Episcopal Church General convention."

The press release goes on to say, "The vote to change the 'local option', allowing each Diocese to determine whether or not to ordain gays and lesbians or bless same gender couples on a local level, rather than making a church wide decision, will happen next week at the convention. In canceling her concert, Ms. Collins hopes to send a message to the leaders of the Christian community that total and equal rights for all people must be embraced regardless of

sexual orientation."

"By canceling her concert, Judy Collins is saying, in essence, that she loves the Episcopal Church too much to be complicit in its bigotry and discrimination," stated Rev. Mel White, co-founder of Soulforce, an interfaith movement of individuals committed to applying the principles of nonviolent resistance as taught by Gandhi and King to the liberation of sexual and gender minorities. "Many Episcopal churches still exclude us. Many bishops still discriminate against us. The debate has been going on long enough. Thank you Judy for your courage and commitment to justice, and for taking a stand for all of God's children!"

The Rev. Dr. George F. Regas, Rector Emeritus of All Saints Church in Pasadena, CA, an esteemed Episcopal clergy and friend of Soulforce, stated in a letter to the Deputies and Bishops of the Convention, "The debate on the homosexuality issue has become a primary source of suffering for millions of lesbian and gay people. The fact that bishops, priests and laity are at this General Convention to debate once again whether gay and lesbian persons are acceptable is obscene!"

A total of 73 people, both gay and straight, from the Episcopal church and many denominations all over the United States, were arrested on July 4, in an act of non-violent civil disobedience at the Colorado Convention Center at the Episcopal Church (USA) Conference in protest to exclusionary policies against GLBT people. ▼

percent of the purchase total being contributed to the Metropolitan Community Church of Charlotte. Additionally, simply clicking on the link (up to once a day per person) results in a small contribution to the church, even if no purchase is made. To access the store, visit the church's web site at www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/2326.

Project Outreach, a service provided by the Family Counseling program of United Family Services and affiliated agencies, offers counseling services at no cost or on a sliding fee scale for individuals, couples and families affected by HIV/AIDS. No one will be denied services due to an inability to pay. If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, lives in Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg or Union counties and would like to talk to a professional about it, call United Family Services at (704) 332-9034 or (800) 345-0441 and ask for Project Outreach. All information is kept private and confidential.

Carolina Celebration has announced the receipt of a gift in the amount of \$2000 from the Sam's Club Foundation. The beneficiary of this fundraiser is The Dennis Fund, a program administered by Metrolina AIDS Project (MAP) which provides financial assistance to persons affected by HIV/AIDS. Tim Brown, local Sam's Club store manager, says, "Our associates were thrilled to partner with Carolina Celebration to raise the funds; the local community will benefit from the money raised, and we are glad to support this organization." ▼

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A new HIV/AIDS support group moderated by Sheri Blackwood meets each Friday from 7:30-9:00pm at MCC Charlotte, 1825 Eastway Dr., Charlotte. Those interested may just come to the meeting, or call MCC-Charlotte at (704) 563-5810 for more information.

Manbites Dog Theater, Durham, begins its annual fundraiser to defer costs of its upcoming season. Supplying some of the most innovative, cutting-edge theatre in the Triangle, Manbites Dog has been the place to be for the finest in powerful drama and exciting new performances since 1987. If you would like to support Manbites Dog in the creation of cutting-edge art for all people, mail your tax-deductible donation to PO Box 402, Durham, NC 27702 or call (919) 682-3343.

Andrew Reyes, an openly-gay Charlotte businessman and community leader, received the first-ever Individual Philanthropy Award recognizing outstanding support from an individual within the community for his work with Charlotte Repertory Theatre. Congratulations, Andrew.

MCC-Charlotte announces a leap into the 21st Century with its new online store. Partnering with Netmaximizer Affinity Store Programs, the store offers a variety of commonly purchased goods at competitive prices with 15



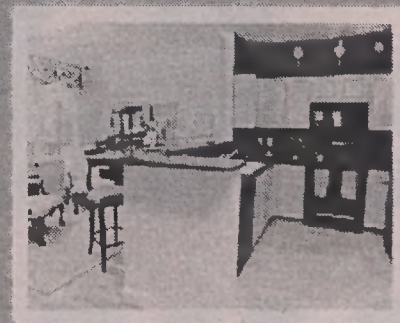
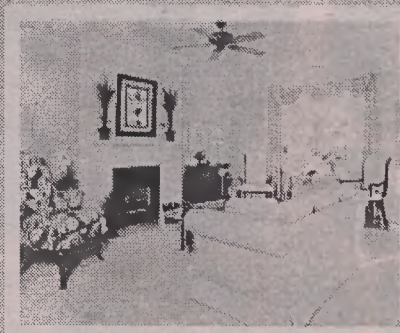
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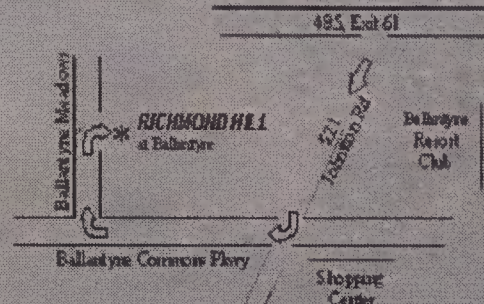


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