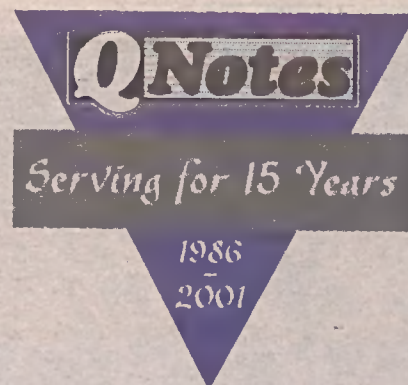


QNotes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper



Want to know about Carolina GLBT history? See page 3 inside for more details as we continue our Out of the Past coverage.

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Take the latest Q-Poll:

What's your remedy for the anti-gay Boy Scouts?

Nothing. They have rights, too. Have separate all-gay troops. Create a Sensitivity merit badge.

Support the "Camp Fire Boys/Girls" who are all-inclusive.

In your own words -- 100 characters or less

To participate in our Q-Poll, access www.q-notes.com See our latest poll results on page 9.

We are family — despite definitions

by Leah Sepsenwol

HUNTERSVILLE, NC — Beverly Mitzel and her partner Sonja along with Catherine Costner and her partner Regina came out fighting for their families and against being defined and denigrated by prejudiced policy.

Defining the words "family" and "couple" for the brand new Huntersville Community Center (HCC) memberships got complicated and cruel, then came to a head at a Huntersville Town Board meeting.

"My partner Sonja and I were forthcoming about our relationship," said Beverly Mitzel, an adoptive parent, a foster parent and an angry tax-paying Huntersville citizen, whose "family" membership was granted then later denied.

"As part of a neighborhood subdivision, we were offered a group discount and paid our \$100 membership fee. At that time," explained Mitzel, "family" covered all members of a family living together in the same household and related; including step-children, adopted children and children who are cared for by a person other than their birth parent. We were so "pleased to hear about the 'liberal' family definition the Center had."

However when Sonja, Beverly and their family arrived on a Saturday to pick up their membership cards, the policy had changed. "We were told that as two females living together, we would have to join separately, rather than as a household — a difference of \$42 more per month," Mitzel said.

They insisted on speaking with Mark Kincaid, Director of Parks and Recreation and the HCC. He told the women, "We didn't anticipate this type of situation [same-sex head of household] and we have been working on a redefining what 'couple' and 'family' meant."

During that conversation Kincaid admitted there was no policy or practice verifying the marital status of heterosexual couples. Kincaid refused to reinstate their all-inclusive membership, or refund their membership fee.

Mitzel discovered that the family/couple definitions were an agenda item for the July Town meeting.

According to the July minutes: the Parks and Rec guidelines interpreted "family" as two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, living together as a single housekeeping unit; the Town did not recognize same-sex

marriages; the Town required Driver's license or other forms of ID as proof of accepted family relationships.

And by its own admission, the Staff recommended the word "Couple" be defined "in a more restrictive manner." Couples must be of the opposite sex. "Couple" memberships will be granted only to married persons."

After hearing the proposed amendment, Beverly outed herself to the Board by recounting all the events that preceded her attending the meeting. She urged that the definition "family" be reviewed so that consistent criteria could be established and fairly applied.

Catherine Costner and Regina not only joined HCC as a family in May, but have been working with the Center staff to establish a corporate membership through their employer — adding about \$15,000 to the Center's revenue.

"We were stunned and disheartened to receive a phone call from Mark Kincaid informing us that our membership would no longer be valid due to our non-traditional status," Costner said.

Ms. Costner continued, "The Community Center should be as inclusive as possible. The purpose of HCC is — as stated in its own literature — 'to promote sensitivity to cultural

diversity.' Non-traditional families make up an increasing percentage of households.

"Base pricing on household, respect our community's diversity and trust the people of Huntersville to define family. Pricing could be restructured to eliminate abuse while preserving fairness."

Costner asked the Commissioners to table their vote, suggesting organizations and professionals equipped to provide guidance for arriving at equitable solution.

Beverly and Catherine won the July battle. The Board voted unanimously in favor of a motion to "allow current memberships to stand, study the issue and come back with a set policy."

The issue led the August Town Board's agenda. There was a lot of media attention, public, television attention — Beverly Mitzel and Catherine Costner were at its center. Both read prepared, respectful opinions, thanking the Mayor and the Board for their favorable July decisions. Both families had waited a month, anticipating sweeping reversal, or at least reasoned proposal.

Instead Kincaid submitted, almost verbatim, the same intolerant policy.

See FAMILY on Page 6

NC PrideFest 2001 will be September celebration

by Keith Hayes

RALEIGH, NC — NC PrideFest 2001 will make history by holding its Gay Pride Rally and Parade well after the customary June/July "pride season" concludes — September 29th.

Selecting September is part of NC Pride's strategy for making PrideFest 2001 the fall festival East Coast pride event — predicting it will attract more participants, spectators, celebrities and vendors than its summer predecessors.

"Logically, the decision for a September 29 parade date makes great sense, and we're working hard to make this a really successful event," says John Short, co-chair of NC Pride. "In the past, when we held PrideFest in June, we lost a lot of participants to parades in DC, Atlanta, and even New York.

This year, we will be the sole focus of the entire gay community in North Carolina, the Southeast and beyond.

It creates the best opportunity to get our messages out and have a blast along the way. Plus we won't be wilting under the heat."

"Embrace Diversity," the PrideFest 2001 theme, supports and broadcasts two key aspects of NC

Pride's mission: 1 — fostering greater unity within the LGBT community; 2 — demonstrating that LGBT diversity is a source of great talent and pride.

"NC Pride is about taking action as well as taking positions," says NC Pride co-chair, Ellen Cohen. "Under the umbrella of PrideFest 2001, we're working to create diversity clubs for LGBT individuals to meet and organize. We've helped form a LGBT Latino/Latina club and a Gay & Lesbian Veterans club, all of whom will march in the parade. On the lighter side, we're helping a Rainbow Car Club to get off the ground. We hope many types of LGBT interest groups will use PrideFest 2001 as an occasion to come together — not just to march, but to form a long-term social network. Schedule of activities for NC PrideFest is still growing but pivots around the noon rally and parade in Durham on Saturday, September 29 and an evening of events at the night festival in Raleigh.

Supporters of NC PrideFest 2001 include Adam Male, Capital Corral, Curve magazine, Flex Club, Insomnia, Legends, Pride Planet Books, U.A. Air, Visions, and White Rabbit Books. Media Sponsors include *The Independent*, *The Front Page* and *Q-Notes*. The host hotel for NC PrideFest 2001 is the Clarion Hotel in downtown Raleigh. ▼

To participate in the parade, learn about all PrideFest events, become a partner, sponsor or vendor:

www.ncpride.org



NC PRIDEFEST 2001

Braves aid city's bid to land Gay Games in 2006

by Jay Croft

Atlanta Journal Constitution

The Braves are showing support for gay and lesbian fans and for the city's bid for the 2006 Gay Games.

At the August 8 game against the Houston Astros, the Braves welcomed international "Gay Olympics" representatives and leaders of a local group bidding to host those games in five years.

The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus sang the national anthem. More than 2000 seats within one section of the Turner Field stands were reserved for tickets sold by Atlanta Games Inc. Atlanta is one of four finalists. Chicago, Los Angeles and Montreal are the remaining three North American finalists. Recognizing the high-profile exposure for a venue and very attractive attendee dollars, the competition is fierce. The Chicago effort re-

cently received \$50,000 from its corporate sponsor, the Miller Brewing Company. The Federation of Gay Games will announce the winner in Johannesburg, South Africa, in October.

"We endorse the Atlanta Games Inc.'s efforts to bring the Games here," said Braves spokesman Jim Schultz, adding that the Games can use

Turner Field for closing ceremonies if the Braves' schedule allows. "It's another opportunity to advance Atlanta's reputation as a culturally diverse city and International city."

A few other major-league teams have had similar "gay days," including Los Angeles, San Francisco and, most recently, the Chicago Cubs, which also advertised in that city's gay newspaper — apparently a first for a professional, men's sports team.

"It caused no controversy in Chicago," said Jim Buzinski, a former sports editor who runs Outsports.com, an online magazine for gay fans that scores 300,000 page views a month. ▼

