



NC Film Fest
'Nine Dead Gay Guys' is part of the line-up for Raleigh's eighth annual N.C. gay and Lesbian Film Festival, which kicks off Aug. 6. **26**



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ONLINE Q.POLL
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Should the White House be investigated for its reported involvement in the attempt to blacklist gay ABC reporter Jeffrey Korman?

. Yes . No

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Grand Rapids teen dies following brutal beating

Bisexual teen, victim of brutal attack and rape, dies in Michigan hospital

by David Moore
Q-Notes staff

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich — A bisexual teen in Grand Rapids, Mich., who was found June 25 nearly unconscious in a ditch with his eyes glued shut following an apparent sexual assault, has died, Grand Rapids authorities confirmed July 8.

Justin Bogdanik, 18, was walking in Veteran's Park on South Division St. near Fulton in Grand Rapids, where he told police he was picked up by a man driving a white tractor trailer rig. According to police there was evidence to conclude that Bogdanik's attacker had bound, raped and beaten him before depositing him in a ditch about 100 miles from Grand Rapids near a highway rest stop.

A friend and classmate of Bogdanik's — Rachel Lukas — paints a portrait of a young man that had hopes and desires for the future and a warm heart for friends and acquaintances.

"He liked to listen to music and enjoyed going to the park with his friends. He wanted to go into the military," Lukas recalled with a touch of irony.

"He was lovable, eccentric and one of the

sweetest people you'd ever meet. He made everything funny and he was so easy to laugh with. Even if it embarrassed him he'd risk that to make other people laugh.

"He was very mature for his age even though he was just 18, but he didn't act like it at all. He knew what he wanted and he stayed out of trouble."

Apparently trouble followed Bogdanik a bit more than he cared for. According to Lukas, Bogdanik's brother-in-law had forced him to move out of their home because he didn't like the people Bogdanik brought over to the house. "So he was living on the streets," Lukas explained, "and staying with friends before he moved into a place downtown."

Despite the brutality of the attack against Bogdanik, authorities are not investigating his murder as a hate crime. "It's being investigated as an assault," Police Detective Tom VanderPloeg told the *Grand Rapids Press*.

Based on data from a police expert on violent crime, VanderPloeg said they are trying to determine if the suspect despised his own sexual orientation so much that he would torture his victim.

Bogdanik was initially treated at a hospital in Grand Rapids, where Livingston County sheriff's



Rachel Lukas

A friend described Justin Bogdanik as 'lovable, eccentric and one of the sweetest people you'd ever meet.'

deputies tried to interview him. "He was embarrassed, not real forthcoming," VanderPloeg said.

Released the following day, his family was

see **TEEN** on 6

Operation Save America effort bombs

Organization's numbers drastically down; group's director agitated

by David Moore
Q-Notes staff

Operation Save America's (OSA) demonstrations around Charlotte during the week of July 12-18 proved to have much less of an impact than the organization's director Philip "Flip" Benham had apparently hoped for.

The organization held a weeklong conference in the city that attracted somewhere around 450 people, substantially smaller numbers than the estimated 2,000 that have shown up for OSA's previous conferences.

Demonstrators at the Metropolitan Community Church numbered less than 20 and most appeared to be teenagers and children accompanied by about five adults. Benham did not show up at the church as he had indicated he would in an earlier interview with *Q-Notes*.

"They showed up two hours late," said MCC Pastor Mick Hinson.

"There was probably some disappointment about the numbers on his side," offered MCC's Reverend Donna Stroud. "We heard that most of the people that were here were people that follow him around, rather than local members, which is good for us."

In addition to MCC, OSA appeared at abortion clinics, an Islamic Mosque and even a gay bar.

In an interview July 24, Benham sounded agitated and disappointed over the turnout for the event. During the phone conversation with *Q-Notes* he even went so far as to accuse a local



Most of the Operation Save America demonstrators at the Metropolitan Community Church of Charlotte appeared to be teenagers and children.

gay bar of encouraging sexual activity in their adjoining parking lot.

"We took 'Word and Warfare' to ten different locations in Charlotte — the federal courthouse, abortion clinics, downtown at the square and at a homosexual bar called the Charlotte Eagle."

"It's amazing what goes on in that place," Benham said, as his tone grew more heated. "They say they won't allow sex in the parking lot. They say there's none in the parking lot, but you know there is stuff going on in the parking lot."

"None of my employees are even aware the he was ever here," says Eagle owner Gary Skaggs.

see **OSA** on 6

Coming to America

Two gay Charlotteans talk about their experiences growing up in countries with little or no gay support networks

by Bert Woodard

We all know how the U.S. treats it gay and lesbian citizens. Sometimes good, sometimes bad. As a community we're quick to adapt to the changing political and social landscape.

But try imagining what it might be like growing up gay in a country that treats gay and lesbian people even worse than America — and then dealing with the social and cultural transition of moving a world away to a safer haven in the U.S.

At least two gay North Carolinians citizens know that feeling all too well.

Manoj Govindan, who grew up in India, and Italian native Paola Filippazzo talked about their upbringing, realization of their sexuality and transition to Charlotte at the July 15 meeting of the Charlotte Business Guild.

Govindan came directly to the U.S. from his native Kerala state on the southern tip of India, but he took a professional tour of the U.S. as a consultant, with stops in San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago and New York City, among others, before

see **AMERICA** on 4



Manoj Govindan