

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER
30TH
2006**



PRIDE - NOT PREJUDICE
NC'S 22ND ANNUAL GLBT EVENT
BANDS, FLOATS, PARADE, FESTIVAL

**SCHEDULE
OF
EVENTS
& NEWS**

Durham Asst. City Attorney to speak at Pride

Sherri Zann Rosenthal shares her recollections about the LGBT struggle for equality in the Triangle
by Jim Baxter . Contributing Writer

Sherri Zann Rosenthal, assistant city attorney for the City of Durham, had been to lunch with the county Bar Association earlier on the same day she was interviewed by *Q-Notes*. "As friend after friend came in, I started thinking back," she said. "In 1985 when I first became an attorney, I felt so alienated from the bar.

"It was just these old white men. I had to sort of push myself to talk to them, because for the most part they had zero interest in me. With some exceptions. But now who makes up the county bar is very different. It's multi-racial now and it really wasn't back in the '80s. The way men and women interact is very different. So it's really interesting."

Rosenthal has seen a lot of changes in the community around

her, and she'll be speaking about them at NC Pridefest on Saturday, Sept. 30. As a keynote speaker, she'll share her reflections on Durham's early Pride parades and Pride activists.



Openly lesbian Sherri Zann Rosenthal is Assistant City Attorney for the city of Durham.

Rosenthal was a founder of the *Lesbian Newsletter*, which was published in Durham for over 20 years. She led the campaign to get domestic partner benefits for the City of Durham and co-lead the campaign for employees of Durham County, which both succeeded. In 2004, she received the Human Rights Campaign Carolinas Community Service Award for her work on domestic partnership benefits.

She was the attorney for Senate Vote '90, which was an anti-Helms political action committee that originated from the gay and lesbian community. She

currently serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of NC GALA, the gay and lesbian attorneys association.

Said Rosenthal:

"Our Day Out' was the very first march and rally in 1981, and yes I was there. It was fascinating because there weren't very many of us marching down the street and a bunch of obviously very poor folks were looking at us very oddly.

"Our Day Out' came in the wake of anti-gay attacks at the Little River in Durham, which resulted in the death of one man, Ron Antonovitch. But there were years of community organizing in other areas that made that first event possible.

"Many had been active in movements for other peoples rights — civil rights, all kinds of voter registration drives, protesting against racial discrimination, but it was after the Antonovitch murder that more public organizing around coming out as being gay began to happen.

"My impression, and this could have been just where I was coming from, was that there wasn't much happening among men at that time. That for the most part it was women who

were doing the community organizing and political organizing, with some real exceptions like Lightning Brown, Faygele ben Miriam, Carl Wittman and Allan Troxler.

"Later on, AIDS hit and women were very, very involved in the organizing around that, and that's really where we had more men and women joining together."

"Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists was another group that was a big thing at the time. There were also 'Take Back the Night Marches.' A lot of the women who were doing community organizing were very involved in those.

"One of the most interesting things about Pride then and now is that back then it was all participants. Now it's more of a spectator event. That's a huge change.

"There are more of us, that's part of it, but I also think that culturally the really good thing about it is that Pride — as well as being for community activists — is also for folks who are not organizational or public in their being. People who do not see life through a political lens. And that's great. I think that's why the numbers are up.

"The numbers are also up because people aren't afraid." ▀

Former Air Force sergeant to speak at Pride

Bruce Wyatt was ousted from the Air Force under the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy

by Jim Baxter . Contributing Writer

On Saturday, Sept. 30, crowds will gather on Duke University's East Campus in Durham for NC Pridefest. At noon, before the annual Pride parade, there will be a rally with several speakers — including Chapel Hill City Councilman Mark Kleinschmidt, Dr. Janie Long of Duke University, Durham County Assistant City Attorney Sherri Rosenthal and former Air Force Sgt. Bruce Wyatt.

Wyatt was a serviceman with over 20 years of experience before he was discharged at Pope Air Force base in Spring Lake under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

"It was 13 months ago, Aug. 23 of last year," Wyatt said in an interview with *Q-Notes*.

"I was 20 years old when I joined. I kind of got tired of hearing Dad say, 'you need to go get a job' and there was not much to be found in northeast Kentucky where I'm from. So I left home and joined the Air Force, which was

a good move, since I discovered I love to travel. I didn't know it at the time. I hadn't been very many places."

Wyatt spent six years on active duty, followed by 10 years on reserve duty and then went back to active duty in many different places across the states. Most of his time was spent in education training and management.

"I had been dating someone, a civilian living in Raleigh," he said. "We had a good friendship going and were starting a relationship. He was a person who made himself out to be someone that he was totally not. He continually lied, was extremely deceitful. I told him, 'I can be your acquaintance, but I can't be your partner anymore.' Once I did that, he actually fought me physically. He destroyed things in my home when he became violent after the breakup. I took him to court for the assault, but that's another story to tell.

"Turns out he had stolen the recall roster from my wallet. A recall roster contains the phone numbers and names in my chain of command. After I kicked him out, he began calling people.

"I didn't know what was going on, I just

went to work like normal with that guy out of my life, I thought.

About four months later, on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 2004, they called me into the legal office. They told me that they had this evidence against me indicating that I'm homosexual and they wanted to know if it was true. And I said, 'Yes it is true. I am homosexual. My military career has been outstanding. This hasn't affected my career at all.'

"They said, 'Well, you will be discharged,' because I admitted it. But they did tell me that if I didn't tell them the truth, they would be digging deeper, they would find out the truth and then they would take appropriate action which would probably be prosecution and jail time."

Wyatt was given an honorable discharge, but lost his pension and his medical benefits. "My children lost their medical benefits as well," he said. "I'm not allowed on base anymore.

"Because I had the number of years in the service that I had, I was entitled to a board hearing. My board hearing date was coming up, but my treatment on the base at the time

— because of everybody knowing about me — was not very pleasant. I was required to have an escort to all the discharge appointments: medical, anything dealing with paperwork, anywhere I went on base I had to have an escort. And I outranked that escort, so that was kind of demeaning. I chose to go ahead and waive the board hearing.

"Once I did that, they set a discharge date. They completed all the discharge paperwork, offered me a severance package — \$24,000 for 21 years worth of service, six months worth of medical and base privileges. The severance package was not paid out until six months later. I actually had to fight for that, argue with the finance department to get paid. I finally got it Feb. 2006." ▀



Former Air Force Sgt. Bruce Wyatt will talk about his experiences with the U.S. Military.



NORTH CAROLINA PRIDE
North Carolina's Annual Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Festival

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