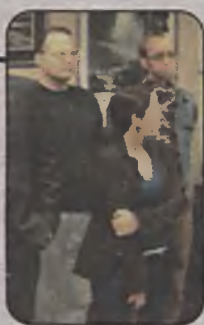


Shelby Lynn debuts new album page 21



S.C. couples demonstrate for marriage page 12



15-year-old shot at school page 19



QNotes

Noted . Notable . Noteworthy . LGBT News & Views

Volume 22 . Number 21 www.q-notes.com February 23 . 2008

Task Force director: HIV is a 'gay disease'

Matt Foreman sparks controversy at national Creating Change conference

by Todd Heywood . Special to Q-Notes

DETROIT, Mich. — In a speech about the state of the LGBT movement, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Executive Director Matt Foreman took the collected 1,500 activists from around the world to task on HIV/AIDS issues.

"We cannot deny this is a gay disease," Foreman said to a muted response. "We have to own up to it."

Foreman's comments spurred controversy at the 20th Annual Creating Change Conference, held here Feb. 6-10. As the leader of the sponsoring Task Force, the oldest national



Matt Foreman: 'HIV/AIDS is not a priority for the vast majority of LGBT national, state and local organizations.'

gay rights organization still in existence, his public claim that HIV is a "gay disease" flies in the face of over 25 years of AIDS activism and political battles.

To bolster his remarks, Foreman cited statistics showing the disease in the United States is still widespread in the gay community. About 68 percent of HIV/AIDS infections are among men who have sex with men, he said.

"Forty-five percent of African-American men in most urban areas have HIV," he continued. "And what do we do when we hear that statistic? We, as a community, give a collective shrug. For that response to happen internally and externally (of the gay community), it's appalling."

However, Foreman did not just call on the LGBT community to take the disease more seriously, he also attacked the Bush administration for what he said were its failures on HIV/AIDS prevention, particularly with regard to African-American men who have sex with men (MSM).

"This disease has been around for 26 years," he said. "For only one of 29 grants and programs

see foreman on 13

MAP loses gay fundraiser support

AIDS agency recovering from alleged internal crisis

by Matt Comer and David Stout Q-Notes staff

exQlusive

CHARLOTTE — Over the past two and a half decades the demographics of the HIV/AIDS epidemic have changed. From a killer that initially ravaged the gay male community, AIDS is now a health crisis that affects men and women, gay and straight, younger and older and all races — if not with equal disregard.

Responses from the government, support agencies and activist groups have also changed over the years. Awareness has increased but funding has been cut; more people know someone who is affected by HIV but fewer seem to be involved. AIDS service organizations such as Charlotte's Metrolina AIDS Project (MAP) have faced great difficulties keeping up with the transformation.

At a time when there were no resources available, MAP was founded in 1985 by six gay men. They were driven by a desire to counter the "gay plague" that was destroying their community, partners and friends. MAP

focused on raising awareness, prevention education and case management.

By the nature of its founding and the clients it first served MAP was for many years intimately linked with the LGBT community. But, as the demographics of the epidemic have broadened, particularly with the rates soaring among African-American men (many of whom don't identify as gay but have sex with men) and heterosexual black women, the agency's client base has substantially changed.

This has led to a sense among some within the gay community that MAP's focus has shifted to serving these demographics at the expense of those who for years were the agency's chief supporters, funders and volunteers.

According to one longtime community member, this perceived slight has recently led a group of donors to sever ties with the agency.

Carolina Celebration is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 by a group of longtime MAP board members, major donors and volunteers, to raise money for the agency's Dennis Fund, named for one of MAP's earliest

clients, Dennis Thaw.

The tens of thousands of dollars Carolina Celebration generated each year through its annual party helped fill the gaps left by federal and state funding by providing direct financial assistance for clients.

Although no official announcement has been made, a Carolina Celebration

founder and board member told Q-Notes that the

board has voted to close the organization and will likely disband sometime around June 1.

"We decided about two months ago to discontinue servicing the Dennis Fund and go with something else," Ed DePasquale said. "We were going to go through with changing the bylaws [and have the money go to a different organization]. Personally, I said the best thing to do is shut it down and start something else later down the road."

DePasquale remembers how the gay and lesbian community rallied in those early years to confront the AIDS epidemic and combat its spread. He said he hasn't seen the same level

see fundraiser on 15



N.C. activist honored at national conference

NAACP leader: 'Gay rights are civil rights'

by Todd Heywood . Special to Q-Notes

DETROIT, Mich. — Mandy Carter has long been on the front lines fighting for LGBT and racial equality. As Sue Hyde said in her introduction of Carter as the winner of the Susan J. Hyde Activism Award from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Carter represents "40 years of political troublemaking."

Carter was honored at the 20th anniversary Creating Change conference, hosted Feb. 6-10 by the Task Force, for her work with Southerners On New Ground (SONG), a North Carolina-based rights group created at the 1993 Creating Change conference hosted in Durham.

"I am truly humbled to receive this award and I do so for everyone who has been, is and will be in the social justice movement," Carter said.

She began her battle for social justice when she heard a speaker from a Quaker group at her high school. She said that conversation changed her life, and as a result she often follows the lead of the Quakers in her own activism. "We have to go where the people are and we have to interact with them there," she said.



Hyde Award winner Mandy Carter (left), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Matt Foreman and transgender activist Pauline Park at the Creating Change 2008 conference.

reminded onlookers that it takes time to be included, citing the annual commemorations

of the 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

Even though the march was largely organized by a gay man, as each remembrance of the event was planned LGBT activists were told this was not the year for their issues to be heard. Forty years later, things changed when Coretta Scott King herself asked that the LGBT community be part and parcel of the events.

"It takes time. It takes tenacity," Carter told the crowd. "Our movement is at a historical, pivotal crossroads. The question before us: Are we about justice, or just us? It's got to be about justice!"

Julian Bond hails activism

Julian Bond, chair of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), wowed a packed ballroom of over 1,500 LGBT activists during his Feb. 7 address at the conference.

"I want to talk about civil rights. I believe gay rights are civil rights," he said. "That is why when I am asked are gay rights civil

see task on 16

k.d. lang visits Chapel Hill page 21

Charlotte tackles bullying page 17

'Skin' author writes again page 24