

## Students come out to get down

By Neal Brown  
STAFF WRITER

The Alliance kicked off its annual Progressive Prom on Saturday with both professional and student-run drag shows, plenty of food and good music.

"Progressive Prom is one of our most well-attended events every year," said Joel Siegel, president of Alliance and junior atmospheric science student.

The night began around 8:30 p.m. in Alumni Hall with a drag show performed by two professional drag troops, the Country Kings and the Asheville Outlaws, according to Siegel.

The professional drag show cost about \$10 to attend. Both the drag show and the Progressive Prom were open to the public, according to Siegel.

"However, all UNCA students were free to the entire night's events," Siegel said.

Chartwells provided food and drinks for the prom, catering to about 150 guests, according to Siegel.

"We had chicken tenders, warm vegetables, pigs in a blanket and about five or six dozen sodas and waters," Siegel said.

Though the dance featured many different types of people from the

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JOEL SIEGEL  
President of Alliance

UNC Asheville community, the Progressive Prom did not really have a theme and focused more on providing students with a place to have a good time, according to Siegel.

"It is basically progressing toward what we would like to see in all of the schools," Siegel said. "We want the people to feel open and safe and have as much fun at our progressive prom as they would in their actual proms in high school."

The goal of the prom is to have an event that integrates both the gay and straight communities, according to A.J. Jessup, senior creative writing student and vice president of Alliance.

"It is just another chance to bring out the whole community whether they are gay, straight or whatever," Jessup said. "It is a chance to have a good time, to dance and to just let it out."

The event drew a decent turnout with diverse groups of people in attendance, according to Jonathan Barnes, junior environmental studies and management student.

"I saw a lot of my straight friends there that I maybe would not have expected to see," Barnes said. "I think that straight people know that when you want to get down, you have to go to the gay parties."

There were a good number of straight people there because people know that the night is all about freedom of expression, according to Siegel.

"There were several UNCA straight students there that definitely came to show off their inner queer," Siegel said.

The drag show was the best part of the night for some, according to Siegel.

"My favorite part was probably looking around during the student drag show and seeing everybody smiling, specifically during Bootsy Calderon's performance. Bootsy always comes through for us," Siegel said.

For some, getting dressed up and dancing was the best part of the night, according to Haveli Carsky, sophomore environmental studies student.

"I liked dressing up and seeing all of the different interesting choices of dress. I also had a lot of fun dancing," Carsky said.

The music and the drag show were the best parts for some as well as showing support for student organizations, according to Erica Little, junior atmospheric science major.

"I am head of all of the student organizations on campus, and so I went to support Alliance and all of their hard work. The student-run drag show was my favorite part, and the DJ played really good music," Little said.

Not only did the event bring out a lot of students, there was also plenty of faculty there showing support with the likes of Bill Haggard, vice chancellor for student affairs and Calvin Kelly, director for campus life, according to Jessup. Alliance advisors were

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HAVELI CARSKY  
sophomore environmental studies student

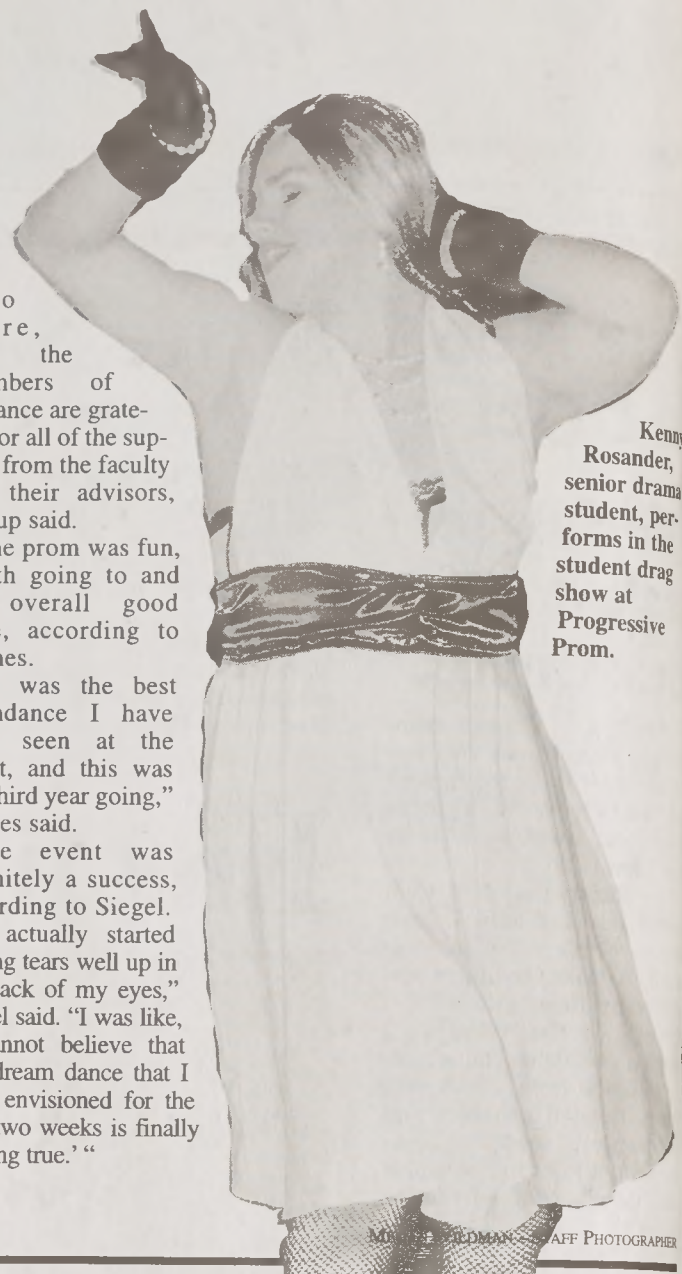
also there, and the members of Alliance are grateful for all of the support from the faculty and their advisors, Jessup said.

The prom was fun, worth going to and an overall good time, according to Barnes.

"It was the best attendance I have ever seen at the event, and this was my third year going," Barnes said.

The event was definitely a success, according to Siegel.

"I actually started feeling tears well up in the back of my eyes," Siegel said. "I was like, 'I cannot believe that this dream dance that I have envisioned for the past two weeks is finally coming true.'"



Kenya Rosander, senior drama student, performs in the student drag show at Progressive Prom.

MARY E. FLEMING - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Conference

a graduate student from Emory University who attended the conference.

One of the highlights of the conference was keynote speaker Kate Bornstein, according to Mills. Bornstein is a transgender writer, scholar, activist and performance artist based in New York City. More than 250 people attended her talk in the Humanities Lecture Hall Friday night.

During her talk, Bornstein celebrated the diversity of experiences and manifestations of sex and sexuality in society. Asheville has more transgender people per thousand people than anywhere else in the country, according to Bornstein.

"Most people come to college with two common misconceptions: There are two genders, male and female, and there are two sexual desires, homo and hetero," Bornstein said. "This binary is just untrue."

Bornstein's talk drew much laughter and cheers from the audience, and at one point the speaker solicited a round of applause for UNC Asheville Chancellor Anne

Ponder, who introduced Bornstein. "It is so cool to see a university that is supporting this kind of conference and this type of important dialogue," Bornstein said.

The conference was an opportunity for Emma Remick, Warren Wilson senior interdisciplinary

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EMMA REMICK  
Warren Wilson Student

student, to have the second screening of her documentary film entitled "Embodied Revolution." The film is a national look at gender-based and body-conscious activism, according to Remick.

The project started small and continued growing, with footage from New York, San Francisco,

Atlanta, Washington, Boston and Asheville, according to Remick. The film includes interviews with leading thinkers, activists and artists dealing with work related to gender and sexuality.

"This conference reflects being able to be academic about these issues and making the information accessible to people outside the academy," Remick said. "That's what I tried to show in my work as well. All sorts of people are really interested in talking about these issues."

The conference is a lot of work to plan, but the results are very rewarding, according to Mills. Queer studies is important for any university program that is really looking to have a diverse curriculum, she said.

"Fundamentally, our society has a puritanical background and makes sex out to be dirty and shameful," Bornstein said in the closing statement of her keynote speech. "I believe there is a silent majority of people in this country who like sex. We are in a position to shift the direction of American culture."



Queer conference participants converse in the Highsmith, where the conference took place. Members of the UNC Asheville community gathered for a weekend of events and speeches centered around queer studies.

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TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Elderly

ing to several reports.

Closer to home in Durham County, government officials report one in every five elderly citizens are victims of crime, which can range from breaking and entering, assault, fraud and abuse by family members. Officials also cite identity theft as one of the largest growing categories of crime victimizing elderly citizens.

There is some apprehension in the senior citizen community toward their own victimization, according to Joan Renton, 60, who is actively involved with UNC Asheville's Reuter Center.

"I think that Asheville is comparatively safe. I am from New Orleans, and there you have to lock your doors when you are driving around town. I don't feel like I have to lock my doors when I am driving here," Renton said. "I wouldn't be surprised if theft was growing to be a big problem here because the city is growing in leaps and bounds. I just wish this sort of thing was reported more."

Eighty-year-old Richard Krueger said victimization targeted to his age group is a serious problem.

"My wife's purse was stolen from her outside a grocery store, and I believe that crime to be targeted toward senior citizens," Krueger said. "I also get all sorts

of spam phone calls that try to trick me into buying or funding some sort of scam."

There are other scams targeted at senior citizens besides pick-pocketing in Asheville, according to West.

"One of the common things that happen in the spring is we will have a scam that focuses on elderly people's homes," West said.

According to West, a lot of home improvement occurs in Asheville during the spring and thieves take advantage of renovations.

"A lot of times we will have a scam where the bad guys will come in and put a coat of black paint or tar and put it on people's driveways. They will then charge them exorbitant amounts of money for the repaving and head out before the owners are even aware," West said.

These groups are present all across the East coast and citizens should be aware of what could happen to them, West said. "We have already had a few incidents of this in Asheville," West said.

Senior citizens are at a higher risk to all of these scams because they are too polite, Dankel said.

"Senior citizens were raised in a time where they were taught not to be rude and some folks have a

really hard time doing just that," Dankel said. "They need to be taught to hang up the phone when scam artists call and to walk away when someone starts hassling them for information or conversation."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation backs this up,

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RICHARD KRUEGER  
Asheville Citizen, 80

reporting the most common reasons senior citizens are victims of crime are because they are more likely to have been raised to be polite and trusting, they are most likely to have a "nest egg," to own their home and have excellent credit. Elderly citizens are also less likely to report fraud because they don't know who to report it to, according to the FBI.

It is impossible to know just how badly senior citizens are affected by pick-pockets or fraud, according to Dankel.

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"Some people are afraid to come forward with their case because they are embarrassed of their vulnerability to it. It is impossible to know how many people are affected by these crimes," Dankel said. "It is hard to say numbers. We know it happens, but we just don't know how badly."

Renton said she would like to see classes educate senior citizens on these problems at the Reuter Center or in the community.

"If this sort of crime is growing to be a big problem, then we should be instructed on how to deal with these types of people. Women started classes when physical abuse became a problem. They learned how to defend themselves in bad situations and so should we," Renton said.

Krueger disagreed saying that some elderly people will not be able to absorb self-defense information.

"There are some people who aren't capable of absorbing a lot of information and that leaves them more suspect," Krueger said.

APD is attempting to combat this sort of crime, according to Dankel.

"We have a problem just like any city does with being defrauded and because of that we have an investigator who works on these things all the time," Dankel said.

## Drive

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ride my bike and walk to school whenever possible."

The film festival will feature the competing short films as well as some of the 30-second PSAs.

In addition to the film contest, the public has the opportunity to compete for prizes by participating in the Strive Not to Drive pledge drive taking place April 20-29.

Participants are to commit to use alternative transportation during the allotted time period and record their ways and means of getting around during that time.

A variety of prizes are available to winners, such as a \$250 Liberty Bicycles gift card, two tickets to the Biltmore Estate, gift certificates to local businesses such as the Asheville Pizza and Brewing Company, Malaprops and many more. A full list of prizes is available at www.getting-around-wnc.com and participants can expect an announcement of winners on May 16.

There are many other events to participate in, including the Strive Not to Drive day on April 20, offering 25 cent bus rides all day on the Asheville Transit System.

There is a free bike commuter workshop from 9 a.m. until 1

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YURI KOSLEN  
Transportation Planner  
UNC Asheville

p.m. on April 21 at the Buncombe County Training Room located at 199 College St.

There will also be the annual Earth Day Festival at the Cathedral of All Souls in Biltmore Village and the Beating the Bounds Bicycle Ride at Pack Square in downtown Asheville on April 22.

A wealth of opportunities to get involved in this event are accessible to the public and those involved are encouraging others to participate in any way they can, according to Koslen, who worked previously with events like this in Boulder, Colo.

"In a time when we are considering the effects of human impact on the earth, this type of event is very important," Koslen said.