

Notes From the Co-Chairs

This has been a very hectic period for the CGLA. April 9-15 was Awareness Week. Although some events were poorly attended, I personally gained much from the week and I consider it to have been a success. One conclusion of the week is that CGLA needs to do more to address racism in the gay community and the special problems faced by black lesbians and gay men. To show CGLA's concern and increase our effectiveness in these areas I propose changing our by-laws to create some new management board positions. These positions will not be exclusive of the present positions, so one person can hold more than one position. The new positions will include, but will not be limited to, CGLA representatives to the Black Student Movement, Students for the Advancement of Race Relations, the Women's Forum, and the Carolina Indian Circle. Hopefully, the management board will vote on these positions as soon as possible.

In other parliamentary news, we will vote to remove the clause that states that an individual can not be co-chair for two consecutive years.

The day after CGLA's lavishly-provisioned, poorly-attended party, there was a lavishly-attended, poorly-provisioned Castle Party (an off-campus gay tradition). Since I wanted to know how the CGLA could be more attractive to lesbian and gay students, I decided to conduct an informal survey. There was a large number of gay male students who don't participate in CGLA functions, but very few lesbians--so this is a male perspective.

When asked why the CGLA was unattractive to them personally, most people said that it was too open, too public. They were not ready or willing to be out at this time. Many people said the CGLA was too militant (I still don't understand that) or too political. A response common among graduate students was that they did not need the CGLA, that it was for

On Thursday, April 13, there were hearings at the Binkley Baptist Church about gay and lesbian harassment and discrimination. The hearing was held by the Orange County Human Relations Commission to determine whether the county needs to update its antidiscrimination statement. Past co-chairs and I were invited to speak concerning harassment directed against CGLA and ourselves. I spoke about the vandalism of our door calendar, the obscene and hateful messages left on our answering machine, and the personal threats directed against friends of mine. I also talked about the postcard sent to a man's UNC workplace from a fictitious CGLA member thanking him for coming to a meeting. The man had not been to a meeting, and CGLA sends mail only in plain envelopes; the postcard was meant to harass and harm him. I somehow forgot to mention that our Christmas tree, decorated with one ribbon for each North Carolinian who had died from AIDS (358 at the time) was stolen from the Pit. In mid-April, we received more than the usual amount of harassment because of Lesbian and Gay Awareness Week: a caller left a message on our answering machine protesting Blue Jeans Day and saying he was "sick and tired of (us) faggots." They always say "faggot," never noticing that lesbians are in CGLA as well. Sexist and homophobic--nasty combination, huh?

There were many more speakers with horrible stories about harassment, and I grew angry listening to them. My resolve was hardened to work to promote greater understanding and acceptance among people. Please show your support by attending these hearings or writing to the members of the Orange County Human Relations Commission. The next hearing will concern harassment and discrimination on account of race. It will be held on May 31 in northern Orange County. Call Town Hall for details.

--Liz Stiles

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"You asked me in to dine, and now just talk
Of Hegel, Mozart, a Picasso nude.
Your learning's splendid, but it's ten o'clock
You've lots of food for thought, now where's the food?"
-Timothy Steele

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