

Holiday. Celebrate.

GLBT-SA Holds Celebration Week



Above: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chancellor James Moeser addresses students, faculty, and Chapel Hill community members at the candle light vigil and speak-out in response to a recent hate crime that occurred on Franklin Street.

by Robert Wells

Society accuses LGBTIQ persons of flaunting their sexuality for doing things that straight people often take for granted. Whether it is holding hands with a partner in public or simply stating one's sexual orientation, non-straight people fight a constant battle to defend the expression of one of the most basic parts of their identity. This is why the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered - Straight Alliance's (GLBT-SA's) spring extravaganza, Celebration Week, was necessary. The week of March first to March ninth brought a myriad of queer-related speakers and activities to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's campus, giving everyone a chance to rejoice in their sexuality without fear of persecution.

The week began on a somber note with a candle-light vigil and speak-out in response to a recent hate crime that took place the weekend before, in which a student was attacked in front of a restaurant on Franklin Street. Though hastily-organized, the speak-out and vig-

il let students know that the LGBTIQ community and its allies refuse to tolerate physical or verbal abuse. During the speak-out, petitions were distributed to urge the University and North Carolina legislators to include sexual orientation and gender identity and expression under their respective hate crime laws. Members of the community, including UNC-CH Chancellor James Moeser, Vice-Chancellor Peggy Jablonski, Chapel Hill councilman Mark Kleinschmidt, and Ian Palmquist of Equality North Carolina, addressed a crowd of about 500 students, faculty members, and concerned Triangle citizens. After an open-mike session, the group was led by Student Body President Matt Calabria and Student Body President Elect Seth Dearmin, both wielding rainbow flags, across the upper-quad to Franklin Street. Once in front of Top of The Hill Restaurant, where the attack occurred, the group stood for one minute in silent reflection.

However, as implied in its title, Celebration