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B-GLAD Votes To Join Coalition

By Kami Chavis
Ink Staff Writer

Members of Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians and Allies for Diversity (B-GLAD), formerly the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association (CGLA), voted Sept. 21, to join the coalition for a free-standing Black Cultural Center.

B-Glad has joined the ranks of other campus organizations including the Campus Y, the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC), the Black Awareness Council (BAC), the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center and the Black Student Movement (BSM), in the persistent struggle for a free-standing BCC.

B-GLAD currently has 60 members, half of which were present when the vote took place. Of the members present, 28 voted in favor of joining the coalition, while two members abstained from voting. On Sept. 30, the group selected a representative to attend coalition meetings.

Doug Ferguson, co-chairperson of B-GLAD, first suggested that the group actively support a

free-standing BCC.

"My argument has been that although the oppression gays and lesbians are faced with differs from that which African Americans experience, we still know what it is like to be discriminated against," Ferguson said. "If at all possible, I would like all forms of discrimination to be eliminated from this campus and one way to do this is to construct a free-standing BCC."

When Ferguson first presented the idea of joining the coalition, several members were opposed and questioned his proposal. But before the vote took place, Charles McNair, minister of information for the BSM, and Ruby Sinreich, co-chairperson for SEAC, spoke to the group and presented reasons why B-GLAD should become a part of the coalition.

McNair and Sinreich shattered myths about the BCC by assuring members it would not promote separatism and that funds to construct the building would not be provided by the University.

Some of the members were also disgruntled by comments made by Khalid Mohammad X during the

Sept. 18 rally in the Dean Smith Center. Mohammad's comment referring to homosexuals angered several members of B-GLAD, but this in no way affected Ferguson's stance on the issue.

"Khalid X made some comments I did not agree with, but he was a worthwhile speaker because he represented the anger of the movement, and it is important that this anger be expressed," Ferguson said. "I also understand that homophobia is a problem in all races and the African-American community is not an exception."

Members of B-GLAD feel that both the coalition and the organization itself have a lot to gain by creating an alliance.

B-GLAD Co-chairperson Kathy Staley stated: "The divisive problems that have arisen between gays and blacks can possibly be alleviated, and more understanding can be reached with our involvement in the coalition. I also hope the numbers we can add to the fight will help UNC to get a free-standing BCC."

Journey Through Blackness

By Shani Barrax
Ink Staff Writer

"Journey Through Blackness," a cultural exposition sponsored by the Special Projects Committee of the Carolina Union Activities Board, was held in Great Hall on Sept. 17. The program showcased several different aspects of black culture, ranging from African American to Jamaican, with song dance, food and oratory.

"A Journey Through Blackness" is not only an educational experience; I want it to be an entertaining experience," said Maleikka Hardy, Special Projects chairwoman of the Carolina Union Activities Board. "One of the goals of the Special Projects Committee is to provide programs that will increase the cultural awareness on campus. This is the first program of the series."

The program, attended by approximately 200 people, began with an African welcome dance called Funga by Afro II, an on-campus African dance group. The BSM Gospel Choir followed them with their rousing performances of "Never Shall Forget," "Joy Cometh in the Morning," "I'm Glad About It," and "Won't Turn Back." As with all their performances, they received an active, positive response from the audience. The Ebony Readers, another BSM subgroup, appeared next, performing two selections by African-American authors: "I've Known Rivers" by Langston Hughes, and "To You," by Mary Bohanon.

The definite highlight of "A Journey Through Blackness" was the performance by Sam Irving. A University of North Carolina at Chapel

Hill alumnus, Irving combined song with monologues to present a powerful depiction of the African-American experience through the Civil Rights Movement. When he opened his mouth to sing, the brother TORE IT UP! The audience, between cheering him on and clapping, was mesmerized by his voice and monologues. He opened with his rendition of "America the Beautiful," which was abruptly interrupted by his display of the harsh reality that African Americans have unequal opportunity in this country. Adorned in African dress, he continued with a beautiful version of "Amazing Grace" and several different monologues.

The portion of his segment that had the most impact was a monologue he wrote which combined "Funtown" and "A Letter From

Birmingham Jail." In "Funtown," a father must explain to his four-year-old daughter that she cannot go to an amusement park that she so desperately wants to attend because she is "colored" and it is for "whites only." He closed the segment with an excerpt from "A Letter From Birmingham Jail," in which Martin Luther King, Jr. explains why severe oppression makes it difficult for African Americans to wait for equality. Irving's description of this oppression and racism had him in tears and the audience in a hushed silence.

"It made me want to cry," said Jennifer Taylor, who attended the program. "The end of his play really gave a good perspective of the difficulty parents had in explaining to their children while still trying to encourage them to love all men as

well as themselves."

The North Carolina Central University Dance Troupe formed the finale of the program, combining martial arts with dance to trace the evolution of early man's survival techniques. Other highlights included steel drums by Wilton Du Bois and West Indian food by Jamaica Jamaica.

"A Journey Through Blackness" had a surprisingly good racial mix; outside of African Americans, those who attended ranged from white to Asian. Other programs by the Carolina Union Activities Board include cultural expos on Hispanic, Asian and Native American culture, which will be held throughout the academic year.