

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Asheville Gay and Lesbian Information Line:

253-2971

A project of the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council

To report anti-gay/HIV + discrimination/violence:

SALGA Documentation Project:  
253-1656

Funded by a Resist grant

U. S. Department of Justice toll-free:  
1-800-457-HATE

Asheville, NC

Serving the WNC Gay/Lesbian Community

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## HIV Group Organizes

by David Owens

A group of HIV+ individuals has formed the Mountain AIDS Coalition (MAC) in Western North Carolina to provide a unified voice and common channel for beneficial action for HIV+ individuals, regardless of race, sex, or sexual orientation. The founders believe that knowledgeable HIV+ people in the community can facilitate decision-making procedures affecting those with HIV infection.

MAC will have primarily an advocacy and educational role. "We will function as mediator between agencies serving and affecting people with AIDS, and those they serve," said Billie Allen, one of the organizers. The group will help provide a unified voice in forming and revising policies affecting them, and will monitor public agencies to ensure that their needs are being met. "We will be there to smooth the road," Allen said. "If someone has a complaint about being treated unfairly, we'll look into it."

Another goal, somewhat down the road, is education. After a person tests positive, what does he or she do then? What kind of resources are available? "We'll probably suggest an outline of sources, such as social, financial, medical

and informational. In this sense we're trying to fill a gap that other groups simply cannot. Right now there is no group within Western North Carolina which targets HIV+ individuals, other than WNCAP (Western North Carolina AIDS Project)," Allen explained.

The group will also assist in educating policy makers.

MAC is currently seeking to become an official site for the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), and has applied for technical assistance available through NAPWA's grant from the Centers for Disease Control. However, MAC's founding and continued existence is not contingent upon acceptance by NAPWA or upon outside funding.

Memberships are CONFIDENTIAL and open to all HIV+ persons regardless of the state of HIV progression. Membership applications for MAC will be printed in four consecutive issues of *Community Connections*.

Lend your interest, strength, and courage to your community; have a voice in those public policies which directly affect you. Join MAC.

A membership application form is found on page 7 of this issue.

MAC's introductory meeting will be held at Shambhala Institute, 118 Cumberland, on Saturday, February 9, 3-5 PM. Anyone who is HIV+ is welcome.



Opening Night Reception at Blue Spiral I Gallery.

See related stories on pages 8 & 9.

## SALGA Marches for Human Rights

Members and supporters of the Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) braved the icy weather and stepped out in the fifth annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Walk in Asheville on January 21. They joined with 200-300 other marchers, as they made their way from St. James AME Church on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to City-County Plaza in downtown Asheville.

About 20 hearty souls marched proudly behind the SALGA banner in this year's parade, the first time a gay or lesbian group had been identified in Asheville's annual event. This is the second time SALGA has marched with their banner in an Asheville parade; the first was Earth Day, 1990.

After the marchers reached City-County Plaza, they enjoyed music by the Living the Dream Choir, followed by a thought-provoking speech by Rev. Dr. John Grant, Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

The march was sponsored by the Asheville Parks and Recreation

Department, Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council, YMI Cultural Center, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, NAACP, and the Bahai's. ▽

## Snow Stops Hearing

The Asheville public hearing about ending anonymous HIV testing in North Carolina was canceled January 24 because of snow. The hearing in Asheville was the last in a series of six held across the state by the Commission for Health Services.

The Commission is considering a proposal to end anonymous HIV testing in all but 12 testing sites in North Carolina beginning June 1, 1991, and to eliminate all anonymous testing as of January 1, 1994.

Keith Floyd of ACT UP Triangle reported that at the hearing held in Raleigh (January 15), 34 people spoke, 33 of them in favor of preserving anonymous

See HEARING, page 6

## Women to Head Outdoors

reported by Betsy Mayers

Are you a woman who finds herself having difficulty deciding between spending time with other women and spending time outdoors? If so, there is a new group just for you. The group is called Women Outdoors. An organizational meeting of Asheville Area Chapter of Women Outdoors, Inc., will be held Thursday, February 21 at 6:30 pm at Betsy's house, 974 Reems Creek Road, Weaverville.

If you are interested in developing your outdoor skills, expanding your leadership potential, promoting environmental awareness, and joining a



group of women who have similar interests and goals, this is the group for you. Become part of a growing network of women who through the outdoors are building bridges

between members of diverse outdoor skills, ages, lifestyles, and cultures.

Women Outdoors strives to create an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect for all women regardless of age, class, color, ethnicity, marital status, physical ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or size. We encourage each participant in Women Outdoors to honor confidentiality and avoid making assumptions about others.

Call for directions: 645-5908.

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