



Photo by Art Polansky

SALGA Goes on Retreat

by Charlotte Goedsche, Secretary

The annual retreat of the Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance was held April 13 and 14 at The Inn in Hot Springs, NC. Those present first reviewed the main activities and projects which SALGA has carried out since its founding in November 1987. It was agreed that SALGA's work could be categorized as follows: public advocacy, community outreach, networking and administrative. We defined the first three of these categories and our major goals.

Public advocacy means "to advocate for public policies which ensure full human rights for lesbians and gay men." It includes the following goals: repeal of the NC Crimes Against Nature law, city/county non-discrimination resolution, appropriate direct action responses, Adopt-a-Highway, dialogue with public officials, and local elections (including canvassing).

Community outreach means "to educate and serve the gay and lesbian

community and to promote public awareness of gay and lesbian issues." It includes the Speakers' Bureau, the Documentation Project, speakers and workshops, concerts and dances, public events (e.g., National Day of Mourning), and media.

Networking means "to work cooperatively with groups and organizations in order to pursue our shared visions." It includes working with national/state/local lesbian/gay organizations, and forming coalitions with non-gay organizations.

SALGA's mission statement was reviewed, and revised as follows:

SALGA is a political action organization working to achieve full human rights for lesbians and gay men through public advocacy and community outreach. SALGA affirms the right of lesbians and gay men to live free of oppression, discrimination and prejudice.

It was agreed that for the next 12 months the Diversity segment of the monthly meeting be devoted to discussing all '-isms,' and that it be extended to 15 minutes per meeting.

April Meeting

The April meeting of SALGA was held April 7 at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Asheville. It was agreed that SALGA contribute \$100 to National Coming Out Day to become a sponsoring organization. SALGA's name will be listed on NCOD's literature. We also agreed that SALGA would participate in the Earth Day Parade in Asheville on April 21 (see article on page 1), and in the Human Rights Festival in Asheville on April 27. Betty Sharpless will speak at the Festival, and SALGA will run an information booth.

SALGA decided to issue a challenge during WNCW's spring membership drive. Kay Ponder collected \$225 from those present at the meeting for the challenge. We will collect for WCQS's next drive in the fall.

This year SALGA will again raise money by selling food, t-shirts, etc., at the WNC Lesbian/Gay Pride Festival in Asheville. A Gay Pride Month Committee was formed to organize other events for Gay Pride Month, and to set up a June calendar to be printed in *Community Connections*.

The Board of Directors met April 22 to discuss the annual calendar, membership, and networking. The next Board meeting will be May 6.

The next SALGA meeting will be Sunday, May 5, at the Unitarian Universalist Church (lower level), 1 Edwin Place, corner of Charlotte Street, Asheville, NC. We will begin the meeting promptly at 4:30 PM. We will have potluck, so please bring a covered dish to share, and drinks for yourself. To help our environment we ask that you bring your own plates and eating utensils. ▽

JOHN - continued from page 8

I had no idea he knew!" Over the holidays, John decided to try to talk to his father, but a conversation about his parents' religious concerns ensued, instead.

His father began to cry.

Both of John's parents were upset that he left the church, and they still think John is going to hell...not for being gay, but for not going to church. John feels that his parents wish he were straight because he is the last male who could carry on the family name. As a matter of fact, John does want to have and to raise children and own a home; John wants to pursue the American dream.

Recently John got a signal that his parents are beginning to accept his sexual orientation. He had just been elected group coordinator for SAGA when his mother called. After sharing the news with his mother, John was surprised to hear his father say "Congratulations!" John hadn't realized that his father had been on the line, as well.

Shocked, John said, "Dad, I'm surprised to hear that from you." His father replied, "Why? You know that your mother and I are very proud of you and the things you're doing."

As the new group coordinator for SAGA, John says he would like to see the group do more of what it was set up to do: support, education, and fellowship. Recently SAGA mailed fliers to the entire student body and faculty about SAGA. At the next SAGA meeting, several new people showed up and joined.

After college, John wants to go into the space program. Imagine a new hero for the gay community--John Majors, the first openly gay man in space! ▽

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