



Photo by Betty Sharpless

Vigil participants mourn Hardwick decision

Candlelight Vigil Sobering End to Gay Pride Month

by Betty Sharpless

Approximately 50 people gathered at Asheville's City/County Plaza Sunday evening, June 30, to participate in the Third Annual Candlelight Vigil for the Right to Privacy in commemoration of the Supreme Court's repressive 1986 Hardwick decision.

Once again, a diverse cross-section of our mountain community attended the Vigil and joined in protest of the U.S. government's attempt to impose its morals upon private citizens.

In its 5-4 opinion, the Court found that state governments had a constitutional right to regulate the private and consensual sexual behavior of adult persons living in their jurisdictions. Advocates of the right to privacy had hoped that the Court would strike down as unconstitutional all laws that criminalize private consensual sexual behavior between adults.

Beth Betze, co-organizer of the event, introduced Bob Smith, Executive Director of the Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council, the first speaker of the evening. A familiar face to many of us, Smith has worked closely with Lillian Powell towards the passage of an inclusive anti-discrimination resolution in the City of Asheville and in Buncombe County. Citing the Holocaust as an example, Smith reminded the audience that one cannot allow discrimination against any one particular group of people without setting a precedent which threatens the legal rights of *all* minorities.

The next speaker, Dewitt Daniell, President of the Board of the WNC American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), cautioned against a false sense of progress against legalized homophobia. Using the recently vacated seat on the U.S. Supreme Court as an example, Daniell pointed out how easily our hard-won victories as a minority could be over-turned by a conservative court.

Laura Gordon, representing WNC Citizens for Choice, continued this theme with an excellent recounting of the history of the struggle for reproductive rights for women. Gordon drew analogies between freedom of reproductive choice and freedom of sexual preference as a private citizen. She, too, reiterated the need for *all* minorities to stand together to fight for the rights of all.

Carlos Gomez, Chair of SALGA, spoke next. He reviewed the history of the Candlelight Vigil and the progress SALGA has made in the Asheville area. Contrary to Daniell, Gomez stated that there was a call for cautious optimism and hope for continued growth through networking with the community.

Local performing artist Cookie LaRue wrapped up the spoken program with an entertaining discussion of her *personal* experience with the Crime Against Nature law. She summarized her program with a quote from Whitney Houston, and sang "I found the greatest love of all in 'So-do-my.'"

Ellen Hines accompanied the actual candle lighting with Holly Near's mountain woman song, which was followed by a moment of silence. ▼

Lambda Connections To Hold Winter Expo

Lambda Connections will hold its annual Winter Expo in Charlotte, NC, on November 2 and 3. The Expo provides an opportunity for the community to purchase all their Christmas gifts under one roof, and to support lesbian and gay supportive businesses at the same time.

The 1992 Lambda Connections Directory will be completed in time for the Winter Expo. The theme of this Directory is "Support

Lesbian and Gay Supportive Businesses." Lambda is now accepting ads for businesses who want to be in the 1992 Directory. The Directory will include businesses from NC, SC, GA, and many other southern states. The Directory will be distributed free to organizations and clubs all over the south. With the diversity of cities and businesses in this Directory, it can be utilized at home and while traveling. For more information on Lambda Connections, contact Kimberley Melton, PO Box 12072, Charlotte, NC 28220; or (704)535-8435.--Press release ▼

Businesses...

Do your ads reach over 2,000 Lesbians and Gays?

*It's time to let the community know who the Lesbian- and Gay-supportive businesses are! If you'd like to be one of those advertisers reaching our people, now's your chance! The 1992 Lambda Connections Directory will be distributed FREE to the Southern Lesbian and Gay community in a positive, **professional** manner.*

For more information, call or write,

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Charlotte, NC 28220
1•704•535•8435

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Lesbian/Gay
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SILENCE=DEATH