

## WNC Pride Fest Successful Despite Rain

Organizers of the WNC Lesbian/Gay Pride Festival are calling the event a success even though an afternoon thunderstorm interrupted the festival for about 45 minutes, causing many people, including some vendors, to leave. Although some vendors lost money on the event, no losses were incurred by the festival organizers, since the festival itself had been paid for in advance.

"We've been really lucky the past few years that it hasn't rained us out," said Ron Huskins, Chair of WNC Lesbian/Gay Pride Committee. "We [the committee] didn't raise as much money as in the past years, but we're not doing it to get rich in the first place."

This marked the first year that the festival was held on city-owned property. "I was informed that a gentleman had called city hall and complained that the city shouldn't have allowed the festival to take place on city property," Huskins stated. "When asked for his name, he refused to give it, saying there would be protestors, and hung up." No protestors showed up, however.



Deryl Mathis & Angie Sheets wait out the rain

Local television coverage of the festival was provided by WLOS (Channel 13) with footage shown during both the 6 PM and 11 PM reports.

The WNCL/GP Committee was dissolved for one year at its July meeting. A new committee will be formed in August under the auspices of the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council to organize next year's Gay Pride March/Parade, which will be held in Asheville. The group was awarded the right to organize the NC Gay Pride March and Celebration by the NC Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE) in May of this year. It will be the first time the event has been held outside the Triangle area. ▽

Photos by C.A. Whittemore



Jail business was brisk



Pride Vice-Chair Betty Sharpless says, "Whew, that was heavy!"

## Pride '92 Committee Needs You!

The last Saturday in June, 1992, the Asheville Gay and Lesbian Community Council Gay Pride Committee will host over 3,000 Gays, Lesbians, their supporters and friends for the first statewide Gay Pride March to be held outside of the Triangle area. Individuals and groups interested in participating in the fun of planning and hosting this FAB-U-LOUS event should contact Co-Chair Betty Sharpless at 254-8832; or P.O. Box 8252, Asheville, NC 28814. Volunteers are needed to help with the following committees: housing, softball and volleyball tournaments, vendors and crafts, fun and games, media, decorations, parade, on-site-information, logos and T-shirts, fundraising, first aid, and anything else you want to see happen! This is our party and we all need to work together to make it happen. Call or write to volunteer today. The initial brainstorming meeting will be held August 15, 1991, at 7 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church on the corner of Charlotte Street and Edwin Place in Asheville. BE THERE OR BE SQUARE. For more information call Betty at 254-8832. ▽

## Miller Boycott Officially Ends

Boycott leaders called an end to the Miller/Marlboro boycott on May 30. Tim McFeeley, Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) Director; Michael Petrelis, ACT UP/D.C.; William Wayburn, Dallas Gay Alliance; and several D.C. and AIDS

activists are finalizing negotiations with Phillip Morris, parent company of Miller and Marlboro. Phillip Morris has agreed to contribute nearly \$1 million annually to AIDS and to put more money into gay and lesbian rights, a total of \$3 million, according to the Gay Community News (GCN, 6/2/91). GCN reports that Phillip Morris has also agreed to distance itself from Helms' anti-gay practices. Phillip Morris contributed \$12,000 to Helms' tobacco industry, and \$200,000 towards the Jesse Helms museum. Phillip Morris would not agree to cease funding Helms, which they see as necessary to protect their business interests.

In the agreement is the understanding that if Phillip

Morris does not hold to its promises, the boycott will resume.

The two largest ACT UP groups in the country, ACT UP/San Francisco and ACT UP/New York, as well as ACT UP/Atlanta (*Southern Voice*, 6/20) so far are continuing the boycott because few ACT UP chapters have had the opportunity to vote on the boycott's end and leaders are unhappy that Phillip Morris will continue to fund Helms.

Leaders of other ACT UP groups were angry that they had not been included in the decision to end the boycott.

Was the boycott effective? Gay and AIDS activists disagree. Many gay men and lesbians across the country didn't even hear about the boycott, like Steve Seidman, president of the Albany, New York's largest gay political group.

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## "Letters to Jesse" Campaign Begins

Helms, that is. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) announced a letter-writing campaign in which gay men, lesbians and their supporters nationwide are being asked to write letters to Helms telling him who we are. "It's not a bash-Jesse Helms operation. It's quite the opposite," said Timothy Lane, a spokesman for GLAAD. "Each letter to Jesse should be a personal affirmation, a sharing of experience, a statement of all that is good, positive, challenging and special about being gay or lesbian... We don't expect to change his mind but...we want to level the playing field as far as understanding about who gays and lesbians are versus who Helms says gays and lesbians are."

After six or eight months of the letter-writing campaign, GLAAD will publish a book containing many of the letters, titled *Letters to Jesse*. Each writer should send one copy of his or her letter to Helms at Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and one to the GLAAD New York Office. That address is: 80 Varick Street, Suite 3E, New York, NY 10013. --Reported in the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, 7/11/91. Thanks to Ron Lambe. ▽