

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:
1-800-347-HATE

Asheville, NC

Serving the Southern Appalachian Gay/Lesbian Community

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It's Up! See page 5 for SALGA's response to state's concerns about safety.

Gay Man Beats CAN-Related Charge

by Cynthia Janes

The case of a gay man charged with solicitation to commit Crime Against Nature was dismissed in court on Friday, August 23. The attorney for the defense, Dewitt Daniell, had argued that it be dismissed because of insufficient evidence.

"Ted" (not his real name) was arrested the weekend of April 19 near the Sandy Bottoms area, by the French Broad River near Asheville. Law enforcement officials arrested 27 others the same weekend in a "sting" operation involving officers from the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department, the U.S. Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and rangers of the NC Arboretum.

What led to Ted's arrest? "[The agent] walked through the woods a good 150 yards to get to me. Then he kept staring and staring, and I didn't speak for the longest time. I was there looking for wisteria. Then he walked up to me, and of course I spoke to him. We talked about gay issues for a good 45 minutes. He told me he was gay.... He talked to me for all that time, trying to get me to do or say something that he could arrest

me for." That could be mentioning a sex act or touching or exposing genitals. Ted had done neither when he was arrested.

"The charge was 'solicitation to commit a felony,'" said Daniell, his attorney. "More specifically, the charge was solicitation to commit crime against nature. It is a misdemeanor charge," Daniell reported.

Ted told *Community Connections* that he decided he had to fight the charge "because I didn't feel that I had broken the law."

Daniell said that of the 28 cases, "my client was the only one that pleaded not guilty. Ted was one of two men who demanded a trial. The case of the second man arrested in the same operation was to be tried after Ted's, but after Ted won his case the District Attorney voluntarily withdrew the second case.

"The state was going after a totality-of-the-circumstances sort of a theory: that they knew Bent Creek was a place where

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WNCAP Auction Nets \$16K for Clients

This year's Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP) auction, held August 10, was a big success, netting \$16,155.50 for WNCAP. All the money is earmarked for direct support for clients.

Over 600 items were donated, and so many people attended that they could not all fit into the area in which the auction was held. "We know that next year we need about twice as much space," said WNCAP Director Brenda Youngblood. Two hundred chairs had been set up, and at the back of the room patrons "were packed like sardines, with standing room only," Youngblood reported.

Auctioneers for the event were Johnny Penland and his son-in-law, Tom Tuten.

Asked where WNCAP had advertised, Youngblood answered, "Everywhere! We were on T.V. and radio, we had a couple of items in the newspaper, we had an ad in *Community Connections*, and we had posters up all over town." A broad mix of gay and non-gay people attended the auction.

Youngblood thinks that the preview held the Friday before the auction helped make the auction a success, because people saw how many nice things were going to be auctioned.

WNCAP would like to thank all those who donated items for the auction, helped solicit items, and helped put it all together. THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, IT WAS A BIG SUCCESS!

Candidates to Meet with G/L Community

Candidates for the Asheville City Council have been invited to participate in a Candidates Forum. The Forum is sponsored by the Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) and will be presented in cooperation with CLOSER. All fifteen candidates for City Council have been invited to participate in the Forum, to be held in the Parish Hall of All Souls Episcopal Church, Biltmore, on Tuesday, September 10, beginning promptly at 7:30 PM.

The facilitator for the evening, Ron Lambe, will ask candidates to answer prepared questions, and will also solicit questions from the audience. Time will also be allotted to educate candidates about who we are, and what needs we have.

A registrar will be in attendance to register voters and to take address changes. The deadline for voter registration is October 7 for the November 5 election.

Results of the forum will be tabulated and distributed by *Community Connections* in the form of a flyer to all subscribers and at Asheville night clubs in

time for the September 24 primary.

This is the first time that candidates for public office have met with members of the Asheville-area gay and lesbian community, but it is not the first time that gays have had an impact on a City Council election.

Four years ago a gay-affirming candidate was elected to City Council by a handful of gays and lesbians. Republican candidate Russ Martin had reacted favorably to questions about non-discrimination legislation during a public

... gay-affirming
candidate...elected to City Council
by...26 votes.

forum. SALGA's founders-to-be were present at that forum and called their friends afterwards to tell them about the candidate. Many of them had been planning to vote for a Democrat. Republican Martin was elected to the council by 26 votes! ▼