

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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Joan Marshall's Ministry to Remain at All Souls

Marshall's Work with HIV + and G/L Communities Threatened, Then Supported

Ed. note: Since 1979, Joan Marshall, mother of a gay son and episcopal deacon in All Souls Parish, has worked with the Asheville area gay and lesbian community. More recently, she has added involvement with AIDS issues and people infected with the HIV virus. In the past several years, as her ministry has become more formally established, Marshall's work has become increasingly controversial within All Souls. Nevertheless, All Souls has continued to take the lead in Western North Carolina among mainstream Christian churches in support of gay men and lesbians, and people with AIDS.

by David Hopes

On the evening of November 3, 1991, the deaconate of Joan Marshall at All Souls Parish in Biltmore was renewed unanimously for another year by the vestry, the elected governing body of the church. Joan's deaconate is set forth in three functions: Liturgical, service in liturgies of the church; Pastoral, visiting the sick and supporting those in need; and Community, specialized service in AIDS and gay and lesbian outreach.

That this item should have struck gay and lesbian parishioners, and most of the rest of the church, as victory unforeseen and grace unexpected, arises from a series of squabbles and misunderstandings that almost ended Joan's ministry at All Souls. As late as Thursday night, Halloween, Joan had resigned herself to leaving the church for a diocesan ministry headquartered in the Bishop's office. Her friends gathered around her to find ways to survive the blow.

That night was the climax of a drama that began on the evening of June 19, 1991, when All Souls held a parish meeting to explore Joan's deaconate, particularly as it related to her commitment to the gay and lesbian community. All Souls Episcopal, home of

C.L.O.S.E.R. and the ministry of Dan and Joan Marshall, has become known in western North Carolina for its outreach to the homeless, to prisoners, to the poor, to the disenfranchised and outcast of every circumstance, but especially to the gay and lesbian community and to persons infected with the HIV virus.

On the evening of June 19 it became clear that almost as long as All Souls had been reaching out to gays and lesbians, portions of the church family had been resenting that outreach, either because they thought it took Joan's energies away from more traditional ministries, or because of undisguised (but also largely unrecognized) homophobia. Longtime members may remember that the meeting night for C.L.O.S.E.R. was changed to Tuesday because at one time the EYC, the All Souls youth fellowship, met on Wednesday night and some members of the parish thought it unwise for the church's youth to risk contact with gay men and women.

Homophobia churning just below the surface for many years--remaining largely unexpressed because All Souls' rector Neil Zabriskie supported (and supports) Joan's ministry unequivocally--surfaced publicly on the evening of June 19, when Joan's ministry was attacked for being everything from high-handed to un-Christian. Mr. David Maxwell, a therapist from Black Mountain, rose and delivered himself of the "gayness-is-arrested-development-so-why-don't-you-grow-up" speech we thought we had heard the last of 20 years ago. Various individual hysterias had an airing. Some feared getting AIDS from a communion cup. Others observed that demonstrations of affection between gay men was not appropriate at church. Others asserted that a C.L.O.S.E.R. dance--men dancing with men and women

See JOAN, page 6



Photo by Kay Ponder

Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up
SALGA members and volunteers pick up trash along I-40 for the first time since adopting the stretch of highway. See story on page 4.

Asheville To Host Festival?

Southern Gay and Lesbian Cultural Festival Planning Group to Meet Here

by Ron Huskins

On a weekend in October 1992, a festival celebrating the diversity and vitality of bisexual, gay, and lesbian culture in the south will be held in North Carolina. Organizers are considering Asheville as the host city for the event, which will be the first of its kind in this country.

Out South (formerly Southern Exposure) held informal organizational meetings on November 1 and 2 in Atlanta with representatives from around the south. Although over thirty people from North Carolina were contacted, no one from NC was able to attend.

North Carolina was selected by Out South to be the first location of the festival because it is home to homophobic senator Jesse Helms. They want Asheville to host the event because of its natural beauty and the fall colors in October.

The next organizational meeting will be held in Asheville the weekend of December 13 and 14 (see Calendar for place and time). Anyone in North Carolina interested in participating should

plan to attend this meeting.

The festival will bring together artists, activists, business people, crafters, performers, politicians, etc. People from all walks of life and from every part of the south will be there. Organizers are hoping the festival will enable us to make visible, for the first time ever, the full cultural, ethnic, social, artistic, intellectual, political and economic diversity of our community here, as well as the incredible wealth and range of our needs, strength and inspiration--as we experience them in our own being.--some information from Out South promotional materials▼

Housing is needed for seven men from Out South when they come to Asheville for the December meeting. All seven are non-smokers and will require accommodations for one night. The men are between the ages of 25 and 35. Anyone interested in helping to house these gentlemen should contact Ron Huskins at 258-3318.