

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Asheville, NC

Serving the Southern Appalachian Gay/Lesbian Community

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:
253-1656

U.S. Department of Justice toll-free:
1-800-347-HATE

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Gay & Lesbian Hotline to Become a Reality

by Liz Peacock

Just a few months ago, the Gay & Lesbian Hotline of Western North Carolina was only a dream. We knew of people who had suffered discrimination, violence, alienation, loneliness, and depression, and others who simply needed someone to talk to. We began to envision a phone line with a live, trained volunteer at the other end, someone who would offer presence, safe space, and understanding to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and their friends and families.

In the last eight weeks, this dream has taken root and begun to blossom, and is well on its way to becoming a reality. We

now have a space in which to begin operations at only \$25 a month. Many thanks to our anonymous benefactor!

The need for this service has been evident for several years to David Hopes, who has single-handedly managed the SALGA's documentation project from his own home. David says that many of the calls he receives are not about documentable incidents at all, but are from people who are struggling with how to handle the feelings associated with being gay. Most calls are hangups -- probably from people who want to talk, but cannot leave a number on the machine for fear of being discovered.

Rally Follows Shooting on Auburn Campus

On Saturday, February 8, 400-500 supporters from throughout the Southeast gathered on the Auburn campus to protest a January 28 shooting which was apparently directed at members of the Auburn Gay and Lesbian Association (GLA) two weeks earlier. Most rally speakers asked the Auburn administration to take appropriate action to protect its students.

Controversy had surrounded the fledgling group since the first stages of its formation two years ago. The Auburn Student Council had refused to grant the group a permanent charter late in 1991, but their decision was overridden by the Vice-President of Student Affairs. Group members had been on campus distributing posters and flyers about the group as part of their weekly activities, when they heard shots coming from the dorm. When they determined that the shots seemed to be meant for them, the students called the campus police, who responded quickly. The student firing the shots from a pellet gun, claimed that he was not aiming at the students. He is now out on bond while the investigation continues. Auburn has no legislation in place relating to hate crimes.

The February 8 rally was organized by Atlanta-based OutSouth, and co-MC'd by Mike Strickland and Dale Carrico of



Jessica Dickson (center), of Students for Progress at Auburn, speaks at rally. (photo by ANita Pratto)

OutSouth. Speakers included Jim Sears, a U. of South Carolina professor and author of *Growing up Gay in the South*; Lynn Cothren of Queer Nation/Atlanta, Larry Pellegrini of the Georgia ACLU, Steve and Kim of the Auburn GLA; Dee Harrison, Lesbian Rights Task Force Chair for NOW in Georgia; Jessica Dickson, president of Students for Progress at Auburn, and numerous representatives from other campus organizations throughout the region. Letters of support from the Southern Appala-

The November, 1990 workshop on "Countering Homophobic Violence," led by Mab Segrest of the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality, provided much of the impetus that has brought us into being. While there, I spoke with people from other gay and lesbian hotlines from across the state, and learned a great deal about the needs in their communities and how they were trying to respond. Several of these people agreed to assist with volunteer training when the new hotline opens in Asheville.

I came back energized and empowered. I soon discovered I was not alone in dreaming of a hotline for the Western North Carolina gay community. Other people quickly volunteered to help, and the first hotline planning meeting was held on January 14, 1992, attended by David Hopes, Ron Huskins, Cynthia Janes, Rowan, and myself. We shared our vision of a hotline staffed by trained volunteers several hours each day.

We agreed that although SALGA had been the birthplace of the documentation project, it was time for us to leave the nest: continued on page 7

Asheville Police Make CAN Arrests

by Cynthia Janes

Having just ended a conversation with a cute guy in a BMW, he turned the corner to head for home. They'd been talking for twenty minutes and he was getting cold. Besides, he was still a bit under the weather and was running a low-grade fever. Time to go home.

Suddenly the reflections of revolving blue lights flashed in his rear view mirror. He pulled over, thinking the police cars were trying to get by. But they stopped ahead of and behind him. He was told to get out. He was thrown against a wall, told

Cruising Crackdown

Asheville police, patrolling a 10-block area downtown between February 3 and 15, issued warning citations and made arrests on the following bases:

Warning citations	37
Soliciting illegal sex acts	10
No operator's license	5
Drunk and disruptive	3
Red light citations	3
Inspection violation	3

Also violations for no insurance, carrying concealed weapon, stop sign, child restraint and seat-belt violations.

Source: Asheville Citizen-Times, 2/20/92

to put his hands over his head, and frisked. He was told he was under arrest and read his rights. He was put in the back seat of the police cruiser, taken to the downtown station, and booked. The charge: solicitation to commit crimes against nature. Within a few hours he was out on bail.

But his ordeal has just begun. Unless he can beat the charges, he faces the likelihood of public disgrace, beginning with the day of his conviction, when the Asheville Citizen-Times will publish his name and address. He fears that he may lose his job, and that his relatives may face harassment from their peers. He is afraid.

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