

# 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

Gay and Lesbian Youth Hotline:

1-800-347-TEEN

Thurs.-Sun. 7 p.m.-12 a.m.

To report anti-gay/HIV +  
discrimination/violence:

253-1656

U.S. Department of Justice toll-free:

1-800-347-HATE

Vol. IV, No. 8

September 1992

## This November, It's Us v. Them

by Cynthia Janes

Ballot box battle lines have been drawn at national and state levels in this year's elections as never before. The right-wing fundamentalist Christians, led by Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and others, have made very clear their intention to take over governmental systems in this country. And a major weapon--the so-called "Willie Horton" of the '92 campaign--is homophobia. Three of the most visible examples of this election year's "us versus them" contest are the presidential race and the Oregon and Colorado ballot initiatives.

In no previous contest for President of the United States have gay-related issues played such a role. When it comes to "the gay thing," the two parties as well as their standard-bearers could hardly be farther apart. There is no grey area. At their convention the Republicans, from their

platform to Pat Buchanan to Pat Robertson to Jerry Falwell, made their position perfectly clear. Did anyone miss it? They are anti-gay and ridicule any party or candidate who speaks out for gays.

And Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton has spoken out for gay

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men and lesbians more clearly than any presidential candidate in history. Specifically, Clinton would (1) issue an executive order banning discrimination against gay men and lesbians in the military, and (2) urge passage of the national gay and lesbian civil rights bill. In addition, Clinton will defend a woman's right to choose, and is committed to the eradication of AIDS. Clinton has told gay men and lesbians, "I have a vision and you are part of it. I believe tomorrow will be better than today

if we act. And we are all a part of the same community, and we'd better start behaving as if we are" (HRCF press release 6/25/92).

Clinton's running mate, Tennessee Senator Al Gore, achieved voting marks for gay- and AIDS-related measures of 89%, 92%, and 100%, in the last three Congresses. Gore has voted repeatedly against amendments by North Carolina's Senator Jesse Helms. Gore has strongly opposed discrimination based on sexual orientation and has said he would vote for a gay rights bill as long as it did not include affirmative action.

Gay men and lesbians and their organizations are hearing Clinton. For the first time in its 12-year history, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), the largest national gay and lesbian political organization, has endorsed a candidate for President of the United States. The group is strongly urging members to support and work for Clinton's election. The HRCF states that "changing the Administration of this country from George Bush to Bill Clinton [demands not just endorsement and commitment, but] should be a relentless, passionate and determined crusade for every gay, lesbian and bisexual American and for every person who cares about fairness in this country." (To join the HRCF, write them at PO Box 1396, Washington, DC, 20077-4462.)

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to change the state constitutions of Oregon and Colorado to outlaw passage of anti-

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## Parental Rights Debated Asheville Lesbian Sues Gay Man

by Cynthia Janes

An Asheville case involving a lesbian and a gay man may have made U.S. legal history. Many legal experts believe that this is the first case of a lesbian suing a gay sperm-donor to remove his rights as a father. The case, litigated in Buncombe County District Court in August, was concerned with parenting rights of a child borne by the women, using sperm donated by the man.

Long before the child was born, the two parties had worked to get just the right wording on an agreement regarding the rights and responsibilities of both biological parents. They modified a form supplied by the National Center for Lesbian Rights. According to the *Asheville Citizen-Times* (8/16/92), the agreement stated that the man would "have visitation rights, but no rights as a parent, and that he would not be

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### Cookie Kisses Off

Cookie LaRue, a local entertainer and author of "The Cookie Chanel," a column that has appeared monthly in *Community Connections* for the past year, gave her final Asheville performance, "Cookie Kisses Off Asheville," on Friday, August 21 at O.Henry's. Cookie, AKA Michael Sheldon, is moving to Seattle.

## OutSouth Feste '92 Is Ready! Asheville Hosts Major Event

The visual and performing art spaces have been reserved. The performing artists have been selected. The lecturers are fine-tuning their speeches, OutSouth Feste '92, the First Annual Southeastern Regional Cultural Arts Festival, is on schedule for the weekend of September 24-27 in Asheville. (See related ad on page 8 and schedule on page 11).

The purpose of OutSouth is to spotlight the diversity and vitality of bisexual, gay and lesbian life, and to celebrate our community's contributions to the contemporary South. Organizers expect the event, the first of its kind in the nation, to draw between 2,000 and 4,000 participants.

The festival will be the second major gay and lesbian event to be held in Asheville this year. In June it hosted the NC Pride '92 March and Celebration. The OutSouth Foundation, an Atlanta-based organization, chose Asheville because of its large arts and crafts community, its beauty, and its more or less central location in the Southeast. They also wanted to hold the Feste in North Carolina because the state is home to homophobic Senator Jesse Helms.

According to Michael Strickland, all that remains to be done is signing up visual artists, which is progressing slowly. "I've had no problem finding performance artists," says Strickland; "as a matter of fact, I'm already booking acts for next year." Anyone interested in displaying their visual art can reach Strickland at (404)607-8225, or write OutSouth Foundation, 1616 Piedmont Ave., Suite 0-1, Atlanta, GA 30329.

