

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

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Oregon Becomes Battleground for Gay Rights

Last month, Community Connections published the text of Measure 9, the anti-gay measure on the ballot in Oregon (printed again below). The No on 9 Campaign in Oregon sent us the following commentary.

Dear Friend,

What is going on in Oregon?

Oregon is in the midst of a all-out battle for the heart and soul of our state. On November 3, Oregonians will vote on a ballot measure so extreme that, if it passes, Oregon will be the only state in U.S. history to amend its constitution to *take rights away* from a group of people: lesbians and gay men.

How did we get in this terrible situation?

In 1991, the Oregon Citizens Alliance, a far-right group that claims membership in Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, began promoting several measures designed to single out the gay community for discrimination.

One of the OCA's discriminatory measures passed in the primary election in Springfield, OR. Within days of the Springfield Ordinance's passage, the OCA moved to investigate and censor the holdings in the Springfield public library. Then the OCA declared that the City's participation in organizing a regional meeting of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment violates the Springfield Ordinance because the conference includes two workshops regarding homosexuality. We've heard that the OCA is planning to sue the City of Springfield for their participation in the conference.

What impact would Measure 9 have on working people in Oregon?

The day the OCA handed in the signatures they had gathered to qualify their statewide measure for the ballot, OCA head Lon Mabon was quoted as saying that homosexual teachers would need to be "fired or reassigned." If Measure 9 passes, school teachers, pediatricians, coaches, librarians, counselors, juvenile court judges, ministers, physical therapists, must be investigated and replaced if they are believed to be homosexual and have any contact with children in their jobs.

What about the faith community?

If measure 9 passes, congregations supporting lesbian and gay people would not be allowed to use public meeting spaces for their services, because the "promote" homosexuality. Programs funded by church-based organizations such as Ecumenical Ministries' HIV Day Center would lose state and county funding because they "facilitate" homosexuality by serving a gay clientele without condemnation or judgment.

Would Oregon business be affected by Measure 9?

The mass boycotts experienced by the state of Arizona after that state's failure to ratify a Martin Luther King Holiday foreshadow the loss to Oregon's economy should Measure 9 pass.

Early communications from across the country to the No on 9 Campaign indicate convention business loss, a statewide public relations disaster, and millions of dollars in lost revenue by consumers not willing to support a state which requires discrimination.

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Tobi Lippin facilitated the hard-work weekend for NCCGLE. Photo by Cynthia Janes

NCCGLE Outlines Vision, Sets Goals

by Cynthia Janes

In a hard-working, few-frills weekend retreat at a conference center near Chapel Hill, the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality put a new structure in place and outlined a work plan for the next year.

Facilitator Tobi Lippin helped participants get acquainted and have fun while they tackled the weekend's tasks.

The group developed NCCGLE's new mission statement, which can also be described as the group's overarching reason for existence: *The North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCGLE) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations working to eradicate heterosexism and homophobia at every level; to empower and strengthen the state's gay/lesbian/bisexual community; and to encompass all the diverse aspects of our community. We will accomplish these goals by educating the citizens of North Carolina about the dangers of homophobia and advocating for the full acceptance and human and civil rights of ALL people.*

NCCGLE has gained visibility over the past couple of years by its leadership role in compiling NC's documentation statistics. Mab Segrest's goal of getting North Carolina's documentation of hate crimes organized became NCCGLE's major work for the past two years. An experienced grants writer and community orga-

nizer, Mab has been successful in obtaining funding for the statewide documentation effort.

In the state's larger cities, volunteers and organizations, such as SALGA in the western part of NC, monitor phone lines set up for victims of anti-gay harassment, discrimination and violence. After collecting statistics throughout a calendar year, these groups submit their results to NCCGLE, which began compiling reports in 1990. (The 1991 report is available by sending \$5 to PO Box 3203, Durham, North Carolina 27715.)

NCCGLE will hold a statewide meeting on documentation, computer networking, and leadership development October 17 in Wilmington. Issues to be covered include bonding as a State, identifying resources and skills, and creating a mechanism for ongoing networking across the State.

Although NCCGLE has focused most of its energy on documentation of violence and discrimination, the group is now turning its focus to other issues as well. Over the next 15 months, NCCGLE will work to:

- Educate the public;
- Build infrastructure among lesbian/gay organizations;
- Develop a strong multi-racial and multi-class board; and
- Create a plan for legislative presence.

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Oregon's Measure 9

This state shall not recognize any categorical provision such as "sexual orientation," "sexual preference," or any similar phrase that includes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism. Quotas, minority status, affirmative action, or any similar concepts, shall not apply to these forms of conduct, nor shall government promote these behaviors.

State, regional, local governments and their departments, agencies and other entities, including specifically the State Department of Higher Education and the public schools, shall assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth that recognizes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse and that these behaviors are to be discouraged and avoided.