

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Asheville, NC

Serving the Southern Appalachian Gay/Lesbian Community

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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:

Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council:

253-1656 / 252-4713

U.S. Department of Justice toll-free:

1-800-347-HATE

Violence Against Lesbians and Gays Spurs Action Across NC

by Deb Self

Violence against lesbians and gay men once again took its toll as two people were murdered in Oregon. As residents of the state were preparing to vote on homophobic Measure 9 (to ban local ordinances which would prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation), some Oregonians took their hate to a street with a vengeance.

On September 26, 1992, Hattie Mae Cohens, an African American lesbian, and Brian Mock, a disabled white gay man, were burned to death.

The atrocity has languished in media silence, and details are still unavailable. However, due to actions by the New York-based Lesbian Avengers, the word is getting out. The Lesbian Avengers took to Fifth Avenue in the thick of holiday shopping with lit torches to protest the Oregon murders. They staged a five-day around the clock encampment in the West Village before a shrine dedicated to those murdered in Oregon and elsewhere.

SALGA Organizes Against Hate

Inspired by the New York group, the

Southern Appalachian Lesbian and Gay Alliance (SALGA) has decided to take to the streets as well. Two events are planned. On April 3 SALGA will host a rally at Asheville's City/County Plaza to protest the Oregon murders and other violence against lesbians and gays. The rally promises to feature a wide variety of speakers, including clergy from area churches, to speak out against the violence.

The rally will be held from 7:00-10:00 p.m. Organizers had hoped to burn a bonfire at the plaza to make more visible the means by which Cohens and Mock were tortured. But the permit was denied, and a candlelight vigil will be held instead.

SALGA will also sponsor a Love Against Hate Crimes KISS-IN at Senator Jesse Helms office at Asheville's Old Federal Building on March 26 at 4:30 p.m.

Lesbian Avengers in Durham

Also inspired by the high-profile actions of the Lesbian Avengers in New York City, Durham women have organized to form the state's first local Lesbian

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Some Media Tackle Education Process

by Cynthia Janes

For the first time, attitudes about gays and lesbians are being discussed all across the U.S. It began when President Clinton said, within his first week of taking office, that he wanted to lift the ban on gays and lesbians in the military. But when General Colin Powell, Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Sam Nunn, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, balked and said such integration would undermine morale and discipline, Clinton decided to set aside six months to discuss the issue.

The right-wing so-called "Christian" fundamentalists are doing their discussing by calling and writing the President and their Congressional representatives in record numbers. Gay and lesbian national and local organizations are urging members to do the same. Many in the gay community feel that ignorance of who gays and lesbians are is the most imposing enemy, and that education must become a priority. Some local and national media apparently agree, as there have been sev-

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Community Connections "Unfolding"

As you may have read in our previous issue, *Community Connections* has been on some very shaky financial ground. So we put out a call for community support--for Board Members, volunteers and financial contributions. And things are beginning to look up, thanks to your enthusiastic response.

In terms of finances, the paper now has a cushion of several months (meaning we can start looking ahead, rather than worrying about whether the next issue will come out). Our improved financial health is due to donations we received from readers this month (thank you!) and some of our advertisers paying overdue bills.

Now, we feel it's time to really begin planning for long-term stability, which depends on a better base of funding and on community ownership of the paper. And it looks like we've got a good start.

On Thursday, February 11, *Community Connections* held an open meeting to get feedback and support from lesbians and gay men who were committed to getting the paper on solid ground. Eighteen people came to that meeting full of ideas and enthusiasm, leaving the staff members encouraged and reenergized.

We would particularly like to thank the five new people who have joined the Board of Directors of *Community Connections*: Susan Parker Weatherford (Chair); Mark A. Goldberg (Treasurer & Chair of Finance Committee); Dianne Lindgren (Secretary); Jamie Thomasson (Finance Committee Member); Alysa (Lee) J. G. Goldberg (Volunteer Coordinator); and Kate Larken.

The new members bring a wide range of talents, interests and experience--as well as a healthy dose of humor! Under their

leadership, I believe we will witness successful efforts to broaden the base of community involvement and ownership of the paper, and to strengthen the paper's financial foundation.

Despite all this fresh air, however, we still need input from you. Remember, you make *Community Connections* a reality. It is our goal to reflect the lives and interests of gay and lesbian people across the Appalachian South, including yours. Whether rural or urban, African American, Latino/a, Asian or Native American, or caucasian, physically challenged, young or old, *Community Connections* aims to reflect the diversity of our community and the complexity of our lives.

Help us inform the whole community of newsworthy happenings and developing issues that concern us. Get involved! Here's

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Organize to Reform
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River, a Tree"
Maya Angelou's
Inaugural Poem

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the Military
Gay Ban

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Gays and Lesbians
in the Military
What You Can Do

Community Connections has received a number of phone calls requesting the addresses and phone numbers of officials one could contact regarding the ban on gays in the military. Here they are:

President Bill Clinton at the White House: (202)456-1111

Senator Jesse Helms: US Senate, 728 Dirksen Building, Washington DC 20510 (202)224-6342

Senator Larch Faircloth: U.S. Senate, 716 Hart Building, Washington DC 20510 (202)224-3154

U.S. Rep. Charles Taylor: R-N.C., 11th District, U.S. House of Representatives, 516 Cannon Building, Washington DC 20515 (202)225-6401

U.S. Rep. Cass Ballenger: R-N.C., 10th District, U.S. House of Representatives, 2238 Rayburn Building, Washington DC 20515 (202)225-2576

General Colin Powell: (703)697-9121 House Armed Services Committee: (202)225-4151

The Pentagon: (703)697-5737 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin: (703)695-5261