

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

SERVING WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA'S LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY

HATE CRIMES BILL VOTED DOWN IN NC

Today, President Clinton will applaud public and private efforts to teach children about tolerance, and will urge Congress to pass quickly the pending federal hate crimes legislation. This legislation strengthens the existing federal hate crimes law by (1) extending the situations where prosecutions can be brought for violent crimes motivated by bias based on race, color, religion, or national origin; and (2) expanding the federal hate crimes statute to protect against hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability. The President will also announce a new public-private partnership which will focus attention on issues of hate, tolerance, and diversity in middle-grade schools. Finally, the President will call

on the Departments of Justice and Education to include hate crimes in their annual report card on school safety and to report on hate crimes and bias on college campuses.

CLINTON PUSHES FEDERAL BILL

Urging Passage of Expanded Federal Hate Crimes Law. The President will urge Congress to pass the bipartisan Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999, which expands a principal federal hate crimes statute. The current statute prohibits acts of violence that are based on a person's race, color, religion, or national origin and that are intended to

interfere with certain specified federally protected activities. The proposed legislation would extend the situations where prosecutions could be brought by making these acts of violence illegal even if they did not interfere with federally protected activities. In addition, the legislation would authorize the Department of Justice to prosecute individuals who commit violent crimes against others because of the victim's sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Current federal law does not cover these cases.

Announcing Public-Private Partnership to Create a Middle-School Program about Tolerance. The

President continued on page 10

NEW PROJECT SAFEGUARD DIRECTOR



Parker Poole

Dear Asheville,

My name is Parker Poole, and I am the new "Project Safeguard" coordinator at The Western NC AIDS Project. For those of you who don't know, "Project Safeguard" is a HIV/AIDS prevention program focusing on gay and bisexual men in the Asheville/Buncombe County area. I appreciate this opportunity to introduce myself to you.

I was born in Raleigh, grew up in Fayetteville and graduated from Catawba College in Salisbury. For the past fifteen years, I have lived in Los Angeles, working in the television and film industry. In January I decided to leave Los Angeles and move to Western North Carolina.

I'm a gay man and though I'm HIV-negative myself, I have lived with

Safe continued on page 18

MOUNTAIN SPLASH CIRCUIT EVENT COMES TO ASHEVILLE

Great Expeditions, a new travel agency and event planner for gays and lesbians is the driving force in the creation of a new event for the east coast.

Touted as a combined circuit event, the inclusion of many groups under the umbrella of Mountain Splash sets this circuit event apart from all others. A two-stepping Hoedown called Whitewater Hoedown, a gathering of bear groups as Wet Paws and the regular circuit attendees for the major circuit party Cascade are one of the reasons that *Circuit Noize Magazine* has called Mountain Splash.....a winner!

The weekend of August 20-22 are the

dates for this weekend of parties, dances and whitewater rafting. Friday's events include a big Pool party with many surprises. That night it is on to the clubs for a series of events.

A special shuttle will take attendees on Saturday morning up the French Broad to enjoy the white waters of the French Broad. A moderate course has been chosen so everyone can enjoy a trip on the water. The evening begins with visitation of area clubs and the circuit events of Cascade, Whitewater Hoedown and Wet Paws.

A large BBQ for all attendees will be held on Sunday to finish off the week-

end with tea dances to follow at some area clubs.

Area clubs and GLBTA business' have joined with Great Expeditions to promote and support this weekend. When asked, many local proprietors expressed the excitement of an event such as this in attracting more gays and lesbians to visit and shop here. It is expected that this first year will bring a large group to Asheville much like Pride did last year and continue annually as the gay and lesbian "must attend event"....as stated by the Triangle.

Reservations have come in from as far

Circuit continued on page 18