

Local News

Homosexual Father Wins Suit: Allowed Overnight Visits With Son

Raleigh—The N.C. Court of Appeals ruled on December 18th that a homosexual father may have unsupervised overnight visits with his 4-year-old son, according to a report in *The Greensboro Daily News*.

Sammy Woodruff of Forsyth County had filed a complaint with court officials contending that his former wife, Janet Woodruff, had refused to allow him to visit their son.

The Court of Appeal's decision upheld a March 1979 order by District Judge Gary B. Tash of Winston-Salem that the father be allowed alternate weekend, summer and holiday visits.

"We concede that the trial judge was faced with a very serious and difficult problem in this case. . . ." commented Judge Richard C. Erwin, writing for the state court in a four-page opinion. "We do not find any evidence from the record that would lead us to reverse this case."

Tash's ruling ordered that Woodruff be allowed to visitation rights after he concluded that Woodruff and his wife were fit parents.

The court also ordered that Woodruff "shall not have boyfriends visit him in his home when he is with the child." Court records showed that Mrs. Woodruff had attempted to limit visits to keep the boy from his father's "open and gay lifestyle."

Winston-Salem Group Organizes

Winston-Salem—The first steps have been taken to organize a gay support group in Winston-Salem, according to the December

issue of CGA's LAMBDA newsletter. Twenty-one gays, mostly men, met in Winston-Salem on October 29 to discuss organizing in the Twin City.

"Organization will come slowly," a spokesman said, "given the social and political climate in the city." The primary focus of the group will be social meetings for now, with topical programs chosen from suggestions.

Meetings are scheduled for the third Sunday of each month. For further information, call (919) 723-8607.

Gay Students At UNC-G Gain Recognition

Greensboro—The Gay Student Union at UNC-G gained official recognition as a student organization from the administration on Oct. 15. The recognition was given "without question," according to a GSU spokesman.

Gay students at UNC-G met in September to begin organizing the Gay Student Union as a general support group. Membership currently averages 20 students.

Meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month at 8:00 pm in the Kirkland meeting room at Elliott Student Center.

For further information, contact: GSU, P.O. Box 5214, Greensboro, N.C. 27403.

ECU Gay Group Denied Funds

Greenville—After a tiebreaker vote, the Student Government Association at East Carolina University decided in a difficult session on November 19 to deny funding to the *East Carolina Gay Community (ECGU)*.

According to the student paper, *The East*

Carolinean, this controversy was the result of a decision made on Nov. 12 that added approximately \$14,000 to the funds available to student organizations.

At the November 19th meeting, a heated discussion ensued concerning ECGU, its nature and its support among students. The student legislature reached a 13 to 13 vote standoff on whether or not to grant the group its \$140 request, but student Mike Adkins, Speaker of the Legislature, broke the tie with his "no" vote.

The final vote was noticeably split along sexual lines: of the 13 legislators who supported the bill, 11 were women; of the 14 who opposed it, 12 were men. Mark Zumbach, a legislator who is also president of the ECGU, told *The East Carolinean* that defeat of the bill was unfair.

"I don't think the bill was defeated on the grounds of the bill itself," he said, "but because of the personal prejudices against the organization."

Zumbach added that the organization was approved officially last year, and that its primary purpose is educational. "We sponsor speakers, and we also have the Peer Counseling Center on Campus, which is for all students."

Harrasement In Virginia

Norfolk Va.—Norfolk police apparently launched a campaign in October to enforce sections of Virginia's Alcohol Beverage Control laws which prohibit the serving of alcohol to homosexuals. Representatives of several local gay organizations met with members of the police dept. to discuss this problem early in November.

According to *Our Own*, it is believed that police intimidation of bar owners and their staffs is part of a general effort to rid downtown Norfolk of persons considered "undesirable" by merchants and police.

Under Virginia's ABC laws, an establishment's liquor license can be revoked if said establishment has "become the meeting place or rendezvous for users of narcotics, drunks, homosexuals, prostitutes, pimps, plunders, gamblers, habitual law violator, person of ill repute, user of a peddler of narcotics or a person who drinks to excess or any B girl."

In meeting with the police, much of the discussion focused on the police

department's definition of "homosexual," and its use in enforcing the ABC laws. John L. Andrews, Deputy Chief of Operations for the Norfolk Police Department, said that in order for a gay person to be prohibited from drinking, he or she must be a "known homosexual," or one who has been convicted of a crime involving a prohibited sexual with someone of the same sex.

The police use the term "known homosexual" when they wish to impart information which - technically - they are forbidden to give out. Although a "known homosexual" must be a person who has had a prior arrest and conviction, the police cannot - according to Andrews - tell anyone else of such convictions because doing so would violate Virginia's Freedom of Information Act.

When asked if a conviction on a charge of *soliciting* someone of the same sex would cause the offender to be classed as a "known homosexual" Andrews said that, in his view it would not. He further said that he did not believe a person could become a "known homosexual" merely by telling the police what his or her sexual orientation was. He did add, however, that he would try to get the Commonwealth Attorney's Opinion on this.

Police harassment has apparently subsided for the time being. It is not know if this meeting was a factor.

As a side note, members of the gay community - as a result of this meeting - will speak to police trainees at the Police Academy at some undetermined date.

Atlanta Gayline Gets A Busy Signal

Atlanta, GA—Gayline Atlanta, an audio news service for the Atlanta Gay Community, has had much more response than originally anticipated, according to a story in a recent issue of *Cruise Weekly*.

The telephone news service officially commenced operations on November 19th at 10 a.m. Gayline is similar to a radio news report, consisting of local and national news and interviews and supported by commercial announcements.

"We underestimated the amount of callers," commented Brian Hadley of the Atlanta-based Gayline Communications Network. "Our experience with Gayline in Detroit has been approximately 900 to 1,000 calls daily. It appears that we will receive considerably more calls in Atlanta."

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