

The Arts & Entertainment Paper for N.C.'s Gay Community



Anita and Her Kind Part 1

The New "Christian" Right Threatens Gays

This article, which began life as an article on Anita, has grown in scope as the New Right has mushroomed. So much so, in fact, that we don't have room in this issue to dish the dirt about Anita. We've got some behind-the-scenes information you probably haven't heard yet, but it'll just have to wait for part two in our next issue.

The reason it'll have to wait is because there are more pressing issues. The "Christian" elements of the New Right are marshalling their forces with alarming speed, and while homosexuals are not their only target, we are definitely on their hit list. Part one of this article includes some of the latest reports from Washington.

The Gay Rights National Lobby recently predicted that an anti-gay amendment to an otherwise unrelated bill would be offered on the floors of both the House and Senate within the next three weeks. The Lobby further predicted that, unless prompt action is taken by the gay community, it is likely to pass.

"Unless the gay and lesbian communities across the nation - and their non-gay supporters - act immediately, we believe that such an anti-gay amendment will be offered and adopted in the next 3 to 4 weeks," said GRNL lobbyist Steve Endean. "We have made a lot of progress which will help us in the long struggle towards national gay/lesbian civil rights legislation, but in the current political climate, the only way we feel there is a chance to defeat such an amendment is by a tremendous outpouring of constituent pressure."

Christian Voice, one of the major anti-gay lobbies at Congress, has been discussing the possibilities of such amendments for some time. They apparently feel that a roll-call vote on such an amendment could be used against pro-gay elected officials.

Although it is difficult to predict what legislation would be the vehicle for such an amendment, Endean speculated that

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Federal Order Protects Gays At Work

WASHINGTON, DC (GCN)—A Carter administration policy statement, signed into effect May 12, protects all federal employees or applicants for such employment from inquiry into areas of activity or conduct, including sexual orientation, that do not interfere with job performance.

Legally backed by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the order strictly forbids government officials from probing into a person's sexual, social, religious or other habits for purposes of judging fitness or eligibility for employment.

The order, drafted by staff in the Office of Personnel Management (formerly the federal Civil Service Office) and circulated last week among heads of federal agencies and departments, not only alerts officials to the law's existence (as spelled out in the Civil Service Reform Act) but also to the kinds of activities protected by it, a spokesperson in the Office of Personnel Management told GCN.

Officials say the changes also reflect recent court rulings outlawing discrimination against lesbians and gays and/or unmarried persons living together. It has been an unwritten practice in most federal agencies to investigate persons alleged to be lesbian or gay, and deny them employment on either moral or security grounds.

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Army Can't Discharge Gays; Lesbian Reinstated

MILWAUKEE, WIS (IGNA)—A U.S. District Court Judge has ruled that the Army may not discharge a soldier simply because he or she is homosexual. The Army's discharge of an acknowledged lesbian whose sexual orientation did not affect her performance violated the First Amendment, he ruled.

Judge Terrance Evans ordered the immediate reinstatement in the Army Reserve of 32-year-old Miriam Ben-Shalom, who had been in the reserve for three years.

Evans also ordered the Army to halt all punitive discharges based on the charge of homosexuality until the Army can prove that one's sexual preference relates to one's ability to perform one's duties as a soldier.

Ben-Shalom, whose Army personnel record described her as an exemplary drill instructor, was discharged Dec. 1, 1976, as "unsuitable" after she decided to identify herself as a lesbian. After the Army had been ordered to reinstate her, she commented "I'm ecstatic. It's a landmark decision for gays everywhere; it reaffirms our civil rights." She said that she will apply immediately for reinstatement.

Evans ruled that the Army regulation requiring the discharge of soldiers who exhibit "homosexual tendencies, desires or interests," even if they do not engage in homosexual acts, violated the First, Fifth, and Ninth Amendments to the Constitution.

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