

Front Page

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University of S.C. Sued By Gay Student Group

Columbia (AP)—A group of gay students filed suit against the University of South Carolina claiming the school violated the group's civil rights by refusing to recognize it as a licensed student organization according to a recent Associated Press report.

The suit filed in U.S. District court December 8, says the Gay Student Association received conditional recognition from the university in May.

But the complaint says the university informed the association in August that the organization would not be recognized because the school administration said the group's proposed constitution advocates conduct illegal in South Carolina.

The suit asks the court to order the university to grant official recognition and licensing as a student organization and to award judgement for actual and punitive damages.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Carolina is representing the gay students, who are unidentified in the suit.

Melissa Metcalfe, ACLU-SC executive director, said the case is similar to suits filed by gay student organizations in a number of other states.

"Virtually every case has been won on the grounds of free speech and association," she said. University Counsel Paul Ward said the following day that he had not received official notification of the suit.

Metcalfe said the group has about 30 members including "University faculty, staff and full-time students."

Attached to the lawsuit is a copy of an Aug. 2nd letter from Marsha Duncan, Student Affairs Dean, informing the association that university recognition would be denied.

Duncan's letter states that "it is the opinion of the university administration that the proposed constitution of the Gay Student Association advocates and promotes conduct which is illegal in South Carolina."

"Accordingly," the letter continues, "it would be most inappropriate for a state-supported institution to officially license or support the Gay Student Association."

Metcalfe said the university's action has the effect of denying the group its rights of free speech assembly, due process and equal protection under the law.

"If they can use sexual preference as something to keep gays from organizing," Metcalfe said, "next week they might be doing it to women." She said illegal activities "are not the purpose of the association."

The Havelock Progress Is At it Again!

HAVELOCK, NC—The Havelock Progress, an eastern North Carolina newspaper, has apparently found homosexuality to be a hot topic. As a follow up to their cover story on October 13, "Police Warn of Homosexual Activity" (see The Front Page, Vol. 3, No. 20), they printed a follow-up on November 3 (although not on the front page) entitled "Latest Homosexual Incident Reported." The North Carolina Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has sent the newspaper a letter of protest.

"The latest incidence of homosexuality," wrote reporter Stephanie S. Hailey (who is obviously becoming the paper's expert on the subject, having authored the previous article), "was reported to local authorities October 31 by a Lundy's Trailer Park man.

"According to the Havelock Police report, the young man was in Central News and Card Shop on E. Main Street, when he was approached.

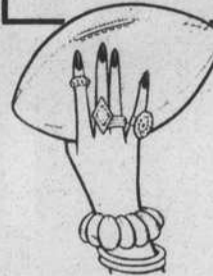
"A man, described as being about 5'10" tall, weighing about 200 lbs., with light brown hair and wire frame glasses, and wearing dark trousers and shirt, approached the man, asking for directions to Morehead City. The victim (editor's note — victim!?) gave the directions and the subject reportedly asked the victim to go along with him and the subject would pay. The victim replied, 'No.'

"The subject then asked the victim to go to his motel room at the Sherwood Motel and drink beer. The victim said, 'No, thanks.'

"The subject then asked the victim to go to

continued on page 9

LETTERS



The Drag Controversy:

Our Readers Take The Ball And Run With It!

Dear Front Page:

I don't know Patrick Coughlin, but I'm willing to bet that he just broke up with a drag queen lover.

Sincerely,
Rob
Charlotte

Dear Mr. Baker,

I read the Front Page regularly now and could not let the opportunity pass to stand and be counted among the who "agree" with the lengthy letter from Patrick Coughlin of Charlotte.

He has expressed my sentiments precisely! I would be much happier if there was not a single "drag bar" in our entire state. I go to the bars for the purpose of meeting and talking with others, not to see some guy parade around on stage pretending to entertain.

Mr. Coughlin deserves a sincere pat on the back. I think he has said what I am certain many of us wanted to.

It would be interesting to see just how many readers do or do not want drag shows to continue.

Why not take a poll and find out?

Adrian,
Durham N.C.

Dear Front Page,

Any honest observer will have to concede that Mr. Coughlin made many valid points about the nature of drag in North Carolina. This subject was, however, put off by the vicious tone of his letter. If female impersonations are truly as nich and pathetic as Mr. Coughlin portrays them, he must be a very small person to attack them.

There are many kinds of obsessions. A casual reading of the personal ads in this

newspaper will confirm this. There are persons imagining themselves to be master, and others who think that attiring themselves in levis and leather will somehow make them more masculine. Many people in society at large consider these obsessions "sick", just as many people find homosexuality pre se wrong.

In my opinion persons who think like Mr. Coughlin should not expect society to treat them with dignity and respect until they learn to accept diversity within our own ranks.

Sincerely,
S. Allen
Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Baker,

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to Mr. Coughlin's letter concerning female impersonation. I am a 26 year old professional currently employed in private industry. While growing up I took 12 years of professional dance training and also taught under a master of the art for 2 years. I left this career partly because of the many prejudices held against male dancers. In this tirade in question Mr. Coughlin's remarks that female impersonators move "like cows." As a person who truly enjoys this gay art form, and as a professional in the area of dance, I say "BULLSHIT!" Mr Coughlin is the one who is "sick". He obviously feels threatened by female impersonation, and as the rest of his letter reveals, he is obviously insecure and detests being gay. I cannot imagine anyone who is gay and content with being so, harboring such hostile feelings toward any member of the gay community.

Sincerely, Michael Gregory

continued on page 7

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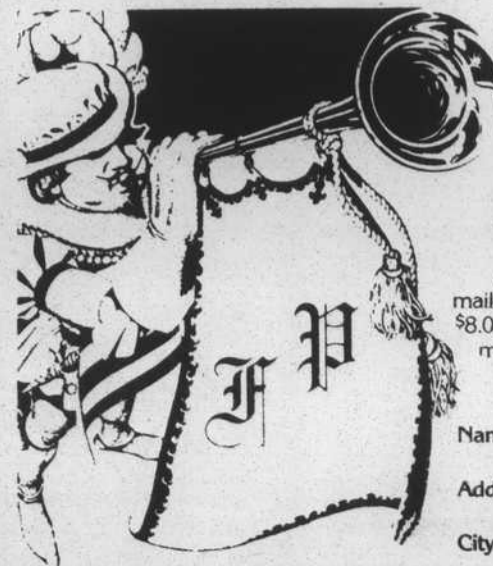
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