

Charlotte Gays Help Swing Mayoral Race

CHARLOTTE—A local gay organization was a very important part of the coalition that elected Harvey Gantt as the city's first black mayor last month. Both his Republican opponent and Gantt made appearances before the city's Lambda Political Caucus, but Gantt made firmer commitments, specifically for an executive order banning discrimination by the city.

The Lambda Political Caucus, which is now three years old, is dedicated "to the educational and political integration of Charlotte and Mecklenburg's County's gay/lesbian community with that of the non-gay community." Billie Stickell, who is president of the caucus, has been with the organization since its inception. She had this to say in the most recent issue of *Q-Notes*, a local newsletter:

"During the Caucus/Acceptance Candidates' Forum this fall, we heard very encouraging remarks from a number of candidates. . . as a result, despite its few numbers, the Caucus threw its support in the mayoral election to Harvey Gantt." This support took the form of a gay phone bank,

contacting as many lesbians and gay men as possible to pull together the gay vote. Stickell credits the Caucus' success to "fantastic help from a number of enthusiastic individuals" and feels that Gantt "will lead us in a progressive and fair manner."

"Mr. Gantt has stated," she explains, "he will appoint without question one or two people nominated by us to the Community Relations Council, which was created during the early integration years to deal with problems of discrimination" in housing and other areas. This is done by making recommendations to the City Council. In recent years, the Community Relations Council has broadened its scope beyond racial discrimination.

"The Caucus sees this as the opportunity we've worked for to add 'sexual orientation' to the present list of groups that legally cannot be discriminated against in Charlotte's housing ordinances, a recommendation which should come from the CRC."

The Caucus will begin a screening process shortly to select for Gantt's consideration the names of one man and one woman who can

responsibly represent the gay/lesbian community on the council. (Nominations should be sent with supporting material to P.O. Box 221841, Charlotte, N.C. 28222).

"In telephoning gay voters during this election," Stickell remarks, "we discovered something very important — many brothers and sisters are not registered to vote! Not only does that make the non-registered less effective as citizens, it also makes the Caucus' job of voter mobility nearly impossible. For the sake of progress, we need each gay

brother's and sister's vote! Don't let another election catch you unable to support a candidate that could make a difference in your life!"

The Caucus will organize a voter registration campaign before the 1984 spring primaries in hopes of expanding the gay/lesbian voting block slowly developing in Charlotte. To register sooner, visit any of the county's libraries. "Your vote counts," says Stickell, "and you won't find one of us in the Caucus taking that fact for granted." •

Press Clippings:

The on-again, off again column called "Press Clippings" has been with *The Front Page* since the paper began in 1979. Recently, however, the column has undergone a noticeable change, and the last few issues have brought in quite a number of favorable responses concerning it. This transformation is entirely due to Michael Schwartz, who not only agreed to write the column but to plow through my backlog of "interesting" clippings (some of them dating back to 1980).

The changes in the column brought it to the attention of *The Washington Blade* which publishes a media review, entitled "Kisses and Curses." (The column is also reprinted in *New York Native*.) *The Blade* gave a kiss to *The Front Page* "for its thorough coverage of media treatment of gays in North Carolina. Appearing under the heading of 'Press Clippings,' the coverage serves the useful purpose of keeping readers abreast of what is being said about them in papers across the state and the volume of articles cited reminds us all just how far we have come from the days when our love dared not speak its name."

Michael, this kiss is all yours! Enjoy it!

— Editor

Feminary Still Seeks Takeover

The *Feminary* collective is still interested in hearing from lesbians interested in assuming responsibility for the literary magazine. Although they have heard from and are talking with several interested parties, the collective will continue to welcome inquiries through January. Ultimately, they are looking for a multi-cultural/racial/class group of lesbian feminists to continue publishing this "feminist journal for the south — emphasizing the lesbian vision."

Based in Durham, *Feminary* began in Chapel Hill in 1969 as a women's liberation newsletter and has gone through several evolutions before its present book format published twice a year. Present collective members have worked on it for six years, and several of them have moved on to new homes or are moving on to other projects.

Feminary has published fiction, poetry, drama, memoirs, journal entries, letters and graphics in issues focusing on southern women's herstory, southern humor and disobedience. In the original collective statement, members said that they "as south-

erners, as lesbians, and as women. . . need to explore with others how our lives fit into a region about which we have great ambivalence."

The publishers have not skirted political issues and say they aim for the journal to increase the visibility of southern lesbians and to serve as a political analysis of the South from a lesbian perspective. They have explored racial, class and religious differences among southern lesbians and have worked to build upon — and to celebrate — that community diversity.

The journal has a national circulation through subscriptions and bookstore sales. Much of the readership is southern — or displaced southerners.

The collective has grant money, a subscription list, and other materials which they hope to pass on to publishers of the next issue. They want to hear from people interested in continuing the magazine by January 21, 1984.

Write to: *Feminary*, P.O. Box 11648, Durham, N.C. 27703

UNC-CH Nixes Gay Scholarship

A Florida psychiatrist's offer of a \$500 scholarship to a medical student "who has already openly and publicly made manifest a same gender affinity preference" has been refused by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, according to *Lambda*, the Carolina Gay Association newsletter. Other schools, including Duke University, have also turned down the offer.

Dr. Robert B. Ragland graduated from the University of Florida and Duke, and was a psychiatry fellow and instructor at UNC-CH. He is now retired and living in Jacksonville, Fla.

Writing in the *Daily Tar Heel*, the UNC-CH student newspaper, Ragland explained that he made these offers "to stimulate awareness and discussion of coerced sexual secrecy and its destructive effects on gay people, their families and society in general." He first made an offer to Stanford, "where I had first become aware of the meaning of my own feelings."

Finding success with Stanford, Ragland repeated the offer to five other schools. He made the offer to Duke's President, Terry Sanford in December 1982. Sanford initiated dialog among Ragland, the medical school, and the Duke Gay and Lesbian Alliance. The result was an alternative scholarship proposal to be locally funded in an amount several times greater than Ragland's offer.

In declining the scholarship, Duke wrote that Ragland's offer had "produced substantially increased respect and understanding on both sides. So you see, a gift can be a gift in many ways — even if the money doesn't actually change hands."

On February 28, 1983, Ragland offered a scholarship to Dean Stuart Bondurant of the UNC School of Medicine. At that time, the scholarship required that the recipient be male. Bondurant returned Ragland's check, stating that federal policy prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex.

Ragland then opened the scholarship to women as well. Bondurant again refused the offer, saying that "The Medical Advisory Committee has decided as a matter of policy not to seek the information necessary to determine the qualified applicant pool."

Writing to UNC President William Friday in August 1983, Ragland dismissed this objection. He agreed that private inquiries into sexual preference could not be made, but said that he avoided these inquiries by specifying an already openly gay student.

He added, "The right of privacy certainly doesn't mean that one must be secret but rather it gives one a choice. . . I doubt that the University is doing anything to deny anyone the right to be open, but is it doing anything to counter the societal pressures which do deny that right?"

Ragland also explained his motivation: "I want to help provide role models for gays. . . It is especially important that physicians be involved in this for they are teachers and examples for others. But physicians, like clergy and teachers, seem to be among the last to take this step."

In September, responding to Ragland's letter, Friday sent a brief note stating that Bondurant had given sufficient reason for not accepting the scholarship.

While in Greensboro, Visit the Historic Rest Area

This issue of *The Front Page* contains a story about the continuing arrests at the Greensboro rest area. The fact that a rest area is where boy meets truck driver may not be news to you and me, but the story, which originated in the *Greensboro Daily News*, was widely reprinted: in the *Winston-Salem Sentinel*, the *Kinston Daily Free Press*, the *Elizabeth City Daily Advance*, the *High Point Enterprise*, the *Asheboro Courier-Tribune*, the *Sailsbury Post*, and *Kannapolis Daily Independent*, the *Concord Tribune*, the *Mount Airy News*, the *Wilson Daily Times*, and the *Gastonia Gazette*. The typical headline screamed something like "Greensboro Roadstop Notorious" or "Rest Stop Gays Unfazed by Arrests."

The problem, apparently, isn't the activity at the rest area, but the fact that people know about it. A *Raleigh Times* editorial (11-23-83) sympathizes: "Whether it belongs to a city or an individual, a good reputation is a prized asset. We don't blame Greensboro for being concerned." Perhaps Greensboro is happier with its straight reputation — as the place where macho Klansmen kill Commies.

The commentary in the *Greensboro Record* — an editorial called, of course, "Straight Talk" (11-17-83) — is confused on the question of notoriety and publicity. It first complains that Greensboro's rest area is too well known: "The I-85 rest stop on the eastern fringe of the city continues to be known up and down the coast as the place for homosexuals to gather." (Forget P-town, Fire Island, and Key West! The Greensboro rest area is "The Place" for homosexuals to gather!)

But the editorial then complains that the rest area isn't well known enough. It says that rest stop sex "is especially dangerous for unsuspecting people from other parts of the country. They have no way of knowing what it is they are entering, and thus are more liable to be victimized and embarrassed."

If Greensboro is mainly concerned about these "unsuspecting people," then the obvious solution is to let them know "what it is they are entering." I propose putting a new sign by I-85: "Rest Area Ahead. Last Blow-Job For 100 Miles." That should keep everyone happy.

New Church For Poisoned Minds

Once a John Deere tractor showroom, now a new wave night spot, a new Raleigh club is going to remain true to its butch origins, according to James Calloway's rock music column in the *News & Observer*. It calls itself the Culture Club, although "the club did not intend to link itself symbolically or otherwise with the British band Culture Club, which is prominent for its transvestite lead singer."

Club owner Steve Alvin is a little worried about the name. "When people hear our name, they think of Boy George and ask, 'Is it gay?' I can tell you, it is definitely not gay. I don't know if the name will be a problem. We will see." If it is a problem, Steve, you can always steal the name of a more unmistakably straight performer. I suggest The Jim Nabors Club.

How We Live...

Newspapers sometimes try to make homosexuality real to their readers by giving detailed looks into the lives of local gays. These features, if not wildly supportive, are at least objective and non-judgmental: they let the gays speak for themselves. And they often provoke vitriolic responses from readers who do not want to learn that gays are real people, just like them.

... In Winston-Salem

The most ambitious piece was a three-part series in the *Winston-Salem Sentinel* (beginning 5-4-83). Writer Scottee Cantrell interviewed 11 Triad women, and the parents of another gay woman. The father is not reconciled to his daughter's gayness: "I still think it's rather unfortunate or even tragic when a child turns out to be homosexual. . . It's something that you'd rather wasn't that way."

The women themselves, however, are uniformly positive. In the first part of the series, they discuss why they resist the label "lesbian" or "gay." One woman asks, "Why title it? I'm a

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