



# They Came, They Danced...

## Invisible No More! Pride '94 A Big Success



Top: Danny Leonard and Deb Kirby-Saleeby; Above: NC Veterans Coalition; Left: Derek Charles Livingston and friend; Below: NC Pride Marching Band. Photos by Kim Fisher and Beth Harrison



The police didn't quite know what to expect, but when the 1994 NC Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration ended, Charlotte police officials told local organizers that the event was one of the most well-organized they had ever seen.

"I gather that they were a bit surprised by that," Don King told *The Front Page*. King, the press liaison for the Charlotte Local Organizing Committee (LOC), also admitted that he and other committee members were pleasantly surprised by the success of the weekend.

"To have your dreams come together even better than you thought they would is just so gratifying," King said.

And come together they did.

Hundreds of North and South Carolinians enjoyed this year's NC Pride Celebration, the first in the Queen City in the event's nine-year history. This was also the first weekend-long festival for the state's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, a change that many attendees seemed to like.

"I've been impressed with the idea of a weekend-long celebration from the very beginning," said Jim Duley, executive director of NC Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. "I think it brought a lot of people to Charlotte who might not have come for just one event."

"Having organized these things in the past, I know how difficult it is to pull off a successful weekend with only one or two events," he added. "That the Charlotte committee was able to put together a weekend with so many different events, and have it go so smoothly, is really incredible."

The event-filled weekend concluded on Sunday, June 5, with a March/Parade and Rally that drew a crowd of 3,800, according to Charlotte LOC estimates. To gauge attendance, the LOC distributed pink wristbands to marchers. Of the 4,000 wristbands that had been made, slightly less than 200 were left after the rally. In contrast—and despite the fact that Jerry Falwell was in Charlotte for the weekend anniversary of a local church—only thirteen counter-protesters from a Monroe, NC, church heckled the crowd as it passed the street corner on which they stood.

Other than the few protesters, there were no negative incidents to mar the weekend. Instead, it proved to be an opportunity to get together, network, and relax. For those who arrived on Friday, comedienne Lea DeLaria gave two evening performances to near-capacity audiences. There were also art displays around the city featuring the works of gay and lesbian artists from throughout the Carolinas, and a mini-film festival

continued on page 3

# ...They Had a *Very* Good Time