

The FRONT PAGE

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Serving the Carolinas' Gay & Lesbian Communities for Over Twenty Years

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The cyber year in review...

In 1999, the Web continued to transform the world, making an impact on almost every aspect of our lives — from activism to entertainment, banking to shopping. And for the New Year, there's free e-mail and internet service from gay.com.

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Contributing Writer

"It's the wave of the future — one must have a Web site," according to John Epperson, maid and real-life alter ego to the drag diva Lypsinka, who in 1999 set up a home page at www.lypsinka.com.

Here's a look back at some of the year's most interesting sites and key cyber events.

Courting the gay surfer proved to be big business as two former online rivals, Gay.net, which specialized in news and information, and Gay.com, which produced chat and bulletin board areas, combined to form www.gay.com — billed as the largest gay and lesbian cyber network of its kind.

Further validating our presence on the Web was new market research from Greenfield Online (www.greenfieldcentral.com) and Spare Parts showing gays and lesbians were shopping online in higher than ever numbers; some two-thirds of the sample group said they made cyber purchases in 1999 — up from 36 percent the year before.

And for the first time, you could pay for those purchases by check via an online account from G & L Bank, www.glbank.com, the first government-insured bank for the gay and lesbian community.

It wasn't all good news on the Web, though. As the year drew to a close, activists charged that America Online — alleging inappropriate sexual content — censored profiles of gay members and interactions in gay chat rooms, while it ignored hate speech directed at gay men and lesbians through other members' profiles and bashing-like behavior in chat rooms. The situation came

continued on page 21

Duke, UNC to share grant for HIV research

HIV researchers at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill will receive \$21 million in renewed federal grants over the next five years, the two schools announced at a Jan. 12 news conference in Chapel Hill. These funds will help provide care for people living with HIV in eastern and central North Carolina and support clinical trials that promise further medical progress.

Duke's effort, directed by Dr. John Bartlett, associate professor of medicine, will receive \$8.5 million. UNC-CH's, led by Drs. Charles van der Horst and Joseph Eron, professor and associate professor of medicine, respectively, will get \$12.5 million.

The renewed grants originate with the national Adult AIDS Clinical Trial Group through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). The announcement represents the fourth round of funding through the group for UNC-Chapel Hill and the third for Duke, said David Williamson, a UNC spokesman.

This year, about \$80 million is being given for the trial group to 32 programs nationwide, Williamson said.

The new federal funding reflects both the quality of HIV research and treatment in North Carolina and the growing number of people infected with HIV in the region, Bartlett said.

"The fact that two of the 32 units are in North Carolina calls attention to the ongoing HIV epidemic in the Southeast," he said. "The Southeast reports more new cases of HIV infection than any other region in the country, a fact that has escaped the attention of many people in the region and nationally."

The reasons for this, Bartlett told *The Front Page*, are complicated. "Perhaps the most obvious is the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases in the Southeast. North Carolina perennially ranks among the top 5 in syphilis and gonorrhea. HIV is a also sexually transmitted disease and therefore we can anticipate similarly higher numbers of reported cases."

"AIDS remains a huge problems in North Carolina," van der Horst added, "particularly among teen-agers, heterosexuals and African-Americans."

In North Carolina, 8,769 people had been diagnosed with AIDS through 1998, and 8,479 more adults and adolescents tested positive for HIV, he said. In 1998 alone, 788 people were newly diagnosed with AIDS, while tests showed 978 others contracted HIV.

"This is only the tip of the iceberg since most persons infected with HIV have not been tested and do not know

continued on page 3

NC Lambda Youth Network Founder Announces Resignation

DURHAM — Activist Hez Norton, founder and Executive Director of North Carolina Lambda Youth Network (NCLYN), will leave the organization to explore new opportunities in May of 2000.

NCLYN, the first statewide leadership development network led by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied (LGBT) youth, has been training and empowering North Carolina youth ages 13 to 24 since 1996. During the past three years, over 400 young people across the state have been involved with NCLYN programs. Many of these young people have created their own venues for activism to make their surrounding communities safer for all youth.

Norton, who founded NCLYN at the age of 23 with a grant from Southern Community Partners, a project of the Lyndhurst Foundation, states, "In the Spring of 1996, I had a vision of a statewide leadership network led by LGBT youth; a safe place for them to go, be affirmed in their identities, develop skills to improve their communities, and work for social justice. I was not alone with this vision and I have had the opportunity to work with so

many amazing people, youth and adults, who transformed this vision into a reality called North Carolina Lambda Youth Network."

NCLYN programming includes workshops to make schools safer for all youth, leadership and organizing training, social and support activities, and opportunities to organize campaigns around specific issues.

In announcing her departure, Norton said, "I leave NCLYN with full confidence that the organization is strong and ready to take on new challenges. We have a talented staff, a dedicated Board of Directors, strong programs, and successful funding. With NCLYN's vision and commitment to LGBT youth and social justice, I am sure the organization will grow and succeed with the next Executive Director."

"Hez's collective work as a resource for LGBT youth, a nonprofit leader, and a catalyst for change speak loudly of the immeasurable energy she has given North Carolina. She will be tremendously missed by the entire Board, staff, youth leaders and all the people across the state she has

continued on page 4

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