



NC Pride: 20th PrideFest in Words & Pictures, pp. 1, 8-13

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A History of NC Pride

By Jim Baxter
Editor & Publisher

This is the text of the Keynote Address which was scheduled to be given at PrideFest on October 2. The speech was rained out with much of the post-parade rally on Saturday:

In the early 1970s, a publication called the *Carologue* – a "catalogue, directory, and manual of alternatives and resources" published here in Durham – discussed "Gay Liberation" in North Carolina, in a short essay by a gay man identified only as "Matthew."

"If you're just "coming out" or thinking of coming out, North Carolina can be a bitch of a place to be located," he said...

"First of all, there is the problem of finding a place or places to go where you can meet other gays. For example, there is only one gay bar in the Triangle area (in Chapel Hill)..."

"Second, the police in North Carolina are very unpredictable when it comes to dealings with gay people. Anti-homosexuality laws are still on the books, and although they are seldom enforced, they still provide a basis for severe harassment..."

"Third, the gay people in North Carolina are, for the most part, still afraid to publicly admit their sexuality."

Ten years later, in the early 1980s, Matthew's assessment was still pretty accurate. There were a few more bars, and there was

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PrideFest Marks 20th State Pride Parade in NC; Crowds Larger than Ever

DURHAM -- Organizers said Saturday's NC PrideFest was the largest ever with about 3,000 people taking part, either marching or shouting encouragement from the sidewalks. Parade watchers lined the streets, many keeping cool with hand fans advertising an upcoming Bette Midler concert.

The annual event included the usual games, vendors, speakers and music. Several booths helped people register to vote. And, of course, there was the parade — which this year took a roughly two-mile route that connected Duke's East Campus with Ninth Street. More than 130 groups participated.

The unofficial master of ceremonies, Dwayne Cornelison of Durham, delivered commentary from the center of a huge orange paper-mache flower planted at the corner of Main and Broad streets (photo, p.10).

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No marching band is complete without a majorette (above); Pride comes with patriotism in contingent of Pride, NC and US flags leading the parade (below left); rain doesn't stop volunteers from canvassing the crowd with voter registration forms just a month before Election Day.

Photos by Brian Doerfler

