

# Baptist homosexual may preach locally

By Kim Cable  
Staff Writer

A homosexual divinity student may be granted licensure to preach if a Chapel Hill church congregation agrees to honor his request.

The deacons of Olin T. Binkley Baptist Church voted last week to let the congregation decide whether to give licensure to John Blevins, a church member and divinity student at Duke University.

Blevins disclosed in his request for licensure that he was homosexual, according to a statement released by the church.

"The deacons' vote to recommend licensure to the congregation indicated that the majority of deacons did not consider Mr. Blevins' sexual orientation to be a sufficient barrier to licensure," the report states.

Licensure, which would grant Blevins the right to preach, is not the same as ordination. Ordination would give Blevins the right to conduct weddings and funerals.

Blevins did not return calls from his home and school last week.

The Rev. Linda Jordan, the pastor of Binkley Baptist, and other church officials refused to comment on the church's decision Monday.

Deacons of the church provided opportunities for the congregation to hear speakers and to discuss the morality of homosexuality and its bearing on licensure before they recommended licensing Blevins, the report states.

University religious studies Professor Laurie Maffly-Kipp said the AIDS crisis brought the issue of homosexual clergy into light.

"It started with the idea that the church ought to support people who are sick,"

she said. "(Churches) said 'if we're going to accept (homosexuals) as members in the church, we can't deny them leadership in the church.'"

Mitchell Simpson, pastor of University Baptist Church, commended Binkley Baptist for its courage in making a difficult decision.

"One of the primary tenets of Baptist church polity is the idea of local autonomy," he said. "Every local congregation has the right to make its own decisions."

Maffly-Kipp said there were a number of denominations that had been debating the issue of whether to ordain homosexuals.

The United Church of Christ openly ordained homosexuals, she said, adding that the Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal churches had been considering ordaining homosexuals.

Some churches were established with

the ordination of homosexuals in mind, Maffly-Kipp said.

"The Metropolitan Community Church was founded on the premise that it would accept homosexuals," she said.

Simpson said that sexuality was a personal choice, and that the church had rarely handled matters of sexuality with the courage and dignity it should.

"The church has not dealt honorably with lots of minority groups, including this one," he said. "My heart aches for so many people in the gay community who think the church has locked them out and condemned them. God's love is unconditional."

The church statement explained that Blevins did not seek ordination from Binkley Baptist but could do so if he received a call to a specific ministry.

Binkley's Interim Associate Pastor Steve Hoogerwerf said the church had a history of addressing controversial issues.

Hoogerwerf said he thought Binkley was the first church in the area to integrate blacks and whites.

"Our history has been to be on the cutting edge of things," he said.

## DTH from page 1

"I know a lot of graduate students just from living here (in Chapel Hill)," he said. "The graduate students that voted obviously read the platform in the paper, paid attention to the endorsements and realized that I have the most solid and innovative ideas."

Eisley said he thought Wallsten received more votes at those poll sites because he campaigned harder in those locations.

"I think he campaigned there more than I did," he said. "I'd like to meet more graduate students. I'm 23, and I'm closer to them in age."

Stephanie Johnston, the third DTH editor candidate, said she wished the run-off candidates luck in the upcoming race.

"Overall the campaign has gone well," she said. "I hope it continues that way for whoever goes to the run-off."

Wendy Bounds and Dacia Toll, write-in candidates, said they were glad they had received so much support in the election.

"It was a difficult race for us being write-ins, but the fact that we had the show of support that we did shows that there were a lot of people out there that believed in Bounds and Toll and the ideas we wanted to implement," Bounds said.

## Campus Calendar

**WEDNESDAY**  
11 a.m. Alpha Phi Alpha will present "Supporting Black Businesses" until 1 p.m. in the Pit.  
3 p.m. A seminar for freshmen, sophomores and juniors about career planning and internships will be held in 306 Hanes. Sponsored by University Career Planning and Placement Services.  
4 p.m. Social/Human Services Career Panel will be held in 210 Hanes. Sponsored by UCPPS.  
5 p.m. La Casa Espanola los invita "Tertulia" en La Cucina Rustica (University Square) para tomar tapas y charlar en español.  
UNC Vegetarian Club presents a free feast until 7 p.m. every Wednesday in Gerrard Hall.  
AIESEC general body meeting will be held in 209 Union. All new members should attend.  
Society for Out-of-State Students will meet in 224 Union.  
5:30 p.m. Asian Students Association will meet in 206 Union.  
Lutheran Campus Ministry will have communion service at Holy Trinity and a 6:15 p.m. fellowship meal.  
Hunger and Homelessness Outreach Projects will meet in the Campus Y Lounge.  
6 p.m. UNITAS will have an open discussion in the fifth-floor lounge of Carmichael Residence Hall.  
Wesley Foundation will have dinner and a program about career choices and living simply.  
7 p.m. Alpha Phi Alpha will show "Strengthening The Black Family, Part II" in the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center.  
Marine Action Committee will meet in the Campus Y. Questions? Call 932-9285.  
Leadership Matters Program will have a skill workshop in 213 Union. Questions? Call 966-4041.  
Muslim Student Association will show "Mujahideen: The Story of the Afghan Freedom Fighters" with refreshments in 226 Union.  
UNC Pre-Law Club will meet in 206 Union with speaker Paige Potter of the Meredith Paralegal Program.  
8 p.m. UNC-Russia Exchange will meet in 218 Union.

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**  
Nominations are requested for the Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Student Activities and Leadership. Forms are available at the Union Desk, Campus Y, Office of Leadership Development (01 Steele) and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (104 Steele). Nominations are due Feb. 28.  
Peer Leadership Consultants applications are available at 01 Steele or at the Union Desk and are due Feb. 24.  
SAFE Escort operates from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and can be contacted at Davis Library or at 962-SAFE.  
Carolina AIDS Resources Ensemble is looking for students interested in building AIDS awareness, raising funds for HIV-positive people and volunteering within the community. Call Cynthia at 933-2976.  
Phi Eta Sigma members: Graduate scholarship and undergraduate award applications are available in the Honors Office, 300 Steele.  
Class of '38 Summer Study Abroad Fellowship Applications for three fellowships of about \$2,600 each are available at the International Center and are due March 9. Questions? Call 962-5661.

**ARTS**  
"Whisper in My Ear..." an evening of erotic and romantic literature, will be held at 8 p.m. Thursday in the Union Cabaret.  
Bertice Berry, celebrated young comedian, will perform at 9 p.m. Friday in Great Hall. Tickets are \$3 for UNC students and \$5 for the public at the Union Box Office.  
Terence Blanchard Quintet, as part of the Jazz Festival: 8 p.m. Feb. 21 in Memorial Hall. \$4 students/\$8 public at the Union Box Office.  
UNC Jazz Band with Rick Lillard and Tim Eyermaier: 8 p.m. Feb. 22 in Memorial Hall. \$1 students/\$3 public at the Union Box Office.  
Wynton Marsalis: 8 p.m. March 16 in Memorial Hall. \$10 students/\$16 public at the Union Box Office.

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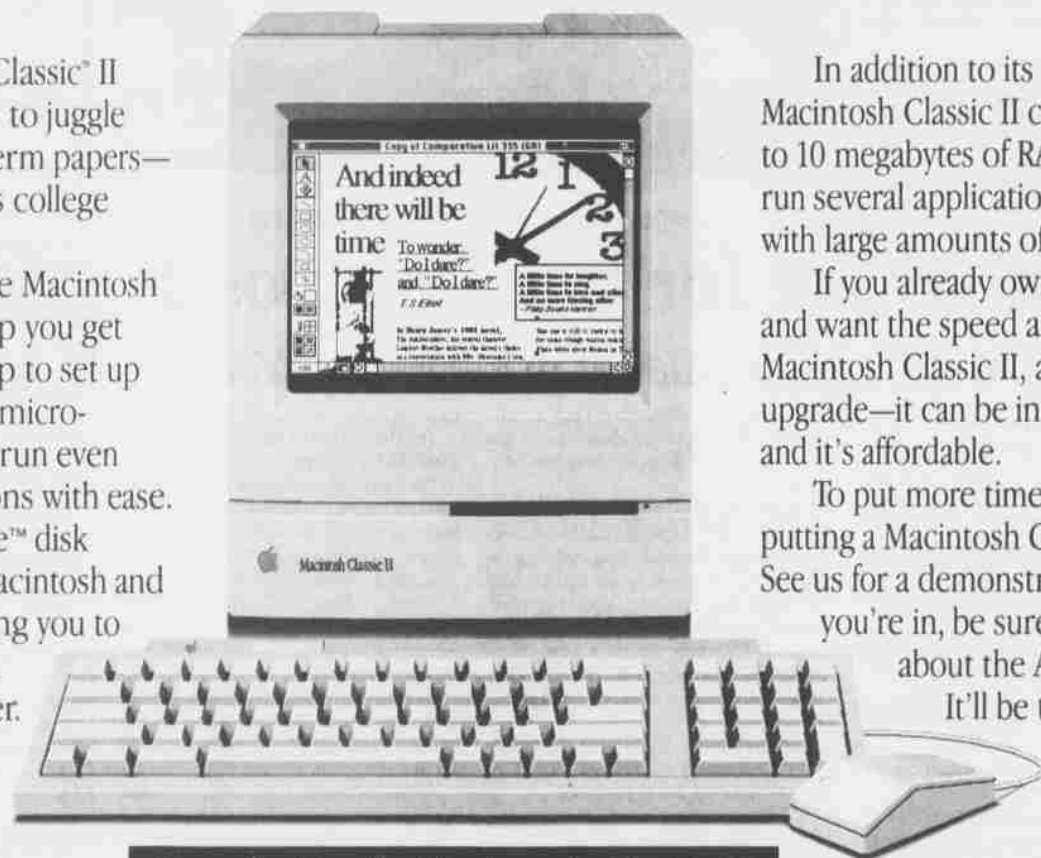


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