

THE TRIANGLE

The Monthly Newspaper from Gay & Lesbian Community Services of Central Florida, Inc.
Serving Orlando's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community

A Death In Our Family

Carol Bartsch

Steve Meunier is a very good friend of mine. Over the past several years we worked together on political causes and quickly became close pals. Then, like some horrible nightmare, AIDS abruptly ended his life on New Year's Day.

Counting down the minutes to 1996 took on a whole new meaning. Steve lived only nine short hours past midnight, oblivious to the changing of the calendar. This is the year that would not be.

What did Steve mean to me? He was both a mentor and an inspiration. He was always dependable. He knew how to activate people.

He was part of my family. I feel somewhat lost without him. He is irreplaceable.

The past two years if you read the Triangle, you undoubtedly read a story by Steve. He reported on so many events that he sometimes had four or more stories in one issue! Over the last few years Steve did so many things.

As the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Field Action Network Congressional District #3 Coordinator, he lobbied his US House Representative Corrine Brown in Washington, D.C. and Orlando so well that she knew him on sight. He also worked on the HRC computer letter writing project, which sent hundreds of letters to Congress.

Steve rode on the Health Security Express, a bus caravan of people from across the country going to Washington, D.C. to push for health care reform. On that 1994 trip Steve talked with Tipper Gore and photographed President Clinton on the White House lawn.

In 1995 he traveled again to Washington, D.C. to lobby on Capitol Hill for increased AIDS funding and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. I lobbied with Steve at seven different Congressional Offices the same day Candace Gingrich (Newt's lesbian half-sister) made headlines joining along with us HRC activists.

Steve devoted his life completely to AIDS activism throughout 1995.

Steve provided many people a closer look at a person living with AIDS (PLWA).

He shared his experiences with all who would listen, so others could better understand what life is like for PWLAs. I'll never forget Steve's response to Senator Connie Mack's staffer who suggested everything has already been done regarding AIDS education. Steve told him "I wouldn't have AIDS if I had been better educated". Looking in Steve's face, the staffer didn't have a comeback.

Steve worked endlessly on political campaigns like the Alachua County ballot measure and along-

side Rainbow Democratic Club during the 1994 elections. Less than six months ago Steve went to Tampa for the "Activate You" conference, which was the same weekend he covered "Laughter Positive" here in Orlando. People everywhere were amazed at Steve's energy and dedication. Who could keep up with him?!

For the Triangle, Steve reported political news for our community along with the social scene. At nearly every local fund raiser, production or event, you would find him taking pictures and meeting people. Looking through his photo collection there's celebrities galore. Steve was simply everywhere, a serious and proud reporter who truly cherished his 1994 Spectrum Award for Journalistic Excellence.

But when you talked with Steve, he would not dream to bore you with his own accomplishments. He would prefer to talk about politics or Paris, Lucy and Lilly, the cinema and art, or the beauty of a walk on the beach. Steve truly loved all the finer things in life. He was the very definition of a well-mannered gentleman, epitomizing grace and class.

In fact, Steve was so charming that he

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Spectrum Awards Finalists

Special to The Triangle

After an exhilarating seven hour Spectrum Judging meeting Saturday, January 6th, the judges voted for 86 finalists out of the 182 nominations from 279 ballots. Twenty-eight Judges, an increase of ten from last year, labored to select the finalists noted in the following two pages.

A letter notifying the finalists was mailed January 9, 1996, and an additional letter and telephone call will be forwarded to the "Entertainer of the Year" nominees to inform them of the opportunity to perform live at the Spectrum Awards.

The Spectrum Awards will be held Sunday, March 3, 1996 at 8:05 PM at the Church Street Station Presidential Ballroom. The event will "Celebrate" the hard work and dedication of Central Florida volunteers, activists and organizations in an academy

award style program with a Mardi-Gras theme. Melinda Paras, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, DC, will be a co-host for the event as we step out to network with our national organizations.

The Gay and Lesbian Community Services of Central Florida, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization which has served the Central Florida gay, lesbian and bisexual community since 1978. The purpose of the Gay and Lesbian Services of Central Florida, Inc. is to provide supportive, educational, social and referral services to the gay, lesbian and bisexual community and the organizations that serve that community. We uphold and affirm that homosexuality is a natural state of being and offer positive support to all members of the gay and lesbian community.

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Spectrum Awards Co-Hosts

Lara Y. Anderson & Laura J. Harding

The 1996 Spectrum Awards Planning Committee is pleased to announce the celebrity co-hosts for this year's ceremony: Melinda Paras, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and Keith Meinhold, Petty Officer First Class, United States Navy.

The Executive Director of NGLTF since December 1994, Melinda Paras had previously served as Health Commissioner for the city and county of San Francisco as well as on the Joint Conference for the San Francisco General and Laguna Honda Hospitals. She spent two years working as Director of Multicultural Affairs for the Shanti Project, a large AIDS service provider in San Francisco. In that position, Ms. Paras pioneered efforts to make AIDS services available to poor and disenfranchised communities, and then later, as Deputy Executive Director, she managed the day-to-day operations of the \$5.6 million non-profit agency.

In addition to her professional work,

Ms. Paras has been active in movements for social change in the Filipino and lesbian/gay communities for more than 20 years. She co-founded the Union of Democratic Filipinos and served as the organization's Co-Director from 1973 to 1979. In San Francisco, Ms. Paras served in many capacities for political campaigns including domestic partnership legislation, defending the domestic partner law and as Vice President of the Harvey Milk Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club.

We are also very excited to announce that gay Armed Forces activist, Keith Meinhold, will also be a co-host for the evening's festivities. Mr. Meinhold gained national recognition when he appeared on ABC World News Tonight on May 19, 1992 and publicly proclaimed his homosexuality. At the time he was in the United States Navy, which, like the other

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