do you wanna dance ?

photo by bill fibben

Athens, Ga.–Bill Green, coordinator of the Committee on Gay Education (CGE), a student group at the University of Georgia, has a vision of his city as "an open place," where gays and straights do not feel uptight with each other, where gayness "stops being an item of curiosity."

The CGE, with about 50 hard-working members–gay and striaght, male and female–feels it has made progress toward that goal. Gay couples walk arm-in-arm on campus. Gay people touch and talk as openly as straight people in the Bulldog Room. At a recent concert, when people got up to dance as they always do, gay people got up and danced together as well. Green alone has spoken to 800 people, and the talks have provided a supportive atmosphere where many individuals have been able to come out and release their feelings toward people of the same sex.

The CGE decided to hold a dance–a "liberation celebration"–to show that gays "can have social functions without damage to society." The dance is scheduled for Friday, March 10 at 8 pm at the Memorial Hall Ballroom.

Two weeks after accepting the reservation for the ballroom, on Feb. 28, Director of Student Activities, John Cox revoked the permission. Dean of Student Affairs Suthern Sims upheld the ruling, stating that the university could be charged with "aiding and abetting the commission of a felony"–sodomy.

Green quickly replied that Sims' point was "absolutely ridiculous. This same argument could be used to uphold the opinion that there should be no heterosexual dances, since they might possibly lead to fornication, which is also a crime."

Student support soon revealed itself. On March 1, about 35 students sat-in at Sims' office, but he refused to budge from his position without a court order. *The Red and Black,* the student newspaper, castigated Sims. Two members of the student senate offered to attend a session in drag and debate the exclusion. Many people have decided to show their support by attending the dance.

The group's faculty advisor, Dr. Karl King, bowed to the pressure and gave up his position with the group, claiming that the dance has gone "out of the umbrella of education and into the arena of confrontation." But in reality, the education has just begun. People who have recently learned to accept their attractions to people of the same sex are being taught that that acceptance is criminal, is a felony. The CGE is going to court to try to force the school to let it use the facilities. Then people will learn how "equal protection of the law" gives way to a "compelling state interest" in heterosexuality. Then they will know what big things a little dance, the freedom to talk in a coffee shop, and the lack of paranoia about walking arm-in-arm are.

The dance will still be held. Green feels sure that growing support, combined with that which the CGE has already received, will ensure success: "I think everything's gonna be real nice Friday night."

–roger