

National gay rights issues hit home for students

By ALLY O'REILLY
Special to Pine Whispers

A design featuring two pink lines on a background of red covered Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networks a few weeks ago to represent something important to many – and irrelevant to some.

Equality.

The subject of equality, specifically marriage equality, has come up a lot recently because of two new cases in the Supreme Court. California's Proposition 8 is being debated along with whether or not the U.S. should repeal the Defense of Marriage Act.

If Proposition 8 is ruled unconstitutional, same-sex marriage will become legal in all 50 states. But, federal legalization doesn't automatically mean total acceptance.

"I don't think anybody in the LGBTQ community will be under the delusion that (federal legalization) means everyone in our society supports that measure or supports their equality," said Reynolds High School English teacher Nikèl Bussolati, who serves as faculty adviser for RJR's Gay-Straight Alliance. "But, I think for them that just means that the state is finally recognizing their equality."

And not everybody does support equality for people who identify as LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Questioning – said a source who requested anonymity:

"I respect what they are trying to do – equal rights for all – I respect that," the Reynolds student said. "But I just don't agree. Not agreeing and not respecting are two different things that I think some people get mixed up."

Senior Joshua Hill, who said he is bisexual, notices same-sex marriage naysayers and says "everybody's got their own opinion and they're going to believe their



Photo provided by Justin Bullard

Reynolds High School freshman Justin Bullard (second from right) poses with his family: brother Torin Maxwell (from left) and fathers Mark Maxwell and Tim Maxwell.

opinion no matter what somebody says, or what the Supreme Court does."

But national acceptance isn't the only thing that matters. Acceptance at home matters just as much. Hill called Reynolds "the most gay-friendly high school in Forsyth County," and he doesn't see that changing much.

Hill's older brother, who is gay, came to Reynolds in 2000. At that time, Matt Hill fought the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education for the right to have a Gay-Straight Alliance here. Joshua Hill said his younger brother, Adam, was openly gay at Reynolds when he attended for a short time, and now Joshua is openly

bisexual here: "This is just an awesome school all around," Joshua said.

There are also some families around the community with same-sex parents, and that's where the Defense of Marriage Act comes in. If DOMA is repealed, then same-sex couples who are married will be recognized no matter where they are in the country – even if their home state doesn't allow same-sex marriage.

North Carolina voters approved Amendment One last year, defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Freshman Justin Bullard, who is gay, has two fathers. For him and his family, the repeal of DOMA would mean "we could

all finally, actually be a real family, and be recognized anywhere we went regardless of anything.

"That would be really nice, knowing that we are a family in here," Bullard added, putting his hand over his heart, "(and) in society we would be considered a true family."

Bullard describes his family as being hard-working, funny, interactive, caring – and traditional.

"We're just like every other family," he said. His dads, Mark and Tim, have been together 29 years and recently married in Washington, D.C.

Like Hill, Bullard said he feels "happy and supported" here at Reynolds.

"I've never really had anything insulting said to me," Bullard said. "There may have been like one occasion, but I'm the kind of person that I don't really pay attention to 'non-factor' people."

Just because those in the LGBTQ community tend to feel safe at Reynolds does not mean everyone supports the cause of gay marriage and equal rights being debated in the Supreme Court.

"We all have the same opinion," stated the Reynolds student who wished to remain anonymous, "and we just don't want it. That's not the America we're looking for."

The source – who mentioned friends with similar thoughts – said their parents raised them "with one clear vision of America, the old views, how it's supposed to be. Same-sex marriage is not a part of that vision."

Ideas like those won't stop people in their fight for equal rights, though.

"The future holds freedom and equality," Bullard said. "I think that it will get better."

O'Reilly is a freshman taking *Introduction to Journalism*. This story was produced as her year-end class project.

Female leader a first for UNC

By ISABELLA MIGLIARESE
Staff Writer

UNC Chapel Hill recently announced the name of its new chancellor, and she is making history. Dr. Carol Folt will be UNC's first female chancellor.

The 61-year-old from Akron, Ohio, was selected from a pool of 30 applicants to replace Holden Thorp, who resigned earlier this year in the wake of several sports-related scandals at the college. Folt graduated from the University of California-Santa Barbara with a bachelor's degree in aquatic biology in 1976 and later earned a master's degree in biology from UCSB. She concluded her education with a doctorate in ecology from the University of California at Davis.

The fact Folt received her education through state schools in California should help her lead one of the prominent centers of higher education in North Carolina.

Folt joined the faculty at Dartmouth College in 1983 and worked her way through the ranks to the position of chancellor in 2012. Coming from Dartmouth, a private college in Hanover, N.H., with a student body of less than 10,000, Folt will have a big transition moving to a public university with some 30,000 students.

Other challenges for Folt after leading an Ivy League school include learning the dynamics of a larger school, the North Carolina public school system and its funding challenges, and Southern culture.

To tackle this challenge, Folt is being paid \$520,000 a year, which is \$100,000 more than the previous chancellor.

One of Folt's primary tasks will be to restore the lost luster and the public's trust in the quality of education at Chapel Hill after the academic scandals. This will be an important goal with the campus' plans to expand the current sports budget of \$70 million to an estimated \$100 million over the next academic year.

Folt joins three other female chancellors in the UNC system; the others are at UNC Asheville, UNC Greensboro and a newly hired female at N.C. Central. Locally, UNC School of the Arts is strongly considering a female candidate for chancellor, according to Board of Governors representative David Powers.

"Gender couldn't help but factor in," Powers said, but added that Folt was hired for the many skills she provides.

"Dr. Folt was chosen because of her focus on academics and research," Powers said, adding that Folt has had a long career in academics with a good record of leadership. Her experience factored into the board's decision, as did her qualities of being politically savvy, an effective businessperson, and her ability to interact with each of the respective departments on the UNC campus.

Dozens of Reynolds High School students head to Chapel Hill each year after graduation. While few college students meet their chancellor – or even know whose signature is on the bottom of that diploma – the fact that a woman will lead the school is important, said Assistant Principal Freda Smith: "Having a female in such a prestigious position sheds light on the skills, ability, talent and accomplishments that women can bring to non-traditional careers."



Folt

NC highways could hit 75 mph

By THOMAS EDMUNDSON
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The North Carolina Senate recently approved a bill to increase the maximum speed limit in North Carolina. If the bill is signed into law, any state highway with an existing speed limit of 70 mph could have its limit increased to the 75 mph threshold.

There are two stretches of highway near Winston-Salem that meet the requirements for the speed increase. One is on Interstate 40 in Davie and Iredell counties between the BB&T Soccer Complex and Statesville, and the other is a stretch of I-85 spanning Davidson, Randolph and Guilford counties.

The potential speed increase has sparked much debate locally. A Winston-Salem Journal poll asking if the speed limit should be raised gave results of 49.2 percent for the increase and 50.8 against.

"I honestly think putting the speed limit up 5 mph makes a negligible difference," Reynolds High School senior Terry Hines said. "The force behind a crash at 75 mph really isn't that much greater than one at 70."

One of the major concerns of the possible speed increase is the higher risk of accidents and death.

"Speed increase means more accidents," Reynolds resource officer Tim Convery said. "It increases injury and death percentage and it would definitely lead to more motorcycle deaths."

Convery said statistics show a link between speed and reaction time.

"It takes a person two to three sec-

onds of reaction time at 45 mph, and as your speed increases, your reaction time also increases," the officer said. "Every second converts into about 20 feet on the road."

Despite the increased danger, many people look forward to the opportunity of going faster on highways. An increase in speed would reduce travel time.

Junior Marcos Melendez said, "I think it is a great idea because when I'm in a hurry I like to go fast, and I'm always in a hurry."

Some people think the new speed limit would promote more speeding. In 70 mph zones, drivers in North Carolina average a speed of 73.5 mph. To combat excessive speeding, an increase in law enforcement would be inevitable.

"If the limit is set at 75, more people will be doing 80," Convery added. "Speeding tickets are not to discipline; they are to influence people to slow down. We have absolute law in North Carolina, which means if it is set at 35 and you're going 36, then you're in violation and can receive a ticket."

AAA Carolinas has expressed its disapproval of the bill, citing that high-speed accidents are the No. 1 cause of traffic fatalities in the state and saying that an increase in the speed limit would sacrifice the safety of drivers on those highways.

If the bill is passed, as expected, by the House of Representatives and is approved by the governor, North Carolina will join 16 other states with a maximum speed limit of 75. North Carolina will, however, be the only eastern state with the 75 mph limit.