

QNotes

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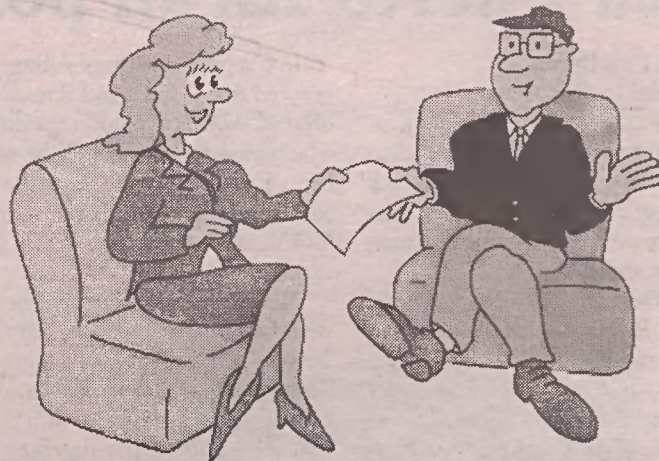
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ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Issue Date	Deadline
October 31	Mon., Oct. 19
November 14	Mon., Nov. 2
November 28	Mon., Nov. 16

And, Senator, here's your schedule for the rest of the afternoon. You'll want to note that your mistress called to see if you'll be free after the Clinton Impeachment Hearings.



guest editorial

Hidden messages

On Monday, October 5, The *Charleston Post & Courier* ran a full-page ad promoting Exodus and other "ex-gay" ministries that claim to be able to "cure" homosexuality through a "reparative therapy" that includes conversion to their own particular brand of Christianity.

The ad was sponsored by the East Cooper Baptist Church of Charleston. It is from a series recently produced and placed in major US newspapers by a coalition of 15 right-wing political and religious organizations. Among those groups are the Family Research Council, the Alliance for Traditional Marriage-Hawaii, the Center for Reclaiming America and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. All of the participating organizations have a long and well-documented record of opposing civil rights legislation for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens, as well as attempts to influence local, state and national elections with inflammatory anti-gay rhetoric.

The ads have attracted a great deal of national press coverage and editorial opinion that calls into question the campaign's true purpose. It is the belief of the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement (SCGLPM) that the actual purpose of this controversial campaign is not a compassionate, Christian outreach to gays and lesbians, but rather an attempt to once again influence general public opinion.

Disguised as an invitation to gays to become "ex-gays," the hidden message to the general public is that a person's sexual and affectional orientation is a behavioral choice that can be "unchosen," and is undeserving of equal protection against discrimination through civil rights legislation. Sexual orientation is an innate, immutable part of a person's being, a fact overwhelmingly endorsed by the scientific and medical community. Furthermore, reparative therapy has been declared by the American Psy-

chological Association and the American Psychiatric Association as being not only ineffective, but in many cases actually harmful.

It is certainly no coincidence that this national ad campaign precedes mid-term elections across the country. It is also no coincidence that the recent placement of the ad by East Cooper Baptist Church immediately followed the previous Saturday's OutFest Charleston, South Carolina's official "coming out day" celebration. Clearly, these ads are meant to sway public opinion rather than affect any real change within the gay community — and it is the view of SCGLPM that despite how these ads might appear on the surface, the true message is political not religious.

SCGLPM is a statewide organization providing education, support and advocacy for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered South Carolinians. Because these citizens come from all walks of life, including various faiths and denominations, it is not appropriate for this group to debate theology with our detractors, or to promote one belief system over another. We recognize that spirituality, like sexual and affectional orientation, is a deeply personal issue — and for a great many gay people, integrating a spiritual life into their whole life is an important, sometimes difficult, journey. With this in mind, we consider it especially abhorrent that the anti-gay elements of the Christian right would attempt to capitalize on the spirituality of gay individuals in order to further a political agenda.

We respect the right of everyone, including the congregation of East Cooper Baptist, to express their religious and social viewpoints. However, we take exception when the form of that expression is a dishonest advertisement handed down by a highly-politicized, richly-funded group of national anti-gay organizations. SCGLPM encourages East Cooper Baptist Church to find its own voice on these issues through dialogue with the gay and lesbian people of its own community and its community's churches. ▼

— Tony Snell

[The writer is the president of SCGLPM.]

dates this year so there's no reason to boycott the elections. If I have to spend another year listening to people who didn't even think it necessary to cast a vote bitch about the state of affairs in our government, I may smack someone.

When will some of you realize that if we expect change, we need to participate in it. ▼

— Michelle Tomey
Lake Norman, NC

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letter

Don't vote? Don't bitch

I went to the Mecklenburg PAC town meeting and I was thrilled by the candidates who were there. I have a message for all of you queens and dykes who won't get off your couches long enough to go to the polls: we have real candi-

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