

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

The Latest Q-POLL Results

Internet watchers say that the gay and lesbian community spends more time online than practically any other group. Approximately how many hours do you spend online each week?

Less than five	Six to fifteen	Sixteen and over
15%	26%	59%

Vote at www.q-notes.com

Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 15, Number 7 • August 19, 2000 • FREE

Gore taps Sen. Lieberman as his VP running mate

by David Elliot
Special to Q-Notes

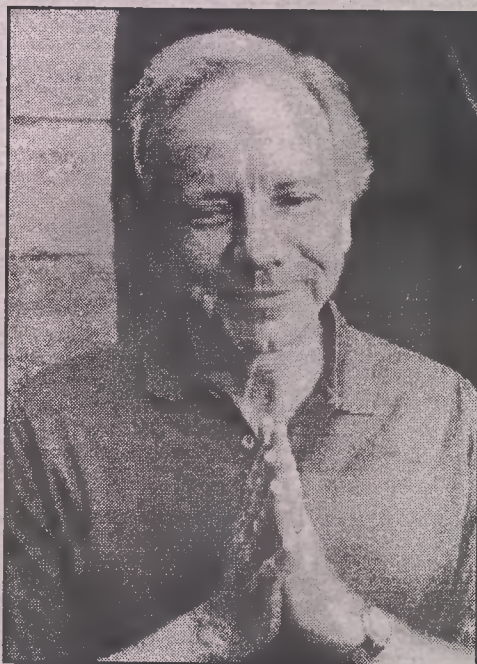
WASHINGTON, DC—Vice President and Democratic party Presidential candidate Al Gore announced August 8 that he has chosen US Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut as his running mate.

In response, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) issued a report on Lieberman indicating that he has voted to end employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and hate violence against GLBT people, but he also has a decidedly mixed record overall on other issues important to the progressive community.

"Senator Lieberman's record is one that bears studying and watching," said NGLTF Executive Director Elizabeth Toledo. "He has a generally good record on issues important to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. At the same time, Lieberman, like Clinton and like Gore, has not always proven to be a friend of the progressive community when we needed him."

Lieberman, who is the first member of the Jewish faith to be selected for the national ticket of a major US political party, has taken several public stands that demonstrate support for issues important to GLBT people:

- He has co-sponsored the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and this year voted for the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, whose passage in the Senate has put the hate crimes ball in the US House's court.



Sen. Joseph Lieberman

- He has co-sponsored and voted for civil rights legislation that would prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation.

- He also has sponsored and voted in favor of the Ryan White CARE Act, has implemented a non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation for his office staff and supported ending the ban on gay, lesbian and bisexual people serving openly in the military.

However, at least two votes prevent Lieberman's record from remaining completely supportive of issues important to GLBT people:

- He voted in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act, which granted states the right to refuse recognition of same-sex marriages performed in other states.

See **LIEBERMAN** on page 13

FL judge denies lesbians and gay men domestic violence protection

by Eric Ferrero
Special to Q-Notes

BRADENTON, FL—The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is investigating reports that lesbians and gay men are now considered ineligible for protection from domestic violence in parts of Florida due to an "unconstitutional and unconscionable" court decision.

Circuit Judge Marc Gilner denied a domestic violence injunction to a 27-year-old Bradenton man earlier this year because, the judge said, the domestic violence law did not apply to "roommates."

The man requesting the restraining order said he had been in a "monogamous, committed relationship" with his partner, who he said punched him repeatedly during an argument. In court documents, he included photos of his swollen cheek and eye.

Just 89 minutes after the victim asked for a restraining order, Gilner denied it. The victim asked him to reconsider, and the judge issued a hand-written denial that said, in part, "Florida law does not recognize same-sex, live-in relationships as family."

Gilner's decision was based on Florida's law banning recognition of same-sex marriages (which are not legal in any state), as well as the state's law preventing gay men and lesbians from adopting children. The ban on adoptions is already the subject of an ACLU lawsuit.

In the months since the judge's ruling, county clerks have not issued applications for domestic violence injunctions to lesbians and gay men.

"The ruling was clearly unconstitutional," said Matt Coles, Director of the ACLU Les-

bian and Gay Rights Project. "It would be hard to think of a clearer denial of 'equal protection of the law' than denying protection from violence because of sexual orientation."

Since they are not protected by domestic violence injunctions, Manatee County lesbians and gay men in abusive relationships can only apply for repeat violence injunctions. These injunctions are more cumbersome to obtain, have more limited effect and are available only to those who have already been abused.

"This is dangerous," Coles said. "We've already had conversations with county officials, and we are looking into the quickest way to resolve this situation and ensure equality and safety for all citizens. Our preference is to resolve this without a lawsuit."

Nothing in Florida state law on domestic violence injunctions prohibits judges from issuing restraining orders to gay men or lesbians, the ACLU said. Judges in the neighboring counties of Sarasota and Charlotte issue domestic violence injunctions regardless of sexual orientation.

The US and Florida Constitutions mandate that all citizens be treated equally under the law, and Coles said legal precedent clearly includes lesbians and gay men as people who are entitled to equal protection.

"We believe lives may be in the balance in Manatee County," Coles said. "We aren't talking about pushing for societal acceptance or for technical recognition. This involves people's basic safety."

For more information about the ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, access the group's web site at www.aclu.org. ▼

GLBT center project gains steam

by Robert Marcus James
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE—It's been talked about for years: creating a place for GLBT people to meet, share our history and heritage, and celebrate our lives. The community has been waiting, but the wait will soon be over. The Lesbian & Gay Community Center Project (serving the GLBT community of greater Charlotte) is now being driven forward by a group of community volunteers who have been meeting since February to breathe new life into this oft-mentioned idea.

Last year, OutCharlotte hired Grassroots Leadership to facilitate a study to determine if Charlotte was ready for and could support a community center. The overwhelming response was that the community is ready for a center. The Project Committee has done additional research and begun a strategic plan — which will be handed over to a new not-for-profit Board of Trustees in January 2001.

"It's been a long, thorough process," said David Howard of the Planning Committee. "We are being very deliberate in our work to ensure the success of a community center. We've developed a mission statement and program goals based on the work of the Study Committee. Rooted in values of collaboration and social justice, the Community Center sees itself as enhancing existing organizations by helping

coordinate administrative costs such as sharing office space and equipment."

The Mission Statement for the Center says that the "Community Center provides a home for the nurture and celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organizations, institutions, and culture; offers access to informational and educational resources and activities designed to empower individuals to achieve their fullest potential; promotes strong community partnerships; and opposes prejudice; and increases public affirmation of LGBT individuals through education, advocacy and outreach."

Two questions constantly posed to Project Committee members are "Where is the Center going to be?" and "When will it open?"

Addressing these issues, Howard explains, "It will likely be a couple of years before we are able to have a

physical location, but we are planning to start programs at the beginning of the year. Programs will be tailored to the needs and desires of the community and will take place at various locations around the city. While it will take a couple of years to plan and execute a capital campaign, the immediate goal is to get people involved in the process and build excitement for the Center."

The Project Committee has already looked at several possible sites to gauge costs and met with the community's larger GLBT organization. See **CENTER** on page 21

Town Meetings

Wednesday, August 30, 7:00pm
West Boulevard Public Library
2157 West Boulevard

Thursday, August 31, 7:00pm
University City Regional Public Library
301 E. WT Harris Boulevard

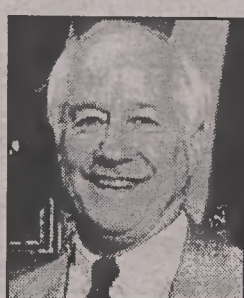
Tuesday, September 5, 7:00pm
Morrison Regional Public Library
7015 Morrison Boulevard

Wednesday, September 6, 7:00pm
Plaza-Midwood Public Library
1623 Central Avenue

Task Force says gays were seen but not heard at GOP convention

by David Elliot
Special to Q-Notes

PHILADELPHIA, PA—Behind the smoke and mirrors, the Republican National Convention reflected a party deeply divided between moderates who want to paint a picture of tolerance and conservatives who reject the basic humanity of GLBT people, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) charged.



Rep. Jim Kolbe

"Viewers who watched [the] convention on TV might be confused," said NGLTF Executive Director Elizabeth Toledo. "Was this the first Republican Convention ever to discuss diversity and inclusion? Or was it yet another

Republican Convention where GLBT people were told we do not have a voice in the political process? In fact, it was both."

According to NGLTF, lowlights and highlights of the convention for the GLBT community included:

- Republicans adopted a party platform that barely differed on GLBT issues from the platform adopted in 1996. This year's platform would ban gay, lesbian and bisexual people from serving in the military; prevent the expansion of civil rights laws to include sexual orientation; and endorse only families with a "father

and a mother." The platform also includes a gratuitous reference in support of the Boy Scouts of America's right to discriminate, and includes a total ban on abortion, even in cases of rape, incest and threats to the mother's life.

- For the first time in history, an openly gay Republican congressman, Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) addressed the convention. However, Kolbe was not introduced as a gay congressman, never mentioned the fact that he is gay and his sexual orientation was not listed in the official convention program. During Kolbe's speech, approximately 25 Texas delegates removed their hats, bowed their heads and prayed, with one delegate holding up a sign on national television that read, "There is a way out."

- Many journalists focused on the role of Mary Cheney, daughter of Vice Presidential nominee Dick Cheney, who stated several years ago in a *Washington Blade* interview that she is lesbian. Although Mary Cheney joined her father on stage during the convention's gala finale, the Bush-Cheney ticket appeared to struggle over what role she would play in the general election campaign.

In a nationally televised interview, Lynn Cheney stated that her daughter "has never declared" herself to be a lesbian, despite her prior interview and her stint as liaison to the GLBT community for Coors.

"In the final analysis, the message sent to the GLBT community by the Republican Party was that it is okay to be seen but not heard," said Toledo. ▼