

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper

Roses are red.
Violets are blue?
What are you doing,
your sweetheart and you?
See page 23 for some fun and
interesting ideas.



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South Carolina is out in front with cozy, fully functional Gay & Lesbian Community Center

The South Carolina Gay & Lesbian Community Center is a rare find, especially in the South — a free-standing community center devoted to meeting the needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) communities of South Carolina. While most of the country is just now recognizing the need for such places, South Carolina already has its Community Center, located at 1107 Woodrow Street in Columbia.

The Center boasts facilities that include a conference room and meeting space; a lending library; full kitchen; a distribution center for local and regional publications; a living room setting for informal gatherings; and office space for the board. Office space has also been made available for OutSmart of the Midlands, an organization for sexual minority young people.

The Center provides education and advocacy on behalf of the GLBT citizens of South Carolina, working to educate the larger South Carolina populace about the issues and concerns of its GLBT citizens, and advocating for

visibility, equality, and inclusiveness. Because the GLBT community comprises diverse groups with varying needs, the Center

payments are available when a donation is requested for a program or event.

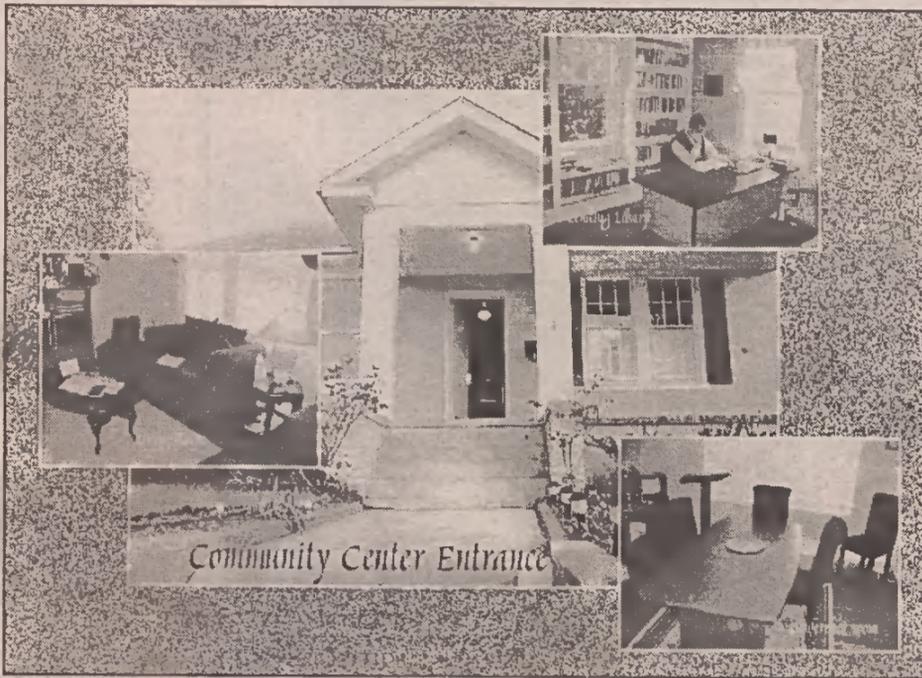
The Center is host to a wide variety of ongoing opportunities:

OutSmart in the Midlands, Inc., a sexual minority youth service organization, is based at the South Carolina Gay & Lesbian Community Center. It is the only organization of its kind in the region, and is designed to meet the needs of GLBT high-school and college-age youth and young adults.

An HIV-positive gay men's support group is offered in coalition with Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services. The Center supplies

the space for this meeting once a week.

Free gathering space is available to area
See CENTER on page 6



The South Carolina Gay & Lesbian Community Center provides a warm environment for Palmetto State GLBT folks to socialize, learn and grow.

is committed to making programs and services as accessible as possible. Sign language interpreters have been present at all large events, and are available upon request for smaller programs. The facility has recently been made wheelchair accessible with a ramp at the rear entrance and restroom enhancements. Most programs are free-of-charge, and special discount rates, scholarships, and sliding-scale

Rep. Barney Frank to be featured speaker at HRC Gala

by Cheryl Ann Welsh
Special to Q-Notes



Representative
Barney Frank

RALEIGH — Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) will present the keynote address for the Carolinas' Sixth Annual Human Rights Campaign Gala Dinner Saturday, February 17, at the Embassy Suites in Cary, NC. Frank, who has represented the Fourth Congressional District of Massachusetts since his election to the House of Representatives in 1980, has written numerous articles on politics and public affairs.

Also participating will be Donna Red Wing, OutGiving Director for the Gill Foundation. Red Wing, one of the first recipients of the Walter Cronkite Faith and Freedom Award, served as HRC national field director 1996-1999.

In addition to the dinner at 8:00 pm, evening activities include a silent auction (6:00-7:45 pm), after dinner dancing, and coffeehouse.

Reservations for the special event may be made through Box Office Tickets at 800-494-8497. Individual tickets are \$175 (\$165 until February 7). ▼

Army drops planned discharge of gay reservist Steve May

by Steve Ralls
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC — The Army announced January 15 it will not pursue its



Lt. Steve May

planned discharge of Lt. and Arizona Republican Legislator Steve May for alleged violations of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass." May will continue to serve in the Army Reserves until May 11, when his two-year obligation is complete.

"It is gratifying that the Army has decided to drop the case," May said. "I have always served my country with honor, integrity, and loyalty, and it hurt me deeply that the Army would try to fire me — not for anything I did in the Army, but for who I am and for doing my legislator's job. I didn't ask to go back into the Army, but when called, I reported for duty and did my job there. My sexual orientation and my statements about my sexual orientation have never interfered with my performance as an officer in the United States Army," he said.

"The Army has tacitly recognized it never should have pursued May," said Service members' Legal Defense Network (SLDN) Executive Director C. Dixon Osburn. "The current law does not contemplate discharging

elected officials for statements they have made as elected officials," Osburn said. "Nor does current law contemplate punishing soldiers for statements made as civilians or while in the inactive reserves. The Army has made the right decision to drop the case at long last," Osburn continued.

The Army has declined to provide an official reason for dropping the discharge action. The Secretary of the Army retains ultimate authority to accept or reject any proposed discharge recommendation.

The Army initiated discharge proceedings against May after learning about remarks he made about his sexual orientation during a debate on domestic partner benefits for state employees in the Arizona State Legislature. At the time, he was on inactive status with the Army Reserves. The Army called May back to active duty at the time of the Gulf War — after making his remarks and after winning re-election as an openly gay candidate for the state legislature — making his sexual orientation a matter of record at the time the Army called him to active duty. Lt. May served as executive officer of his reserve unit.

Lt. May has been hailed as an exemplary officer. In his recent evaluations, his superiors stated that May had "unlimited potential," even after the disclosure of his sexual orientation. May's fellow soldiers also testified in September at his administrative discharge hearing that his removal would hurt his unit's cohesion and morale. ▼

Judy Shepard to speak at UNCC

by Shane Windmeyer
Special to Q-Notes

HARRISBURG, NC — The Carolinas will be host to Judy Shepard, mother of slain college student Matthew Shepard, who will bring



Judy Shepherd, mother of slain college student Matthew Shepard, continues to champion anti-hate crimes legislation.

her crusade to the campus of UNC Charlotte on April 19 for a town hall meeting and a lecture entitled, "The Legacy of Matthew Shepard."

Matthew, who attended Catawba College in Salisbury, NC, before transferring to the University of Wyoming, was brutally attacked in

October of 1998. The Shepards discovered later that their son was beaten because he was gay. Found hours later, Matthew lingered in a coma for several days before dying.

The tragedy galvanized millions of people and focused the nation's attention on the growing epidemic of hate crimes. Vigils were held across America. The Shepard family received tens of thousands of letters and emails of support.

In the aftermath of his death, the Shepard's started the Matthew Shepard Foundation (www.matthewsplace.com) to help carry on Matthew's legacy by embracing the just causes their son had championed. This includes working for gay and lesbian equality and helping to prevent hate crimes.

The Charlotte lecture is one of many Judy Shepard has given since the death of her son. It is her daily tribute to his life, she says. On May 11, 1999, Judy testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. In front of the committee, she delivered a powerful message to those who oppose hate crimes laws.

"I can assure opponents of this legislation firsthand, it was not words or thoughts, but violent actions that killed my son."

She appeared in two Human Rights Campaign public service television spots aimed at
See SHEPARD on page 17

The latest Q-Poll results

What effect do you think the election results will have on the GLBT community?

Things will get better: 23% Things will get worse: 38% Things will stay the same: 38%

To participate in our new Q-Poll, access www.q-notes.com