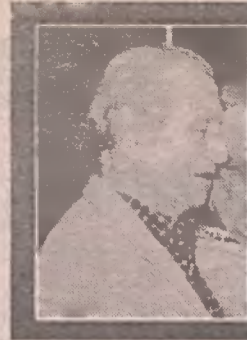


Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper



Stokely Bailey, PFLAG chapter founder, is among the honorees at the group's Fifteenth Anniversary Celebration. See story on page 13.

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Dr. Joycelyn Elders to speak at Charlotte area RAIN AIDS walk

by Elaine Rhodes
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLOTTE — Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former US Surgeon General, will speak at the fifth annual AIDS WALK for the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network (RAIN). The event is scheduled for Saturday, May 5 at the Great Aunt Stella Center, 926 Elizabeth Avenue, Charlotte. The WALK begins at 2:00 pm, RAIN or SHINE.

Dr. Elders is a deeply committed official in the fight against AIDS. During her tenure as US Surgeon General, she worked to bring more resources to persons affected by the disease. Upon her nomination, Dr. Elders stated, "I want to change the way we think about health by putting prevention first...I want to change concern about social problems that affect health into commitment."

Walkers register by bringing donations from 12:30-1:45 pm. RAIN invites participants to pack a picnic lunch and eat on the front lawn prior to the event. Judging at 1:00 for "Best Picnic Spread."



Dr. Joycelyn Elders

Prizes are available for top individual fundraiser and top team fundraiser, most creative team banner and most original individual umbrella. Walkers who raise a minimum of \$50 receive an AIDS walk T-shirt.

Executive Director Rev. Deborah C. Warren says, "Last year, support from corporations and over 300 walkers raised nearly \$50,000. This is our signature fundraiser, and we expect another great success this year." Since 1992, RAIN has provided over 71,000 hours of volunteer service, trained over 2100 individuals, provided CareTeams for almost 400 persons living with HIV/AIDS and provided prevention education to over 10,000 people in 11 counties of North and South Carolina.

Donations support CareTeams as well as RAIN's HIV/AIDS prevention education program. RAIN trains and supervises almost 80 Careteams who provide practical, emotional, and spiritual support to over 90 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Mecklenburg and 10 surrounding counties. Currently over 60 area congregations from 20 denominations are involved with RAIN.

For information on corporate sponsorships or to request a walker packet, call 372-7246 or e-mail ElaineatRAIN@aol.com. ▼



Chief of Police Reuben Greenberg

Charleston Police remove sexual history question from hiring exam

by Veronica Schwartz
Special to Q-Notes

CHARLESTON, SC — The Charleston Police Department has revised its hiring examination to no longer ask job applicants about their sexual practices. Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley announced the revision on March 14.

The Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA), a lowcountry GLBT rights group, recently learned that, as part of the police hiring process, job applicants had to pass a polygraph examination which included a question about whether they had participated in homosexual activity. The group believes the question was intended to prevent gay and lesbian applicants from being hired. AFFA President Linda Ketner approached

Mayor Riley to express concern about the question.

Riley said that after hearing Ketner's concerns, he discussed the issue with Chief of Police Reuben Greenberg, and the two agreed the question should be eliminated. Riley said he believes that the question is an invasion of privacy, adding, "I don't think a person's sexual orientation is relevant to their being a police officer."

The mayor also said the question has been a part of the department's hiring process for as long as anyone could remember.

According to AFFA, the mayor's office has agreed to work with the group to ensure that the city's non-discrimination policy protects gay and lesbian employees in all departments. ▼

Watchdog group reports military harassment continues Pentagon promises directive

by Steve Ralls
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC — Finding that "reports of death threats, assaults and verbal gay-bashing continue almost unabated," GLBT military watchdog Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) released *Conduct Unbecoming*, the group's Seventh Annual Report on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass," on March 15.

According to the report, total documented incidents of asking, pursuit and harassment declined slightly for the first time in the policy's seven years, though total reported violations remain higher than in the first five years SLDN tracked such incidents. Citing a total of 871 incidents of anti-gay harassment, SLDN again called on the Pentagon to issue its promised orders to the services to revise service regulations and training to curb harassment.

The group urged Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to implement a thirteen-point Anti-Harassment Action Plan published by a Department of Defense Working Group in July 2000. The Pentagon adopted the plan's recommendations, but has failed to implement them. The plan included, among other things, increased rank-appropriate training for all military personnel.

The Pentagon developed the Anti-Harassment Action Plan in the wake of its own Inspector General's survey of 75,000 service members. That survey found that 80 percent of men and women in uniform had heard derogatory, anti-gay remarks during the past year. Of those, 37 percent said they had witnessed or experienced targeted incidents of anti-gay harassment. The Pentagon conducted the Inspector General survey to gauge the level of anti-gay harassment servicewide in the wake of the murder of Pfc. Barry Winchell at Fort Campbell, and SLDN's annual reports citing escalating incidents of anti-gay harassment.

"The Pentagon's failure to move aggressively to implement the Action Plan is inexcusable," said SLDN Executive Director C. Dixon Osburn. "The Pentagon itself has said anti-gay harassment undermines good order, discipline and morale. By toler-

ating continued harassment, ridicule and assault of men and women in uniform, the Pentagon is working against what it knows to be in the best interest of our armed forces."

Pentagon spokesperson Adm. Craig Quigley, responding to the report, stated that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is committed to issuing a Pentagon Directive and Instruction on anti-gay harassment, according to a March 15 story in *The New York Times*. Admiral Quigley's statement marks the first public comment relating to gays in the military by anyone in the Bush Administration.

"We welcome Adm. Quigley's comments that the Pentagon remains committed to curbing anti-gay harassment," said Osburn. "The questions remain, 'When will the Pentagon release the new orders?' and 'What are the specifics of those orders?'"

Osburn added, "The question is whether the Bush Administration will do what the Clinton Administration failed to do and enforce 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass' with fairness and compassion. Today is the first day

• Pentagon and services hold few leaders accountable.

In the first six years, military leaders did not officially hold anyone accountable for asking, pursuing or harassing. This past year, SLDN documented increased accountability. Specifically, action was taken against three commanders for improper conduct. Gen. Clark at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, was denied his third star for his conduct in addressing the anti-gay harassment scandal surrounding the murder of Pfc. Winchell; Capt. Brady at Fort Campbell was disciplined by the new commanding general at the base for calling a gay soldier a "pole smoker" in front of his subordinate leaders; and the Marine Corps reprimanded Lt. Col. Melton at Twenty-Nine Palms, CA, for disseminating an anti-gay email to his subordinates.

• Women disproportionately affected. Women continue to be accused of being lesbians for retaliatory reasons, regardless of their actual sexual orientation. Women represent 24 percent of SLDN's cases, though they comprise only 14 percent of the active forces. Women have historically been discharged at twice the rate of their numbers in the military.

• Services implement inconsistent training.

The report noted that the Army is almost exclusively responsible

"By tolerating continued harassment, ridicule and assault of men and women in uniform, the Pentagon is working against what it knows to be in the best interest of our armed forces."

for the new Administration to demonstrate its resolve."

Among the report's findings:

• Pentagon fails to protect those reporting harassment.

The Pentagon's anti-harassment training fails to make clear that service members should be able to report harassment to Inspectors General, law-enforcement officers, equal opportunity representatives, healthcare providers and others without fear of reprisal:

• Doctors and psychologists told to out gay service members.

Psychologists report they continue to be instructed to turn in gay, lesbian and bisexual military members who seek their help, despite promises by the Pentagon since 1998 to correct that practice. Officials have knowingly permitted erroneous instructions to circulate in the field that tell psychologists and doctors to out gay service members, including in new Army training on the policy.

for the small decline in anti-gay harassment. The Army, better than any other service, trained soldiers on preventing harassment and on upholding the policy's investigative limits. Navy and Marine Corps training was not as effective in reducing some violations — anti-gay harassment actually climbed in the Navy, which leads all services in reported incidents of anti-gay harassment. Air Force training, the report found, is limited to online, self-directed training which service members report has not been successful.

SLDN contends that the Pentagon's anti-gay policy undermines national security. The report argues that "forcing gay, lesbian and bisexual service members to hide, lie, evade and deceive breaks the bonds of trust among service members essential to unit cohesion, and forcing commanders to discharge valued members of their team impairs mission readiness."

Conduct Unbecoming: The Seventh Annual Report on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue, Don't Harass" is available online at www.sldn.org. ▼

The latest Q-Poll results

In the Carolinas, where is your favorite place to go for a few days of fun?
Metropolitan areas - 31% Mountains - 13% Myrtle Beach - 18%
Charleston - 31% Other - 6%

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