

News notes: sc

from the palmetto state

by Ed Madden

USC elects gay student body president

COLUMBIA — The University of South Carolina elected its first openly gay student government president on Feb. 24, when students voted Zachery Scott into office with an overwhelming 57 percent of the vote. Though there were three candidates in the race, Scott's strong win allowed him to avoid a run-off election.



Zachery Scott

A junior political science major, Scott currently serves as USC student government vice president. When he was elected to the office last year, he became the first openly gay student government official at USC. (The honor of being the first openly gay candidate goes to former USC BGLA president Angela Wilson.)

Charleston attorney attacks lesbian custody

CHARLESTON — A custody case in the Charleston area has the potential to affect the gay and lesbian community of South Carolina.

A lesbian couple of five years went to court after their son reported he had been sexually abused. The son's biological father knew of and supported the relationship, until he was accused of sexual abuse. He has hired attorney Dusty Rhoades, who used his time in court to totally denigrate LGBT couples, according to the Alliance for Full Acceptance of Charleston. The case ended in a hung jury and is under appeal.

Rhodes has pledged to take the case all the way to the Supreme Court to make sure that no gay or lesbian parent ever has the legal right to raise a child. In the current climate (with anti-adoption bills proposed in the S.C. Senate and federal courts denying adoption rights to gay and lesbian couples), this case could affect the community for years to come.
Info: info@affa-sc.org.

State coalition hires lobbyist

COLUMBIA — The SC Equality Coalition, an alliance of GLBT and AIDS-service organizations and allies, has hired Laddie Howard as a lobbyist for the current legislative session.

In an email to the delegates, the SCEC chair Johanna Haynes explained that the current legislative climate made the hire urgent. Howard is working with state organizations and activists to coordinate responses to pending anti-gay legislation. If you would like to contribute to this important work, email SCEC at chair@scequality.org.

Gays and lesbians of color coalition forming

COLUMBIA — It is time for some Palmetto Umoja. Palmetto Umoja is a new group designed to defeat the stereotype that the fight for orientation equality is just a "white issue." The group will focus on topics important to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people of color. The group's first goal is to form a committee to write a letter to the S.C. Legislative Black Caucus to let them know they should be a voice for gays and lesbians of color as well as the heterosexual African-American community. Umoja is the Swahili word for "unity."
Info: CharleKenghis@aol.com

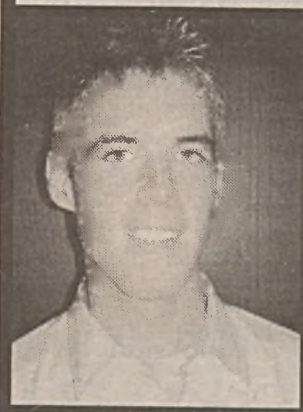
SCGLPM revising wedding resource guide

COLUMBIA — At the statewide bridal show in Columbia, the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement distributed almost 100 copies of a "Wedding Resource Guide for Same-Sex Couples." It includes ministers, florists, caterers, photographers, limo services, travel agencies, and other businesses willing to work with same-sex weddings.

Deciding to include wedding resources in the Community Center resource guide, SCGLPM has now put together a separate guide for couples. At a time of celebration, one doesn't want to worry about whether or not one's caterer will have a problem putting two grooms or two brides on the cake. SCGLPM would be interested in knowing of florists, bakers, caterers, ministers, musicians, etc., who are happy to work with gay or lesbian weddings or provide services important to gay or lesbian couples making a commitment to one another. Listings in the guide are free. Display advertising is also available.
Info: SCGLPM
803-771-7713 or SCPrideCenter@aol.com



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