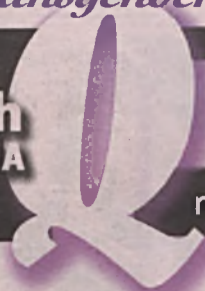


north  
& south  
CAROLINA



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A queer Thanksgiving

## One year and counting: Will S.C. turn its back on gay and lesbian citizens over marriage amendment?

Vote set for Nov. 7, 2006, will decide whether or not the state becomes one of the next to ban gay marriages

by Donald Miller

COLUMBIA, S.C. — On Nov. 7, 2006, South Carolina voters will go to the polls to decide the future of gay and lesbian equality when they give an up or down vote to HB3133. The amendment to the state constitution will not only ban same-sex marriage, it will refuse recognition of civil unions and domestic partnerships, whether entered into in this or any other state or country.

Organizers in the effort to squash equality for LGBT families declared victory this past March when members of the S.C. Senate, led by Sen. John D. Hawkins (R-Spartanburg), pushed HB3133 through a subcommittee chaired by Sen. Robert Ford (D-Charleston).

Hawkins and his colleagues called for a vote to take HB3133 out of Ford's subcommittee, and it passed. The Senate was prepared to vote on HB3133 — a bill that would change the state constitution and enshrine LGBT people as second-class citizens — with no public hearings at all.

Through the efforts of Senate President Pro

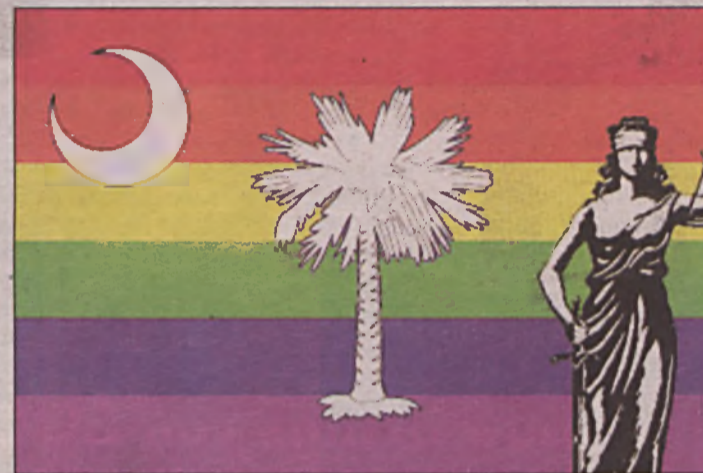
Tem Glenn McConnell (R-Charleston), the LGBT community was granted two hours of public testimony. Despite their best efforts, 37 senators voted in favor of a bill described by McConnell as "unconstitutional." Sen. Ford cast the only dissenting vote. However, nine senators abstained.

With a year to go before the big showdown, activists in S.C.'s LGBT community are working hard to educate voters across the state.

Volunteers with South Carolina Equality Coalition (SCEC) recently staged a political outreach through a booth at the South Carolina State Fair.

"When we talked to South Carolina voters at the fair," SCEC volunteer and South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement (SCGLPM) President Ed Madden explained, "we found that most were unaware of the full text and full impact of the amendment."

"The amendment denies gays and les-



Activists in S.C.'s LGBT community are working hard to educate voters across the state.

bians and their children not just access to marriage but to any basic legal protections," explains SCEC co-chair Michael Drennan.

Of the 1,406 surveys completed at the state fair booth, 925 people said that they would vote against the amendment, 53 they supported civil unions for same-sex couples and would vote against the amendment, and 63 said they were unsure but likely to vote against the amendment. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed — 1041 voters

see S.C. on 21

## While the world moves on, hurricane victims still struggling

Carolina lesbians volunteer to help victims in storm ravaged areas

by David Moore  
Q-Notes staff

NEW ORLEANS, La. — It's been over a month since New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Although the world has moved on, hundreds of thousands of residents remain displaced, unemployed and still unable to return to their home — if in fact there is a home to return to.

The statistics following the disaster are grim: more than 1,050 dead have been recovered so far, an estimated one million are homeless and storm-related job losses for the area top 500,000.

In neighborhoods in New Orleans that were see DEAD on 13



One of many scenes of destruction in Pass Christian, Ms.

## Notes from a gay soldier

Editor's Note: These are the thoughts of a gay soldier — a North Carolina native — who has been deployed to Iraq. Because of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, he must remain anonymous.

I mentioned in my last correspondence about being mobilized with my military unit. We're going through that intensive training I talked about and we'll soon be shipping out of the States for Kuwait and then Iraq to a camp just north of Baghdad.

I rarely have a chance to be alone these days — so it's hard to be alone with my thoughts.



There are so many racing through my head right now as I think about leaving my partner and so many friends behind.

I guess this experience — being uprooted from my daily life, facing deployment and possible

combat situations, has made me seriously think about life, the people I care about and things that are important.

Over the past few days I've been poked with so many needles I'm starting to feel like a pin cushion. You get so many immunizations when you are leaving the country. It's great because it protects you from some of the diseases you can get in Third World countries. It gets see NOTES on 18