

Q-Notes

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ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Issue Date	Deadline
January 23	Mon., Jan. 11
February 6	Mon., Jan. 25
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You may be smiling now, but...

- ...Republicans have not gone away
- ...in spite of the rumors, the AIDS crisis is not over
- ...same-sex marriage is still illegal
- ...gold lamé still has not come back into fashion
- ...Congress doesn't like us



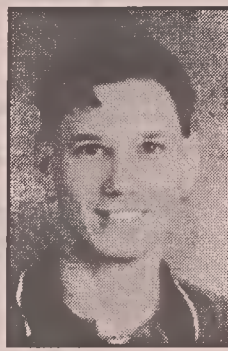
- ...Ellen's out and Will doesn't date
- ...gay hate crimes are on the rise
- ...a gay couple cannot adopt you
- ...stereotypes persist
- ...we still need a gay sports hero
- ...the Pope is still Catholic
- ...and gays continue to fight among themselves.

Are you listening to me?



editorial

10 Great Events of '98



sexual orientation and the potential for discrimination and violence it portends.

Voters reject the Gang of Five. The political landscape changed overnight when Mecklenburg County voters dumped right-wing extremists (with the lone exception of Bill James) in favor of moderates who support arts funding and diversity.

McVeigh sinks the Navy. Chief Petty Of-

Reaction to Matthew Shepard's death. The outrage, media response and coast-to-coast memorials that followed the brutal beating death of University of Wyoming student Shepard proved that Americans have advanced in their understanding of

ficer Timothy R. McVeigh was discharged from the Navy after they illegally secured his private user profile from Internet provider America OnLine to prove that he is gay. A federal judge ruled that the Navy blatantly violated "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" guidelines and ordered the sailor reinstated. McVeigh subsequently retired with full benefits.

Georgia sodomy law overturned. In 1986, Georgia Attorney General Mike Bowers successfully defended his state's sodomy law before the US Supreme Court, severely wounding the gay rights movement in the process. In 1998, Georgia's State Supreme Court found the statute to be unconstitutional in a 6 - 1 vote. For good measure, Maryland and Rhode Island also removed their sodomy laws in '98.

Judge Ray Warren comes out. This event generated a ton of media interest and provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss a number of complex issues such as coming out in middle age and the place for gays within the NC Republican party.

Lesbian takes the Hill. In November, Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin became the first openly-gay, non-incumbent candidate ever elected to Congress. Baldwin broke through a barrier by proving that voters will support a qualified, out candidate.

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letters

Up in smoke

I am writing to you from the "underground," as one of millions who are disenfranchised by the current sociopolitical climate in the United States. Although I am not behind bars, I am a political prisoner in my own country, as my private behavior is dictated by laws which I did not participate in creating, and I am governed by officials who were elected in a political process fueled by money and handshakes. My direct democracy is limited to voting on irrelevant local ordinance propositions, and my ideas are not reflected in most corporate-owned media sources. I am grateful for the First Amendment rights I have and I am morally compelled to exercise them, struggling against apathy, cynicism and nihilism.

Federal legislators recently subverted democracy by refusing to tally the election results on Initiative 59, after nearly 70 percent of Washington DC voters decided to allow medical marijuana in their district. By appealing to a constitutionally specious law which forbids them to spend any money on relaxing marijuana policy, our legislators are playing politics while cancer, AIDS, glaucoma and spinal cord-

injury patients are suffering. They refer to legalistic obligations, but the past decades have demonstrated that some officials are willing to break the law when it serves their economic and political interests.

If conservative Republicans want to "get government off our backs," they could start by hopping off the back of the quadriplegic spinal cord-injury patient I provided personal care to. I personally witnessed the benefits of medical marijuana on this Vietnam veteran. He experienced painful spasms from retracted tendons and atrophied muscles, but after using marijuana the spasms completely subsided for the remainder of his physical therapy. It does not serve the cause of justice to deny relief to the sick, or to deny voters the right to democratic due process. When will our government prioritize compassion and democracy over paternalistic control and arbitrary morality?

— Christopher Jon Largent
Denton, TX

Bench review

Your interview with Judge Warren is one of the most thoughtful and inspiring pieces I have read in any publication in a long time. Thank you for the way you handled the interview.

I have personally been out for a very long time.
See LETTERS on page 14

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