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## Jennings to keynote Journey party

by Brian M. Myer  
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—On March 4, Journey, an organization focused on the spiritual and educational issues of GLBT youth, will sponsor its second I.C.E. Party to acknowledge its benefactors and raise awareness of the group's work.

I.C.E. (Inform, Contribute and Embrace) originated a few months ago as an introductory gathering for Journey. The evening consisted of food, fellowship and the premiere of Journey's promotional video. Approximately 30 people attended.

This second I.C.E. Party, which will be held at the Afro-American Cultural Center from 6:30-8:00pm, has even loftier goals than did the start-up event. "This one, in particular, is to really empower our youth and to learn new techniques to empower others," said Journey's Executive Director Kim Honeycutt. "We also want to celebrate the individuals who made financial contributions to Journey in the past. They believed in us when Journey was simply an idea. Today we have programs running; we've given assistance to youth in college — back then it was just me going from person to person telling them I had an idea."

The keynote address at the upcoming gala will be delivered by honorary Journey board member Kevin Jennings. A native North Carolinian (Winston-Salem), Harvard graduate and author of three books (including *Telling Tales Out of School: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People*

*Remember Their School Years* — from which he will read and sign copies), Jennings is best known as the founder and executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). Because of his groundbreaking work with GLSEN, which focuses on GLBT issues within the public school system, Jennings was named one of the "Top 100 Newsmakers and Earthshakers" by *Out* magazine as well as one of the "100 People to Watch in the New Century" by *Newsweek*.

Also scheduled to speak is Connie Vetter, an attorney with The Southern Center for Law and Justice. "[Connie] will be speaking about her personal experiences with Journey," Honeycutt noted. "She also recognizes the importance of spirituality and understands what happens when you leave that part out of your life."

Wes Liles, a Journey participant who received a car from the group, will discuss how the organization — and its contributions — have positively affected his life.

Admission to the I.C.E. Party is a \$25 donation. Afterward, attendees can stay for a special reception with the evening's speakers for an additional \$50 donation. Beer, wine and heavy hors d'oeuvres (choice cuts of meat provided by Hormel) will be served.

For more information on the I.C.E. Party or to inquire about general volunteer opportunities with Journey, call (704) 531-6900 or e-mail [Journey@makingapath.org](mailto:Journey@makingapath.org). ▼



Photo: Jim Yarbrough

Approximately 100 panels from the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt will be displayed February 26-27 in UNC-Charlotte's Belk Gymnasium. The display will feature an opening and closing ceremony and new panels will be accepted for inclusion. For more information, see page 30 of this issue.

## Legislative sessions begin with record number of GLBT bills

by Tracey Conaty  
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) has released its first summary of state legislative activity for the 1999 legislative session and reports that this is the busiest start ever with respect to gay- and AIDS-related bills.

In 26 states, 111 such measures have been introduced. Like in the previous three years, the right wing has taken aim at GLBT couples. At the same time, there is greater momentum for hate crimes legislation than in years past.

Legislative attacks on GLBT families became pervasive after the first anti-marriage bills were introduced in 1995. Since then, anti-marriage measures have become law in 30 states. There are currently anti-marriage bills under consideration in nine more states. There are efforts in nine states to prevent GLBT people from becoming adoptive or foster parents. Most of these measures are legislative, though in two states they are proposed state regulatory policies.

In addition to battling hostile bills throughout the country, activists in 12 states are working to pass hate crimes bills. The highly publicized killing of Matthew Shepard has spurred greater support for hate crimes legislation.

### Hate Crimes

**Favorable.** Thirteen hate crimes bills have been introduced in 12 states. In seven states, bills have been introduced to add sexual orientation to existing hate crimes statutes (CO, MS, NY, VA, OK, ID, MT). The New York Assembly recently passed its bill; it is now under consideration in the Senate, where the bill has stalled during previous attempts at passage. In Texas, a measure has been proposed to strengthen the state's existing statute by enumerating groups that would be covered under the law. The law as it is written is currently too vague to be enforced effectively. Bills in Indiana and South Carolina would establish first-time hate crimes laws in those states. California's legislature is again considering a bill to equalize penalties for anti-gay hate crimes with penalties for hate crimes committed against other groups. Other states likely to see hate crimes legislation this year include Michigan and Hawaii.

**Unfavorable.** One Montana senator, having decided that there are too many laws on the books in that state, has vowed to repeal many of the state's existing laws. The first on his list is the hate crimes law which currently excludes

sexual orientation.

### Civil Rights

**Favorable.** Measures promoting GLBT equality at work and within communities have been introduced in four states (CA, DE, NY, WV). California Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa has re-introduced a bill to add sexual orientation to the Fair Employment and Housing Act which would strengthen the state's employment and housing non-discrimination policies. Activists in Delaware have re-introduced a bill prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation. New York's bill would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodations and credit. Organizers in West Virginia have introduced two bills that collectively would ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the areas of housing and employment. Maryland Governor Parris Glendening has also publicly vowed to push for inclusion of sexual orientation in the state's civil rights law if a bill is introduced.

**Unfavorable.** Bills seeking to deny equal rights to GLBT people have been proposed in four states (MS, NE, OR, SC). An employment non-discrimination measure in the Nebraska legislature would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, a homophobic provision known as the "Boys Town Clause" exempts employers who "engage in or are responsible for the care and education of children less than 18 years of age in a residential facility."

Last December, in *Tanner v. OHSU*, an Oregon appeals court ruled that the state constitution mandates that all government employees be eligible to receive domestic partnership benefits. The ruling also determined that Oregon's constitution prohibits private and public employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Right-wing groups are now challenging this ruling by attempting to pressure the state legislature to pass a series of anti-GLBT referenda to appear on the November ballot. One such measure pertaining to GLBT civil rights, HJR 6, would require majority approval through referendum of any state or local measures banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. Another Oregon bill would establish a zero tolerance policy for discrimination in public employment against various groups, but excludes sexual orientation and  
See SESSIONS on page 8

## National group stresses need for United Airlines boycott

by Kim I. Mills  
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest GLBT advocacy organization, is reiterating its support for a boycott of United Airlines organized by a San Francisco-based group, Equal Benefits Advocates. According to group representatives, HRC supports the boycott for two primary reasons: United's leading and unique role in filing a lawsuit that seeks to deny gay and lesbian employees bereavement leave and family travel benefits and the fact that the airline finds itself on the same side of the issue as Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) which is seeking to undermine San Francisco's equal benefits ordinance.

"First, United is the only commercial airline to challenge an April 1998 court ruling that said airlines would have to provide bereavement leave and equal travel benefits to San Francisco employees," said HRC Communications Director David M. Smith.

"Second, United, which claims to be gay-friendly, has found itself on the same side as one of the most notoriously anti-gay groups in the country."

United's main argument against this boycott has been that it is fighting the San Francisco law not because it objects to domestic partner benefits, but because it objects to local government attempts to regulate a federally regulated industry.

"Unfortunately, United's credibility vanishes when its recent actions are considered. On January 14, United Airlines agreed to comply with a Los Angeles law imposing a minimum 'living wage' for workers," said Smith. "That means

that people who work for United subcontractors at Los Angeles International Airport and do not get benefits will be paid at least \$8.50 per hour and those with benefits will get at least \$7.50. Meanwhile in San Francisco, United continues to fight to ensure that benefits inequities for gay employees remain intact."

In a January 16 *San Francisco Chronicle* article, United further undermined its claim that the lawsuit is only about business and not upholding discriminatory policies when airline spokesman Matt Triaca said, "The two issues of the living wage and domestic partners are totally separate in United's eyes. These ordinances affect different employee groups."

San Francisco Supervisor Leslie Katz put United's policy, as articulated by Triaca, in perspective for the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "United is saying that paying higher wages in Los Angeles is reasonable, but giving benefits to gay and lesbian couples in San Francisco is not."

In November 1996, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a law that requires companies doing business with the city to provide the same benefits to workers with domestic partners as they give to married employees. The law went into effect in June 1997. United joined the Air Transport Association, an industry group representing the nation's major airlines, in a lawsuit seeking to ban San Francisco from forcing it to comply with the ordinance since most airlines contend that they only have to follow federal government mandates.

In April 1998, US District Judge Claudia Wilken ruled that San Francisco could not require the airlines to provide health and pension benefits to workers with domestic partners. See BOYCOTT on page 8

**"United finds itself on the same side of the issue as Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)."**