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Coretta Scott King to attend Creating Change

by David Elliot
Special to Q-Notes

ATLANTA, GA — Civil rights giant Coretta Scott King has been confirmed to appear at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) 13th annual Creating Change Conference, scheduled for November 9-13 in downtown Atlanta.

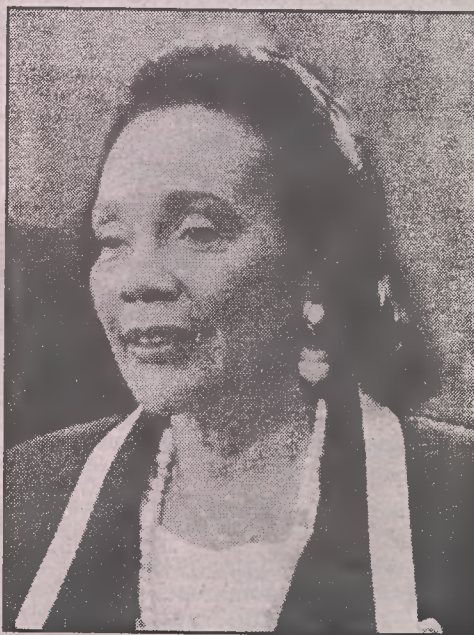
King will appear at Creating Change on November 10, at a plenary that will focus on organizing in the South and the connections of race, class, gender and sexual orientation with community organizing. The plenary, entitled "Southern Cookin': Stirrin' Up Change in the South and the Nation," will feature stories, vignettes and song with Southerners on New Ground (SONG). Presenters include Pam McMichael and Kim Diehl, co-directors of SONG.

"Coretta Scott King was an early pioneer in the fight for justice for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people," said NGLTF Executive Director Elizabeth Toledo.

"She has articulated a vision for the progressive movement that links issues such as civil rights for people of color, justice for the GLBT community, rights for the disabled community, equality for women and workplace equality. Atlanta is both the cradle and the crossroads of the civil rights movement in our country, and we are honored that Mrs. King will be joining us for this historic conference," Toledo added.

During the conference, attendees will have the opportunity to join Mrs. King in a procession of respect honoring her late husband, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The procession will travel from the conference hotel — the Westin Peachtree Plaza — to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

This year's Creating Change will kick off just two days after the November 2000 elections.



Coretta Scott King

An opening plenary the evening of November 9 will examine the November elections, and what the future holds for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community. Another plenary will focus on ageism within the GLBT movement and community and will feature activists who span several generations.

A Sunday morning plenary will feature Dr. Manning Marable, professor of history and political science and the founding director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University.

In addition to the plenaries and hundreds of workshops, a series of pre-conference institutes will be held during the day on Thursday, November 9. These institutes will examine such topics as people of color organizing, youth organizing, building community centers, philanthropy and social change, sex and gender liberation, anti-racism organizing and aging.

The conference concludes with the Body Politic Workout, back for its second year, which will offer a day-long intensive skills-building sessions in such areas as fundraising, leadership development, grassroots organizing, operational planning and governmental relations. ▼

House-Senate conferees strip hate crimes bill despite broad support

by David Elliot
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC — Despite strong support from the public and affirmative votes by both the US House and Senate, on October 5 members of a House-Senate conference committee stripped hate crimes legislation from a Department of Defense authorization bill.

The action constitutes a major setback for passage of a hate crimes bill including sexual orientation, but a broad coalition of anti-violence groups vowed to continue fighting for the legislation until Congress' expected adjournment later this month.

Activists say the GOP leadership's actions show they are determined to kill the legislation even if it means Republicans will be hurt on Election Day. Polls show overwhelming support for hate crimes legislation among the American public.

"The conservative leadership that refused to allow this legislation to become law has sent a message of callous indifference to our country," said Elizabeth Toledo, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). "In less than five weeks we will go to the polls to elect a new House and a new Senate. We in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community will have our own message to send come Election Day."

"The morally reprehensible action by the GOP leadership sends the wrong message to the country and will have ramifications for fair-minded Republicans who supported bipartisan hate crime legislation," said Winnie Stachelberg, political director for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). "The recent murder in Roanoke illustrates once again the need for our leaders to seriously tackle the problem of

hate violence. [See related story on page 5.] But we have a GOP leadership that has instead turned its back on hate crime victims and their families and acted against the wishes of the House, the Senate and an overwhelming majority of the American people. This is not only bad policy, it is bad politics, and their irresponsible actions may cost the party in November."

In a recent poll, 66 percent of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who opposed hate crimes legislation, including 54 percent of Republican respondents.

The removal of the hate crimes rider came despite Virginia Sen. John Warner's pledge to reconsider his position on hate crimes legislation in light of the Roanoke incident. As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Warner was a key member of the House-Senate conference committee.

The committee's decision to oppose hate crimes legislation also flies in the face of strong support from both chambers. Last summer, the Senate voted 57-42 to add the legislation to the Department of Defense authorization bill. Although the House did not add the amendment to its version of the bill, it voted 232-192 for a nonbinding resolution instructing House conferees to leave the legislation intact.

"Not only did the conservative leadership of the House and Senate ignore the will of the public, it ignored the will of a majority of Representatives and Senators," Toledo said. "We look forward to the day when our political leaders have the fortitude to do what's right for our country."

It now appears that the only way hate crime legislation can become law this year is if it is made part of the final budget negotiations between the House, Senate and White House. ▼

John Paulk dismissed from Exodus International board position

"Ex-gay" leader lied about trek to gay bar

by Wayne Besen
Special to Q-Notes

SEATTLE, WA — Exodus International, the worldwide umbrella group for "ex-gay" ministries, removed John Paulk from his position as Chairman of the Board after leaders determined that he misled them about a recent, well-publicized trip to a Washington, DC, gay bar.

The board of directors for Exodus voted October 3 to remove Paulk as chairman. According to an Exodus press release, he will remain on the board on probationary status, but cannot vote or attend meetings.

Paulk's troubles began on September 19 after he was discovered in a gay bar by three HRC staffers. Paulk originally claimed that he did not know the establishment was gay and had stopped by to "use the bathroom." However, the story seemed suspect to witnesses who said Paulk was in the bar for nearly an hour.

"That statement was widely doubted by both other Exodus leaders and by the gay community," said Exodus Director Bob Davies. "John's unwillingness to tell the truth from the beginning was most unfortunate, as it has further undermined his public credibility." Paulk

later admitted to Exodus leaders that he knew Mr. P's was a gay bar before he went in.

According to an October 5 article in the *Gazette*, a Colorado Springs-based newspaper, Paulk's dismissal from Exodus leadership also puts in jeopardy his position as head of Focus on the Family's Homosexuality and Gender Public Policy Department.

Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy for Focus on the Family, said the Exodus board's action was appropriate. Asked if Paulk would still run FOF's "Love Won Out" program — an anti-gay traveling road show that highlights Paulk's testimony of "change" and argues against GLBT rights — Minnery responded, "I believe John eventually will be leading the Love Won Out ministry again," insinuating that Paulk is not currently in charge of the program, although he remains on the group's staff.

Paulk first made headlines in 1998 when he and his wife — self-described "ex-lesbian" Anne — appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*. The Paulks were prominently featured that same year in a half-million dollar right-wing newspaper ad campaign that appeared in major dailies such as the *New York Times* and *USA Today*. The couple also appeared on popular shows like *60 Minutes* and *Oprah*, and Paulk is the author See PAULK on page 19

Winston-Salem United Way drops dispute with Scouts amid backlash

by Veronica Schwartz
Special to Q-Notes

WINSTON-SALEM — Under pressure from a conservative GOP alderman, the United Way of Forsyth County is reinstating its financial support of the Boy Scouts of America and repealing a sexual orientation clause recently added to its member agency agreement.

According to a press release from Winston-Salem Alderman Vernon Robinson, the United Way "grossly overstepped their mandate [and] abused the sensibilities of the community" when they moved to cut the Scout's funding.

In August, following a controversial US Supreme Court ruling affirming the Boy Scouts' right to exclude gays from participation, the United Way of Forsyth County amended its member agency agreement to withdraw support from groups that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Staffers, whom Robinson labeled "fringe elements of the homosexual lobby," used the new wording to cut \$429,000 in United Way support from the Old Hickory Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

When the story broke that the United Way

was planning to pull funding from the Boy Scouts, Robinson announced plans to introduce a resolution excluding the United Way campaign from being conducted on City premises. In addition, the resolution would stop payroll deductions to the United Way unless the agency continued its funding. Robinson claimed that the United Way was being manipulated by "the

homosexual lobby, the North American Man-Boy Love Association and the American Civil Liberties Union" to wage a public war on scouting.

According to Local Scout Executive Hal Murray, several large employers phoned to express their support for Robinson's resolution and promised to

discontinue participation in the United Way campaign if its "persecution of the Boy Scouts" continued.

Robinson expressed delight at the United Way's surrender. "This is nothing short of extraordinary. It is a total victory for the Winston-Salem Forsyth County community, the Boy Scouts of America, and this nation."

He also stated that the agency's turnaround was "the best birthday present" he could receive. Robinson turns 45 this month. ▼

The United Way "grossly overstepped their mandate [and] abused the sensibilities of the community" when they moved to cut the Scout's funding.