

Q Notes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper



Coming next issue!
**Tell Trinity:
 The Queen
 of Advice**

Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 15, Number 13 • November 11, 2000 • FREE

Wife of AOL chairman gives \$5.8 million to Florida school connected with fundamentalist church

Gay activist group bars AOL users as members

by Clay Ollis
 Q-Notes Staff

FT. LAUDERDALE, FL — Jean Case, wife of AOL founder and chief executive Steve Case, donated over \$8 million to Westminster Academy, the school where she graduated in 1978, according to an October 16 story in the Ft. Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel*.

The school sits adjacent to the campus of the ultra-right-wing Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and according to its web site, "It exists primarily to educate the children of Coral Ridge families." That news prompted the National Gay Lobby to urge all GLBT users of AOL to switch ISPs immediately, explaining that by paying for AOL service, subscribers are helping to subsidize the anti-gay programs AOL funds.

Coral Ridge Presbyterian is the church pastored by Rev. D. James Kennedy, who is well known for anti-gay positions on every issue. The church sponsors "Worthy Creations," an ex-gay ministry which claims to offer a way out of homosexuality for those desiring to change. Coral Ridge also runs the "Center for Reclaiming America," which in 1999 launched a national ad campaign thanking Sen. Trent Lott and pro football player Reggie White for publicly proclaiming their anti-gay views.

The Center for Reclaiming America joined eighteen other right-wing organizations, including the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition, to fund the "Truth In Love" ex-gay ad campaign, featuring Anne and John Paulk. Most recently, Coral Ridge Presbyterian led the opposition to a decision by the Ft. Lauderdale city council to cut funding to the Boy Scouts because of their discrimination against gays.

Jean Case defended her gift, saying the money was not coming from the Case Foundation, but from the Case's personal money, and that it was for scholarships to benefit underprivileged youth attending Jean Case's alma mater — it was not to benefit the church at all. She also stated she was opposed to discrimination and intolerance.

AOL does indeed have a non-discrimination policy and offers gay employees domestic partner benefits. But so do almost all tech companies: it's a requirement to be competitive.

According to research conducted for the story by Gay.com, only \$500,000 will be earmarked for scholarships, while over \$7 million will go toward building a new school building. Furthermore, Jean Case is president of the Case Foundation, while Steve Case is a member of the Board. And in 1998, the foundation itself gave \$100,000 to the McLean Bible Church, a similar fundamentalist congregation near the Case's home, which also is involved with ex-gay groups affiliated with Exodus International. McLean Bible Church's web site also has links to the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family.

On October 20, the National Gay Lobby (NGL, nationalgaylobby.org) board of directors responded to the news by adopting a resolution calling upon all GLBT and supportive America Online users to immediately switch service providers. The resolution also bars NGL from accepting new members who use AOL as their Internet Service Provider (ISP).

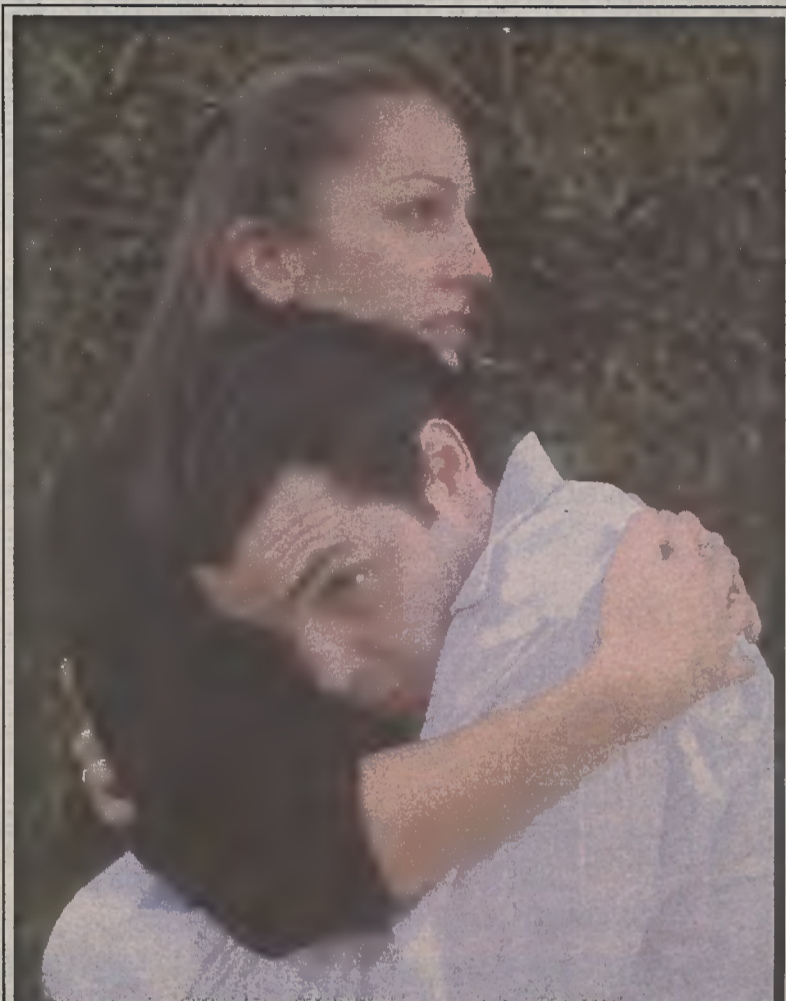
In presenting the resolution adopted yesterday to the NGL board, NGL Executive Director Michael Romanello explained why he believes the drastic action was called for.

"After a full year of this AOL nonsense, including what we all believe to be AOL's discriminatory enforce-

ment of its Terms of Service policy and other actions which negatively impact that company's gay and lesbian users, I have come to the conclusion that anyone who financially supports AOL is an enemy of our community, be they straight individuals, businesses, or organizations, or gay versions of the aforementioned," wrote Romanello in a message to the NGL board. "You cannot walk with the devil and remain sin free. Gay Internet users have got to understand that they cannot support AOL financially and think of themselves as being supportive of the gay equality movement. They are not, and it's time they are made to understand that."

According to NGL President Jayce Fortwangler, existing NGL members who use AOL as their ISP will be able to retain their NGL memberships. "As memberships come up for renewal, NGL members now using AOL will receive a letter explaining why they must switch ISPs in order to renew their NGL membership," said Fortwangler.

NationalGayLobby.Org is working now to provide current AOL users who wish to switch ISP with an acceptable alternative. "I placed calls yesterday to AOL competitor Earthlink/Mindspring's Vice President of Marketing Brinton Young and to E/M's Vice President of Brand Marketing Claudia Caplan to notify them of our pending announcement," said Romanello. "We are going to do our best to provide NGL members, and gay and lesbian Internet users in general, with an economical and advantageous deal if they switch from AOL to Earthlink/Mindspring." ▼



Italian American Reconciliation
 Huey Maximilian Bonfigliano (played by Robert Simmons) embraces Janice (played by Laurie Cipriani) in a scene from John Patrick Shanley's *Italian American Reconciliation*, directed by Michael Simmons.
 See page 19 for the whole story.

Memorial to gay Vets dedicated

PHOENIX, AZ — The Arizona Rainbow Veterans announced October 24 that the first memorial in a national cemetery to acknowledge the service of gays and lesbian in our nation's armed forces will be dedicated at a 7:00 am ceremony on Saturday, November 11, at the National Memorial Cemetery in Phoenix, Arizona. This represents a critical turning point in honoring gay and lesbian veterans, according to the group.

"This memorial pays tribute to those who have served their country and been willing to sacrifice everything," said Wally Straughn, a spokesperson for the Arizona group. "It is not only for those men and women who gave their lives, but also those who sacrificed their careers, their honor

and their dignity to serve in the military."

Straughn did note three specific incidents involving gay and lesbian service members in recent years: Two men who were killed when their barracks was bombed in Beirut; the murder of sailor Allen Schindler in Japan; and the murder in July 1999 of PFC Barry Winchell, a soldier at Fort Campbell, Kentucky who was attacked and killed by fellow service members who thought he was gay.

"This memorial is for them, and those who have served for a number of reasons," Straughn said. "Some come from a long line of service members and feel drawn by family honor; some have entered the military to escape poverty. This Memorial honors them all." ▼



Fall heats up activities in Wilmington

by Bo Dean
 Special to Q-Notes

WILMINGTON, NC — Notable changes in the climate in Wilmington have been less marked by the rash of hurricanes in recent years and more noted by the great numbers of powerful gay and lesbian activists making the scene with messages of hope and progress in this traditionally closed and conservative town.

Among these notables is the Reverend Doctor Mel White, who recently visited the University of North Carolina at Wilmington as one of the main speakers brought to the campus by the newly structured Office of Campus Diversity.

The formation of this office is evidence of major changes in and of itself. Formerly known as "Minority Affairs," the administration at UNCW saw a need to expand the parameters of the office beyond ethnicity and to include GLBT students among others. In a commendable fashion, the office began its programming with Dr. White's visit.

In keeping with the great work of Martin Luther King, Ghandi, and other spiritual leaders, firmly rooted in his own Christian faith, and reflecting his background as a closeted ghost writer for such conservative constructivists as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, Dr. White of

See FALL on page 26

The latest Q-Poll results

On which of the following nights are you more likely to go "out on the town?"

New Year's Eve - 48% Fourth of July - 13% Halloween - 39%

To participate in our new Q-Poll, access www.q-notes.com