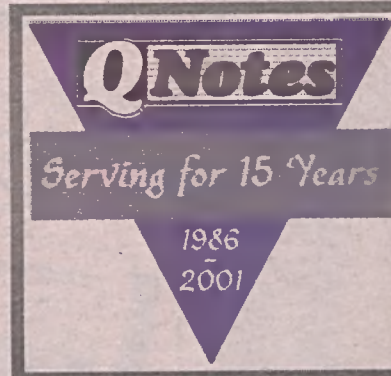


QNotes

The Carolinas' Most Comprehensive Gay & Lesbian Newspaper
www.q-notes.com



The story continues... more from our 15-year history inside. See page 3 for more details.

Published Every Two Weeks On Recycled Paper • Volume 16, Number 3 • June 23, 2001 • FREE



Melissa Ethridge among the most powerful gay women in show biz. See page 20 for the "scoop."

What's inside...

Funeral rocks Southern Baptist Convention page 20

Teachers demand GLBT student safety page 4

Hector Vargas joins Lambda Legal page 11

Military recruiting lags, gay firings increase page 12

See these and more news, editorials and features when you step inside!

Take the latest Q-Poll:

How often do you write your elected officials about GLBT issues?

- Never
- Once or twice in my life
- Less than once a year
- One to three times a year
- Regularly

To participate in our Q-Poll, access www.q-notes.com See our latest poll results on page 22.

HRC calls for nationwide boycott

ExxonMobil reversed former Mobil Oil's pro-gay policies

by Anabel Evora
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign is calling for a nationwide boycott of fuel-giant ExxonMobil Corporation because of the company's continued refusal to reinstate a written non-discrimination policy covering

officials have been met with resistance. As the largest corporation in the world, ExxonMobil should be a leader in fairness. Instead, it has become the leading proponent of stonewalling gay and lesbian employees, consumers and shareholders."

HRC is asking all fair-minded Americans to:

- Stop patronizing Exxon or Mobil gas stations and their On the Run convenience stores;
- Cut up their ExxonMobil gasoline credit cards and Mobil "Speedpasses" and send half to ExxonMobil and half to the Human Rights Campaign;
- Write or e-mail ExxonMobil, with a copy to HRC, expressing their displeasure with the company's treatment of gay and lesbian employees, customers and shareholders;
- Send to HRC one month's worth of receipts for gasoline purchased from companies with policies aimed at treating gay and lesbian employees more equally.

HRC is also asking people who already have ExxonMobil stock to keep it and pledge to vote next year in favor of an

executives closed Mobil's domestic partner benefits program to any additional employees.

Since then, HRC and its coalition partners have worked to reverse these actions, to no avail.

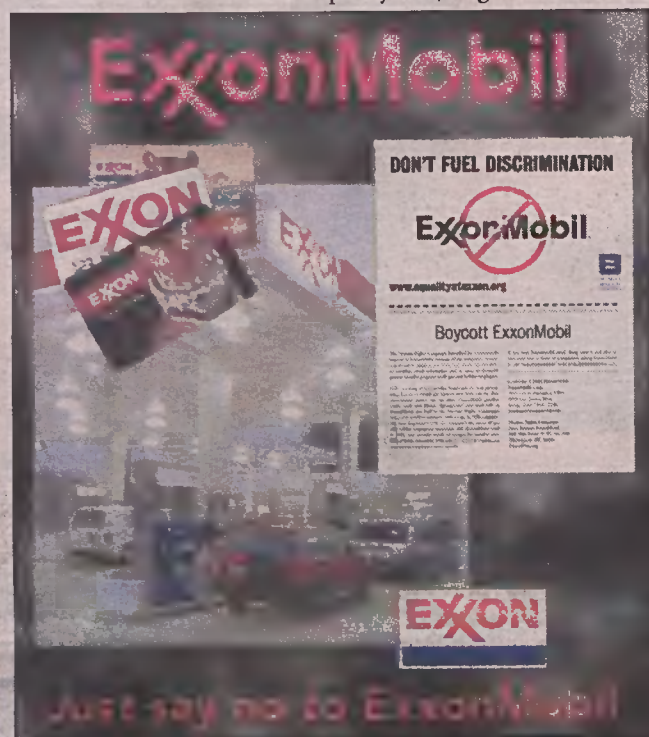
In 2001, HRC co-filed a shareholder resolution with the New York City Employees Retirement System, The Equality Project and several others asking ExxonMobil to reinstate a written policy barring discrimination based on sexual orientation. HRC Education Director Kim I. Mills attended the meeting May 30 and spoke in support of the resolution. The measure garnered 13 percent of the vote, a 75 percent increase over 2000 and the highest percentage of any shareholder resolution on the ballot.

At a news conference after a recent ExxonMobil shareholder meeting, Chief Executive Officer Lee R. Raymond was asked by a *Dallas Voice* reporter why the company doesn't actively reach out to gays and lesbians as it does to other minorities. "We don't want to know [who they are]," he replied. "That's the whole point of the policy."

"ExxonMobil is out of step with most other corporations, including many of its competitors," said Birch. "We are at a loss to explain why this company wants to risk losing valuable employees who want only access to equal benefits and a written assurance that they are valued and protected from unfair treatment."

ExxonMobil competitors Chevron, Sunoco, Atlantic Richfield, BP Amoco, Shell and Texaco explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation; BP Amoco, Chevron and Shell also offer domestic partner benefits.

A total of 76 of the Fortune 100 have written non-discrimination policies covering sexual orientation; more than 50 percent of the Fortune 500 — already have such policies. More than 3700 US employers offer domestic partner benefits, including 127 of the Fortune 500. ▼



sexual orientation and to open its domestic partner benefits program to all gay and lesbian employees.

"ExxonMobil has stubbornly refused to treat its gay and lesbian employees fairly and has exhibited unusually antagonistic behavior toward those who have asked the corporation to make reasonable changes," said HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. "A boycott may be a drastic action, but it is commensurate with the company's actions, which are unique in US business. Our efforts to work this out with company

executives have been met with resistance. As the largest corporation in the world, ExxonMobil should be a leader in fairness. Instead, it has become the leading proponent of stonewalling gay and lesbian employees, consumers and shareholders."

The Human Rights Campaign has launched a website, www.equalityatexxon.org, where consumers can get information on the boycott and obtain addresses for ExxonMobil executives.

In December 1999 when Exxon merged with Mobil, it became the first US employer ever to rescind a non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation. At the same time, ex-

Andrew Reyes: Without a trace

by Brian M. Myer
Q-Notes Staff

Gay-Latino businessperson, activist and political figure Andrew Reyes seems to have dropped from the face of the planet. Police in Charlotte-Mecklenburg are searching for the county's former Democratic Party chairperson who is believed to have disappeared on or around May 4 when he reportedly left Charlotte by car for Boston. Reyes was first reported missing on May 8, his 35th birthday.

Reportedly a San Antonio native, Reyes is a partner in the accounting firm Wilson, Reyes & Associates, associated with United Building Contractors and owner of Reyzdale Properties. Reyes has been an outspoken member of both the Latin and Gay Communities since relocating to Charlotte from California in the early 1990s. He developed the bilingual magazine *Impacto Latino*, served on the governor's Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs and has been honored on numerous occasions for his efforts to advance Latin causes.

It was the Gang of Five who helped spark Reyes' activism in the Gay Community. When public arts funding was cut, largely because of gay-themed productions, Reyes seized the opportunity to come out and make a bid for a seat on the County Commission — a bid he later dropped. But that was just the beginning.

A major contributor to the Democratic Party

(in 2000 alone, \$190,000 by some estimates), Reyes enjoyed the rewards of being a "diversity wunderkind." He was a guest at a White House state dinner for Czech President Vaclav Havel, attended a private birthday bash for out singer George Michael and his office is festooned with photographs of Reyes with everyone from the Clintons and Gores to Ellen and Anne (in happier days.) Reyes served as Mecklenburg Democratic Chair until he stepped down from the post at the April 21 convention this year. According to *The Charlotte Observer*, John Cotham, new Democratic Chair, says Reyes had made it clear he was not interested in serving another term, going so far as to decline a nomination from the floor.

Angeles Ortega, president of the Latin American Coalition, stated Reyes "definitely brought a new perspective of the Latin community, somebody who was connected nationally with the Democratic Party and somebody who had a lot of possibility." Jim Yarbrough, publisher of *Q-Notes*, echoes Ortega's sentiment in relation to the gay community: "Andrew has done a lot for the gay and lesbian Community, both in Charlotte and nationally. From sitting on boards and hosting fundraisers to bringing in top speakers for local fundraisers and educational events he has made a significant difference in our community. There are a great many people concerned about him and his whereabouts."



Andrew Reyes
Noted publisher and politician
has been reported missing.

So, where is Andrew Reyes?

Detective Mark Balmas reports the Char-Meck Police are running out of leads. "Right now it's still an open investigation," but Balmas reports speaking with Reyes' mother in Mexico several times and says she has not spoken with her son since early April. A co-worker reiterated that Reyes left to visit clients in New England and was expected to be gone for about two weeks. According to those clients, Reyes evidently never reached Boston. ▼