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PFLAG Chapter Forming in Aiken

AIKEN — On May 7, 13 people met at the Aiken Unitarian Universalist Church to discuss forming an Aiken PFLAG Chapter.

Interest was high and the group generated many suggestions for work in the Aiken area. The group has begun to review formal procedures for stating a new chapter. A chief concern is the need for a parent to step forward and to be willing to lead the chapter (the ideal model for chapter leadership). The next meeting is planned for 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 17, at the Aiken Unitarian Church (115 Gregg Ave).

United Methodists ban gay clergy

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The United Methodist Church, America's third-largest denomination announced May 4 that church law unambiguously says the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching" and a "chargeable offense" for Methodist ministers.

The Rev. Larry McCutcheon, superintendent for the Charleston, S.C., district of the church confirmed in an interview with

Post Courier and Staff that he felt certain his church would uphold the ban.

With 8.3 million members, the United Methodist Church is America's third-largest denomination, behind Catholics and Southern Baptists. It reports 250,000 members in South Carolina. The Charleston district reports 36,000 members in 80 churches.

State newspaper focuses on growing gay market

COLUMBIA — In an article titled "Advertisers aim straight for the gay market," the *State* newspaper explored the growing gay market of South Carolina, focusing on the GLPM "Wedding Resource Guide" (distributed during Marriage Equality Week) and the S.C. Gay and Lesbian Business Guild's business directory. "Whether a wedding cake is topped by two grooms, two brides or one of each," wrote Pat Berman, "and regardless of who throws the bouquet, or who wants the crystal and fine china — money will be spent." She also noted that Wachovia, The Adam's Mark Hotel and Orbitz, an online travel company, were among the companies sponsoring S.C. Pride Week events in Columbia.

Billboard Fundraiser nearing completion

AIKEN-AUGUSTA — The CSRA Rainbow Alliance and the Savannah River Site GLOBE (Gay Lesbian or Bisexual Employees) are partnering to put up an equal rights billboard in the Aiken-Augusta area, on Interstate 20 between Aiken and Augusta. They are applying for a matching

grant funding from the SC Equality Coalition. The community has answered the call for support, and about 60 percent of the funds needed have been raised! The billboard is expected to cost \$2,000 and will be up one to two months. The more money that is raised will mean that the billboard will be able to stay up for a longer period of time. If you would like more information about this project, please contact CSRA at 803-663-9375 or email csrara@aol.com. If you would like to make a donation, please send your check or money order, (made payable to CSRA Rainbow Alliance) to: CSRA Rainbow Alliance, P.O. Box 2, Vaucluse, SC 29850, or to SRS GLOBE (made payable to SRS GLOBE), c/o Jeff Krohn, 104 Dunbarton Cir., Aiken, SC 29803.

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