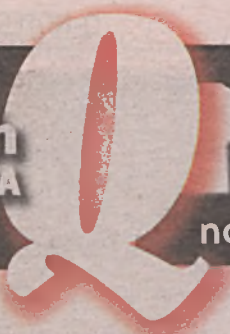


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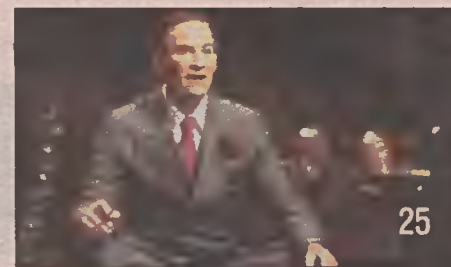
VOLUME 19 . ISSUE 4

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Kevin Kline talks about 'De-Lovely' in Q-Living



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## South Carolina boasts openly gay and lesbian police force

Richland County Sheriff's Department has 10 openly gay and lesbian officers — and the Sheriff is supportive

by David Moore  
Q-Notes staff

You don't hear much about openly gay cops in the Carolinas. Oh sure, they're pretty commonplace in places like San Francisco, New York and even Atlanta. But here?

The very thought of it brings to mind some long-forgotten episode of "Hill Street Blues" or "St. Elsewhere," in which an outed policeman is harassed by his co-workers in the locker room.

It's not like that anymore — at least not in Richland County, S.C. (Columbia, the state capitol, covers a large portion of the county.)

It's there — in the Richland County Sheriff's Department that you'll find a handful of brave women and men who decided that coming out was the right thing to do — despite the stigma that might follow an openly gay or lesbian law enforcement officer in a smaller southern town.

"I've been out for eight years now and I've not had a problem," says Sgt. Roxanne Meetze, a 10-year veteran of the force. "I feel very safe within our department."

Meetze points to her long-term partner Peggy as being a pivotal factor in her decision to be completely open.

"When we had squad cookouts, she would be there and over and over, she would

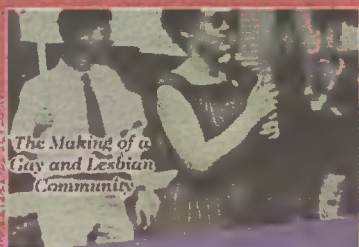


At S.C. gay pride: Sgt. Roxanne Meetze (left) and Deputy Patty Weed flank PFLAG's Harriett Hancock.

just always be there. I never made any effort to hide who she was and how important she was to me."

According to Meetze, it was around the time that she decided people should understand she was out and proud and sharing her life with a woman that Richland County elected their current Deputy Sheriff, Leon Lott.

see GAY on 12



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ONLINE Q.POLL  
www.q-notes.com

Would you feel safer if you knew your neighborhood law enforcement officer was gay or lesbian?

. Yes . No

Q.POLL RESULTS: 11

## MCC regional conference a time to heal

Mom and kids raise money to aid non-U.S. region member

by David Stout  
Q-Notes staff

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — When the Metropolitan Community Churches of Region 7 gather in Charlotte July 22-25 for their second conference following a difficult restructuring in 2002, organizers expect the mood to be conciliatory and upbeat. The tone will be a reflection of the fact that the rift from the denomination's



MCC founder Rev. Elder Troy Perry will speak at regional conference.

global reconfiguration is finally mending.

"It's very important to remember that all change can be painful for some and as such there is a component [to the conference] that will give people an opportunity to participate in their own healing," said Rev. Elder Gillian Storey, the director of Region 7. "We continue to move forward together as not just a united region but a united fellowship."

Healing often comes at a price and the cost to MCC was the loss of some member churches, including at least two in the Carolinas. Dissenting congregations were passionately opposed to the decision to scrap the existing Districts — which MCC leaders say were biased toward U.S. churches — in favor of Regions that group states and foreign territories together.

North Carolina and South Carolina are joined in Region 7 by Florida, Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay. Dissidents argued that the restructuring places an undue financial burden on congregations forced to send church leaders and lay delegates abroad.

While this predicament hasn't yet faced MCCs in the Carolinas — the first Region 7 biennial conference was held in St. Petersburg, Fla., just after the realignment — some members are mindful that the cost of participation cuts both ways

## Eric Rudolph trial moves forward

Man accused of blowing up Atlanta gay bar, Olympic Park and an Alabama abortion clinic to face prosecution

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A federal judge approved a plan June 22 to try serial bombing suspect Eric Rudolph in Birmingham but pick jurors from throughout northern Alabama, instead of just a three-county area around the state's largest city.

U.S. District Judge C. Lynnwood Smith, Jr. approved the joint proposal that had been agreed to by defense attorneys and federal prosecutors.

Rudolph is charged with a series of bombings in the Atlanta area, including the 1997 bombings of the Otherside Lounge gay club and an abortion clinic and the 1996 bombing at the Atlanta Olympics.

Rudolph arrived in court wearing a bulletproof vest. Streets were blocked off around the courthouse and scores of officers were visible, along with bomb-detection dogs, as Rudolph was escorted into the building for the hearing before Judge Smith.

After five years on the run in the Appalachian Mountains he was captured by police last year in rural North Carolina.

His lawyers sought to have his trial moved out



Eric Rudolph will be tried in Birmingham.

see MCC on 12

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