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Do you think the gay marriage issue was responsible for Kerry's loss in 2004?  
yes no

## The biggest noises in 2004

*Gays got married and then not in San Francisco, the Mayor of N.J. says he's gay, 11 states pass marriage amendments, Dubya gets re-elected and Jamaica can't stop hating us*

by David Moore  
Q-Notes staff

A year full of elation and disappointment, 2004 showed us what can happen when the community and our friends believe in change. It also showed us how the manipulation of ignorance and fear can be used for political gain.

It didn't come as a surprise to most in the LGBT community. When Canada got same-sex marriage — we wanted it too! And why not? We deserve it — just like every other human being that shares love with another and reaps the benefits of government recognition.

It's a fact change in this country comes slow. Regrettably, we're not as liberal as our neighbors to the north. But in 2004 the LGBT community in the United States had one thing on their mind: marriage.

Maybe it was that word "marriage." Perhaps we should use the phrase "civil unions" many in the community would say. No matter what words you choose, the subject was in the forefront of the entire nation's consciousness throughout the year — sometimes even overshadowing a continuing war in Iraq and a presidential election.

The first inklings of change began Feb. 4, when The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that civil unions are not the constitutional equivalent of civil marriage, effectively reaffirming that same-sex marriage should be allowed. But Massachusetts would not be the first place to offer same-sex marriage.

On Feb. 12, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom threw open the doors of City Hall and in walked 15 same-sex couples, eager to tie the knot. Newsom was all too happy to oblige.

"This is an unforgettable day," said Kate Kendall, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "For the first time



Rosie O'Donnell and her partner Kelli Carpenter were among the many same-sex couples to marry in San Francisco.

in this country, lesbian and gay couples in loving, committed relationships were able to exercise the same right to protect their families that others take for granted."

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## All those amendments...

In an election year that used the issue of same-sex marriage like a bluff card, it's hardly a surprise that marriage amendments would pop up on the voting screen like lights on a Christmas tree. What did come as a surprise for most in the LGBT community was that there were so many. And that all of them — save for one overturn — were passed.

On April 21, Lawmakers in Virginia passed a sweeping ban on same-sex partners, outlawing any "partnership contract or other arrangements that purport to provide the benefits of marriage."

Although the *Marriage Protection Act* failed in the Senate and would later fail in Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives passed on July 21 a bill that restricts federal courts from hearing challenges to a law, in this case the *Defense of Marriage Act*.

The 233-194 vote on the *Marriage Protection Act* (MPA) came one week after the Senate defeated a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex couples from marrying.

On Aug. 3, voters in Missouri officially banned same-sex marriage in their state. Louisiana voters followed suit Sept. 18 when they overwhelmingly approved a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. A state judge, however, threw out the amendment on a technicality just 17 days later.

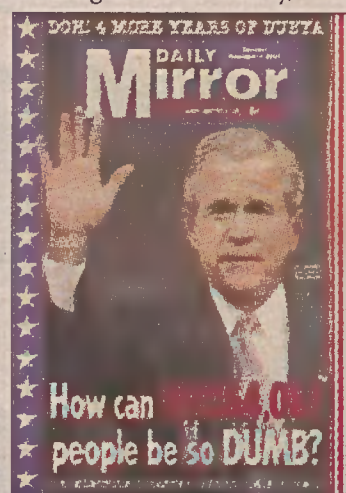
On the bright side, attempts at putting constitutional amendments on the ballot in both South Carolina (June 4) and North Carolina (June 29) were defeated.

But the crushing blow came at the same time conservatives would once gain capture the White House. On Nov. 2, all 11 states with amendments on their ballots voted in favor of imposing a ban on lesbian and gay marriage. Those states include Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana and Utah.



## Bush re-elected

Despite all our best efforts, Dubya won again. Not by a landslide, but just a tiny little bit. That's not what's so troubling about his victory, though. It's a look at the



political map that might leave you scratching your head. The South and the Midwest went for George W. Bush, while the North voted for John Kerry. Sound like a re-enactment of the Civil War? Not quite.

Polls show that most urban areas throughout the country gave Kerry a victory — though

it may have come in the form of a county (Mecklenburg, for example), not a state's electoral votes. So as it seems, those in less urban areas prefer the conservatives to be in power, while those in larger cities lean more to the left. Doesn't sound like something that could be sliced very easily, huh?

The campaign was clearly unlike any other in U.S. history. After sitting on the fence for most of the year, Bush finally announced his support for the *Federal Marriage Amendment*. This led to the Log Cabin Republican's refusal to endorse Bush, although an obscure African-American gay GOP group, the Abe Lincoln Black see FOUR on 11