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news notes: sc

from the palmetto state

by Ed Madden

Gay groups join in on MLK Day March

COLUMBIA — On Jan. 17 gays and lesbians were among more than 2,000 South Carolinians in honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. at the King Day at the Dome event in Columbia.

Members of Alliance For Full Acceptance (AFFA) in Charleston, SCGLPM in Columbia and Palmetto Umoja (the state's new organization for gays and lesbians of color) joined others in a march from Memorial Park in Columbia to the Statehouse, where a rally focused on education equity and social justice, as well as the civil rights legacy of King.

As march organizers Lonnie Randolph and Rhett Jackson said in *The State* newspaper, although marchers may not agree on every issue, there was "a strong consensus that our state must be more assertive and courageous in overcoming the negative legacies of its past."

AFFA president Susie Prueter wrote to her membership, "As we continue the fight for LGBT equality, it is crucial that we build



coalitions with other groups of people and organizations." She characterized participation in the march as a chance to begin "dialogue, build relationships and sincerely support each other."

'Colors of Pride '80s Orange Party' at Community Center

COLUMBIA — South Carolina Gay & Lesbian Pride Movement (SCGLPM) wants you to come to an '80s party! Remember acid washed jeans, Jersey hair, Hammer pants and "Miami Vice" suits? Did you sport a high top fade, finished off with Gloria Vanderbilt jeans and matching Reeboks? Put on your best '80s outfit and bring your nostalgia and merriment to the Community Center, 1108 Woodrow St. on Feb. 19, 7-11 p.m., for the Orange Party, hosted by Palmetto Umoja. There will be refreshments and door prizes, as well as a grand prize for the person with the most fabulous orange apparel.

The party is part of the Colors of Pride, a series of events to raise funds and support for SC Pride 2005. There is a requested minimum donation of \$5, with all proceeds to support SC Pride 2005.

Palmetto Umoja begins education project

STATEWIDE — Palmetto Umoja began "Operation Saturation" in early January in order to educate South Carolinians about homosexuality in the state's black community.

The outreach is the first of its kind in the state and a bold step against ignorance, according to the organization's leadership. Concerned with what it sees as a lack of visibility of gays and lesbians of color, the Columbia-based organization wants to encourage dialogue and education.

Umoja President Robert-John Hinojosa said the main issue right now is visibility. There is a reluctance, he said, in both the black and gay communities to publicly acknowledge gays and lesbians of color. Hinojosa said that a fair dialogue in the black community is the main goal of "Operation Saturation," a year-long education project.

In early 2005 Umoja sent out packets of information to black leaders across the state. The packets included information about the needs and issues of gays and lesbians of color, as well as specific information about black lesbian and gay families

see next page >



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(We are temporarily sharing space with United Church of Greenville)

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