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# QNotes

Noted . Notable . Noteworthy . LGBT News & Views

Vol. 21 . Number 02 www.q-notes.com June 3 . 2006

## NC House and Senate introduce marriage amendments

What you can do to help prevent legislated discrimination

by Ian Palmquist and Donald Miller

RALEIGH — On May 9, the first day of the 2006 session, Sen. James Forrester (along with Sens. Smith, Allran, Apodaca, Berger, Bingham, Blake, Brock, Brown, East, Garwood, Goodall, Hartsell, Hunt, Jacumin, Miller, Pittenger, Presnell, Stevens, and Tillman) introduced SB 1228, which would amend the state constitution to discriminate against same-sex couples.

A summary of the bill reads as follows: "This bill proposes a constitutional amendment in North Carolina defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman at one time. The uniting of two persons of the same sex or the uniting of more than two persons of any sex in marriage, civil union, domestic partnership, or any similar relationship would not be recognized."

Just two weeks after that bill was introduced, legislation to constitutionally define marriage as the union of one man and one woman was filed in the N.C. House on May 23. HB 2438 — Defense of Marriage is sponsored by Reps. Tim Moore (R-Cleveland), Bonner Stiller (R-Brunswick), Dewey Hill (D-Columbus) and (David Almond (R-Stanley).

In a curious exchange of words with Almond Q-Notes reader Kriste DeLane inquired as to why Almond felt the need to use the constitution to malign the gay and lesbian community.

"Since marriage is one of the most basic and fundamental institutions of our culture, I think laws which enhance it also enhance quality of life," Almond wrote. "HB 2438 is not discriminatory. It simply sets a standard based upon common decency and common sense (to



Anti-gay politicians in the N.C. state capital are taking aim at gay and lesbian families, once again, with two attempts at banning same-sex marriage using the state constitution.

most people).

"This proposed amendment ... applies equally to everyone — homosexual, heterosexual, or would be polygamist."

Almond continued his diatribe against DeLane in subsequent emails: "To advocate that homosexual marriage should have the same standing as heterosexual marriage is ludicrous. Using your argument, then siblings should be allowed to marry, parents should be allowed to marry their own children, if they are at least 16."

Clearly, with this twisted justification of an attempt at legalized hatred and homophobia, it's obvious right-wing legislators are chomping at the bit to pass the amendment in the next two months.

Equality NC (ENC), working with various allies, helped to prevent an earlier amendment from passing in 2004 and 2005. To date, North Carolina is the only state in the South to stop such an amendment in the legislature.

If passed, either of these amendments would not only elevate the discriminatory ban on same-sex marriage to the state constitution, they would prohibit any recognition of same-sex partners in North Carolina. In fact, the language of the amendment is so broad it could prevent private companies from offering domestic partner health benefits.

ENC's plans for fighting the amendment include both grassroots and insider strategies.

Supporters (this means you!) are

see legislature on 6

## Black/Latin Gay Pride week set for Columbia June 19-25

First event of its kind in the Palmetto state

by Charles Kenghis

COLUMBIA, S.C. — History will be made in June when South Carolina's African-American and Latin gay communities will come together in the capitol city for a week of education, celebration and spiritual growth.

Columbia will be the place to be on June 19-25 as the Palmetto State will celebrate its first ever Black/Latin Gay Pride. The Carolinas Black Pride Movement and Palmetto Umoja are working together to bring this event to South Carolina.

The Carolinas Black Pride Movement, headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., works to foster and celebrate black gay culture throughout the Carolinas. Palmetto Umoja is the only South Carolina organization dedicated to the issues and visibility of gay communities of color in the Palmetto State.

The theme of Pride is "Strength in Visibility, Empowered by Diversity." Events will include a vigil, town hall meeting, a film

festival, a poetry event, a mini-Ball, a faith service and an expo featuring Broadway actor and R&B recording artist Billy Porter live in concert.

In 2006, there will be 25 black gay Pride events in places as diverse as Georgia, New York and California. Last year, Charlotte, N.C., had its first black gay Pride with thousands in attendance.

During the build up to Charlotte's black Pride last year, a few individuals in the LGBT community had concerns that the event sought to exclude those that of European ethnic descent.

"This historic Black/Latin Pride is not about exclusivity," says Jermaine Lee, founder of the Carolinas Black Gay Pride Movement. "On the contrary, it exemplifies the diversity, complexity, and beauty of the greater same-gender loving, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community."

Other South Carolina gay organizations share Lee's position. Many of them, including the South Carolina Gay and Lesbian Pride Movement and the South Carolina see pride on 12



## A soldier's story

### Back in the heat and sand

Editor's Note: These are the thoughts of a gay soldier — a North Carolina native — who has been deployed to Iraq. Because of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, he must remain anonymous.

I've been back in Iraq for a week now. It's so hot the Devil himself won't come outside to play. Coming back was hard but not as tough as leaving the first time. One of the reassuring aspects about coming back was knowing where I would be located, what I would be doing and where I would be sleeping, eating etc.

Getting here was dreadful: long flight, no sleep, dead tired and exhausted from a vacation that was a

roller coaster ride all over the Southeast United States. It was a hell of a trip — but a great one full of laughs, friends, loved ones and many great memories.



The flight took me from Charlotte to Atlanta, then on a military charter through Shannon, Ireland, for a short stop. We then flew to Kuwait to Ali Al Saleem Air Force see soldiers on 6

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