Legacy Clubs of the Carolinas

A look at the history of National Coming Out Day - pg 14
Qnotes staff share their thoughts on NCOD - pg 15
Days and Dates to remember throughout October - pg 16

QnotesCarolinass.com
We Are Just Balls of Fun!

White Rabbit
920 Central Ave.
Charlotte N.C., 28204
(704) 377-4067

Follow Us @

Instagram: WHITERABBIT
Facebook: WRABBITNC
TikTok: SHOPWHITERABBIT
Matthew Shepard, Me and a PFLAG Mom

Murdered at the age of 21 in 1998, this story takes a look at the life and death of Matthew Shepard, recognizes the impact his passing had on our community and the legacy of hope since created for our future.

PAGE 4

Q Music: Side by Side

It’s a safe bet to say that anyone listening will find it extremely challenging to sit still and not jump to their feet to move and groove to the music of Will Butler + Sister Squares. They’ll play Motorco Music Hall in Durham Dec. 2.

PAGE 19

NOW FIND Qnotes IN 63 CHARLOTTE-AREA FOOD LION AND HARRIS TEETER GROCERY STORES

These rates only cover a portion of our true cost, however, our goal is to serve our community.

Mailed 1st class from Charlotte, NC, in sealed envelope.

Subscription Rates:

☐ 1 yr - 26 issues = $48
☐ 1/2 yr - 13 issues = $34

Mail to: P.O. Box 221841, Charlotte, NC 28222

name:
address:
city: state: zip:

credit card - check one: ☐ mastercard ☐ visa ☐ discover ☐ american express

card #: exp. date:

signature:

September 29 - October 12, 2023 Qnotes
Matthew Shepard, Me and a PFLAG Mom
A reflection on the past 25 years and a legacy of hope
By Chris Rudisill and Karen Graci

“As dusk fell on October 18 and the day’s heat withdrew into a crisp autumn evening, nearly 400 people gathered in uptown Charlotte’s Marshall Park to honor Matthew Shepard, a young gay man they never knew, and to send a message that the time of meeting anti-GLBT violence with silence was over,” wrote Wanda Pico in a special feature for QNotes’ Oct. 31, 1998, issue.

I was 21 years old that night, a college student attending UNC Charlotte, and living in a small apartment just south of the city’s uptown. Matt (as his family and friends refer to him) and I were born just weeks apart.

On Oct. 7, Shepard was brutally beaten and left to die, tied to a wooden fence outside Laramie, Wyo. He succumbed to his wounds and died on Oct. 12. Months before, I had come out to my mother on a park bench in front of what is today Two Wells Fargo Center Plaza. With its bronze statues of children playing in the nearby fountain, tears filled my eyes as I left my own childhood behind and revealed my true self, fearing that I might lose the only family I had known.

Like Matt’s mother, mine accepted me that day and has shown me great love ever since. Matt had come out a few years before his death. Judy Shepard recalled the moment in a 2018 ABC News interview. “He said, ‘Mom, I’m gay.’ And I said, ‘What took you so long to tell me?’”

According to the Matthew Shepard Foundation, “Matt had a great passion for equality.”

He was born in Casper, Wyo., but moved with his family to Saudi Arabia when in high school. He attended The American School in Switzerland, where he was a peer counselor. He briefly attended Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., before transferring to Casper College in his hometown and later the University of Wyoming where he studied political science, foreign relations and languages. He enjoyed theatre and was part of the Wyoming Environmental Council.

I will be 47 years old this November – a life that I feel has so far been well spent. Shadowed by a life taken, I often wonder what Matt’s life would have been like.

His legacy has challenged and inspired millions. As the foundation in his name states, “the life and death of Matthew Shepard changed the way we talk about, and deal with, hate in America.”

What would it have been like for Matt to bring a boyfriend home? To graduate college or get his first professional job? Matt’s father, Dennis Shepard, said he had dreams of working at the State Department in the previously mentioned 2018 interview.

Would he have marched alongside me and thousands of others in the 2009 National Equality March, the one that called for expansion of hate crime laws and led to the passage of the “Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act”? Would he have danced the night away at gay clubs and experienced the joy of Pride festivals across the globe? Where would Matt Shepard have been the day the Supreme Court struck down state bans on marriage equality? Would he have fallen in love, gotten married and found his dream?

A Mother’s Story
At the time of Matt’s death, I didn’t think much about what my mother’s experience might have been. Perhaps I should have, but maybe it was just the reaction of a 21-year-old focused more on his own emotions than that of others in the moment.

For this column, I asked Karen Graci to share her reflections on that day and the 25 years since. Graci is the executive director of PFLAG Charlotte and shared these reflections via email.

“In 1998, the brutal attack on Matthew Shepard made national news. As the mom of a one-year-old, I was horrified as I watched the story unfold. Yet, it wasn’t until I watched the Celebration of Life & Interment of Matthew Shepard at Washington’s National Cathedral in 2018 (twenty years after his death) that I began to comprehend the horrific truth and harsh reality of hate and violence against LGBTQ+ people.

“By then, my husband and I were parents to a high schooler and a college student, one of whom had come out a couple of years earlier. I was volunteering with PFLAG Charlotte, an organization whose mission is to create a caring, just and affirming world for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them. At PFLAG, we lead with love, and we meet parents right where they are. We see both the fierce love parents have for their child and the deep-seated fears they have for their child’s safety and well being.

“Watching Matthew Shepard’s Celebration of Life, I thought about the struggles faced by many of our PFLAG families, including my own. We were all increasingly aware of the challenges faced by so many LGBTQ+ individuals simply because of who they are. The story of Matthew Shepard and his family was heartbreaking.

“It’s now 2023. I’ve had the privilege of serving as PFLAG Charlotte’s first Executive Director, and our kids are now young adults. I’m thankful for The Matthew Shepard Foundation and its wide-ranging efforts to Erase Hate. Hate is violence and bullying against LGBTQ+ individuals. Hate is prohibiting medically necessary healthcare. Hate is banning LGBTQ+-themed books. Hate is the recent legislation in North Carolina that directly targets LGBTQ+ people, families, affirming schools and healthcare providers.

“Yet, I’m hopeful. I’m hopeful because of local organizations like Charlotte Trans Health, Time Out Youth, Freedom Center for Social Justice, Gender Education Network, RAIN and Transcend Charlotte. I’m hopeful because of the growing number of affirming and inclusive spaces and businesses nurtured by organizations like Charlotte Black Pride, Charlotte Pride Band, One Voice Chorus, Stonewall Sports and the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber.

“I’m hopeful because of advocacy efforts led by Equality NC and Campaign for Southern Equality and funding efforts led by The Plus Collective. I’m hopeful because 260,000 people showed up for Charlotte Pride in August. And I’m hopeful as I think about the PFLAG families I met eight years ago and continue to see today ... LGBTQ+ individuals, allies, families, and friends helping to grow the caring and just world that Matthew Shepard envisioned.

“Ultimately, that’s what we’re all fighting for – each human’s right to live, to love and to thrive in a world just as they are.”

On Oct. 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the “Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.” This year marks the 25th anniversary of Shepard’s death. Since that time, the Matthew Shepard Foundation has provided hate crimes training to 1,060 law enforcement officers and 76 prosecutors, and through local, regional and national outreach, has worked with communities across the country to empower people to create change and address hate within their schools, neighborhoods and homes. ::

Facebook post from 2018, when Matthew Shepard was interred at Washington National Cathedral.
THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK
INTENTIONALLY
WorkFair virtual job fair to provide LGBTQ+ professionals networking opportunities

The event will take place on October 18

By Qnotes Staff

Organized by myGwork, the largest global LGBTQ+ talent platform, WorkFair 2023, a virtual job fair, will return on Oct. 18, featuring hundreds of jobs worldwide for students and recent graduates with inclusive employers, alongside empowering careers guidance workshops and webinars. Powered by Highered, WorkFair is the largest virtual careers fair, which attracts thousands of LGBTQ+ students and graduates from all corners of the world, to help them land their dream roles with inclusive employers of choice.

Recent research carried out by myGwork revealed being out at work is important for the majority of Generation Z (72 percent) in the UK and US. In fact, nine out of 10 students/graduates said they are more inclined to land their dream roles with inclusive employers of choice.

“WorkFair 2022 was a fantastic opportunity for GSK to meet and interact directly with talented LGBTQ+ individuals. We had a good response to jobs advertised via the platform and great engagement during the day. Looking forward to attending again in 2023,” said Deb Westfield, UK Recruitment Diversity Lead at GSK.

“Dorchester Collection is thrilled to be a part of the myGwork WorkFair,” shared Jane Grammer, Diversity & Belonging Champion at Dorchester Collection. “Diversity, inclusion and belonging are core beliefs of our ‘We Care’ philosophy, because we believe that diversity is key to creating the legendary experiences we are globally renowned for. To create a place where unique stories are told and legends are made, we value each and every employee as a part of our Dorchester Collection family – so our culture celebrates difference, welcomes imagination and offers the freedom to take initiative. WorkFair not only empowers jobseekers by helping them to identify organizations that are going above and beyond to create inclusive workplaces where they can truly work with pride, but also access to webinars and workshops offering valuable guidance and coaching to help hone their job search and interviewing skills to land their dream role.”

In a release from Gwok’s co-founders Adrien and Pierre-Gaubert: “WorkFair 2023 is a great event for LGBTQ+ students and graduates to connect and apply for their dream roles in real-time with inclusive employers of choice, where they don’t have to hide their real identity and [they can] work with pride. WorkFair will also provide advice on how to find those top jobs, and offer guidance to help them thrive in their chosen careers.”

Students and recent graduates can register to attend WorkFair 2023 completely free of charge here, where all sign-ups will be entered into the draw for the opportunity to win an overnight stay in five-star luxury at the Dorchester Collection’s Coworth Park Hotel, with dinner and breakfast included. Click here for terms and conditions. ::

Connie J. Vetter, Esq.
Attorney at Law, PLLC
Your LGBTQ+ Law Attorney
serving Clients from across North Carolina
Talk/Text 704-333-4000 or online
New budget proposal would delay NC Parents’ Bill of Rights law

North Carolina’s School districts could get extra time to implement policies required by the so-called “Parents’ Bill of Rights” under the latest version of the state’s budget. Under a draft version of the budget unveiled Sept. 18, districts would have until Jan. 1 to put policies in place required by the new law. Senate Bill 49 required the policies to be in place by Sept. 15.

Districts, for example, must adopt rules and procedures for “parental concern hearings” and develop a parent guide to “student achievement.” School districts say that many of the procedures and rules required by the new law are already in place.

State Superintendent Catherine Truitt told the State Board of Education earlier this month that she and others with concerns about the law’s implementation were talking with lawmakers about extending the deadline. Truitt said she felt good about the direction those talks were going.

The law requires educators to alert parents if their child changes their name or pronoun at school. It also restricts instruction about gender identity and sexuality in K-4 classrooms.

In addition to extending deadlines for adoption of new rules and procedures, the budget draft addresses questions educators had about student surveys and the type of medical care school officials can provide students.

The law exempts the NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey from the requirement that parents must give permission for children to take “protected information surveys” at school. It also makes clear that educators may provide emergency medical care to students when “reasonably apparent circumstances indicate that any delay would seriously worsen the physical condition or endanger the life of the pupil.”

As NC Newsline previously reported, compliance with SB 49 has been time-consuming for district leaders and controversial for lawmakers. Democrats and Republicans intensely debated the bill before the state Senate approved it on a 26-13 party line vote, with all Republicans voting in favor and Democrats voting no.

Democrats see SB 49 as an attack on LGBTQ students and their parents. They worry that LGBTQ students with unsupportive parents could be harmed if they’re outed. Republicans, however, say they believe parents have a right to know such information, regardless of circumstances.

Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, vetoed the bill, but the GOP leadership mounted a successful override on Aug. 16. That sent school districts scrambling to implement legally required policies ahead of the Sept. 15 deadline.

This article appears courtesy of our media partner NC Newsline under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

—Greg Childress/NC Newsline

Sherlock’s Homes Foundation Raleigh sanctuary home

Sherlock’s Homes Foundation is a safe haven for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness with homes in Colorado Springs, Colo. Richmond, Va. and their most recent addition, Raleigh, N.C. The sanctuary home in Raleigh opened in late 2022 and provides housing, support services, and a sense of community for LGBTQ+ youth who are struggling to make it on their own.

Sherlock’s Homes Foundation was founded in 2020 by Jacob Reide Jennings, an award-winning real estate expert based in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Homeless and living in his car as a teen, Jennings saw a need for a safe and supportive place for LGBTQ+ youth who were aging out of the foster care system or who had been rejected by their families.

“Forty percent of young adults experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ+,” says Jennings. “Despite this elevated rate, they tend to be under-served due to a shortage of response systems offering services tailored to their individual needs. It is more important today than ever that we create safe places and eliminate barriers to entry for LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness and help power true change where it is most needed.”

Sherlock’s Homes’ Raleigh home provides a safe and supportive environment where residents can feel comfortable being themselves. The staff at Sherlock’s Homes are trained to provide support for LGBTQ youth and they offer a variety of services, including safe and affordable housing for its residents; a variety of support services, including counseling, employment assistance and financial education; and a sense of community for its residents, where they can feel supported and accepted.

Sherlock’s Homes Foundation has made a significant impact on the lives of the youth it serves. The Raleigh home has helped young adults to find safe and stable housing, to get back on their feet after experiencing homelessness, and to build a strong sense of community.

In June, Sherlock’s Homes Foundation was spotlighted as a Pride community partner by Digital Lift by Monday.com and earlier this year, their brand campaign, ‘By the Numbers’ was named Bronze Winner in the Humanitarian Action and Services category in the Second Annual Anthem Awards.
FDA approves COVID boosters for upcoming season

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the latest round of COVID-19 boosters Sept. 11, as public health officials brace for another cold and flu season.

An advisory panel at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is scheduled to vote on recommendations regarding the final step in the process before people will be able to get the shots.

“Vaccination remains critical to public health and continued protection against serious consequences of COVID-19, including hospitalization and death,” said Peter Marks, director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

“The public can be assured that these updated vaccines have met the agency’s rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality,” Marks added. “We very much encourage those who are eligible to consider getting vaccinated.”

The updated COVID-19 booster shots are made by Moderna and Pfizer.

The FDA said in a statement that people five and older can get one dose of the updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as long as it’s been at least two months since their last dose of the vaccine.

Vaccinated children between six months and four years old can get one or two doses of the updated vaccine. Unvaccinated children in the same age range are eligible for three doses of the updated Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or two doses of the updated Moderna shot.

“The updated vaccines are expected to provide good protection against COVID-19 from the currently circulating variants,” the FDA said in a statement. “Barring the emergence of a more virulent variant, the FDA anticipates that the composition of COVID-19 vaccines may need to be updated annually, as is done for the seasonal influenza vaccine.”

Hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 have been trending upward in recent weeks, though officials aren’t expressing alarm at the rise in severe illness. The number of hospitalizations has risen by nearly 16 percent while deaths increased by almost 11 percent, according to data from the CDC.

The percentage of Americans getting COVID-19 shots has steadily decreased since the first round of vaccinations rolled out in the last weeks of 2020. More than 81 percent of the country got at least one dose of the original vaccine, but 70 percent completed the primary two-dose series. Just 17 percent of the U.S. population decided to get the bivalent vaccine that was approved last year, according to CDC data.

This article appears courtesy of our media partner NC Newsline under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

—Jennifer Shutt

Visit Potters’ Pumpkin Patch Trail in Seagrove, NC this October

With fall and Halloween just around the corner, Seagrove will become a pumpkin-centric pottery hub for the month of October when The Potters’ Pumpkin Patch Trail kicks off. Potters’ Pumpkin Patch Trail is a self-guided tour of five pottery galleries, with every collection featuring special Fall themed items and experiences each Saturday of the month.

The stops along the trail include Blue Hen Pottery, Crystal King Pottery, Seagrove Stoneware, Thomas Pottery and The Triangle Studio, which gives attendees the opportunity to explore five individual shops featuring Fall themed pottery, woodland animal sculptures and, of course, ceramic pumpkins and gourds. Each stop has exclusive items special to each shop, so visitors are encouraged to go to each potter and see what they have to offer.

“You might think a pumpkin is just a pumpkin, but you will find that these talented artists all have their own unique style and their own handmade seasonal interpretations,” said Pumpkin Patch Trail spokesperson Erin Younge in a statement. “Find the latest fall designs, pottery pumpkins, gourds, fall home decor and seasonal tableware for all your baking needs. Each participating shop offers a different experience, so pick up a map and follow the trail.”

The event’s main sponsor — The General Wine and Brew — will offer handmade collectible pottery mugs, as well as a seasonal selection of pumpkin brews. The local retail wine shop and bar in downtown Seagrove will be open during each event day from 1 to 9 p.m.

More information on the wording hole can be found on its website.

“Pottery shops in Seagrove are the ideal getaway for a day or weekend trip — the countryside is beautiful, the pottery is exquisite, and the individual shop locations are perfect for social distancing,” Younge continues. “Visitors can shop galleries and studios from the town’s center, extending to a 20-mile radius along the scenic NC Pottery Highway. Tour the Seagrove shops to experience the 200-year old pottery making tradition as well as the contemporary evolution of its artful potteries.”

—Taylor Heeden

The LGBT Center of Raleigh announces new location

The LGBT Center of Raleigh announced it would be moving to a new physical location last week, but its new address may ring a bell for residents. The center is relocating to 128 E. Cabarrus St., which is just down the road from where the center had its first physical location.

The new location is set to open sometime next summer, according to a press release sent from the LGBT+ center.

“The new building will allow us to open our community center space again, hold public drop in hours, host programs and so much more,” the release stated.

The original location, which was on West Cabarrus Street, opened in February 2010, and within months, the center began to “settle,” the officials stated they were planning on 411 Hillsborough St. in downtown Raleigh in May 2011. The new location allowed for the organization to expand its services, create new events and by 2014, the center found itself moving to an even larger location at 324 S. Harrington St.

The center’s current location, 19 W. Hargett St. in the Commerce Building, was established in the middle of the pandemic in July 2020. After the pandemic began to “settle,” the officials stated they were “eager to get a larger space once again to bring those from the community together.”

With the highly anticipated move to Cabarrus St., the center put out a release saying it was looking for design teams and firms to work together to create a space for all of Raleigh’s queer and allied residents to enjoy.

From the Raleigh LGBTQ Center Facebook page:

“We are currently searching for design firms to help us create our vision on paper. If you know of anyone, please send them our way! Requests for Proposals will be posted on our website very soon.”

More information about the Raleigh center can be found at their website.

—Taylor Heeden

LGBT Center of Raleigh announces new location

The LGBT Center of Raleigh announced it would be moving to a new physical location last week, but its new address may ring a bell for residents. The center is relocating to 128 E. Cabarrus St., which is just down the road from where the center had its first physical location.

The new location is set to open sometime next summer, according to a press release sent from the LGBT+ center.

“The new building will allow us to open our community center space again, hold public drop in hours, host programs and so much more,” the release stated.

The original location, which was on West Cabarrus Street, opened in February 2010, and within months, the center began to “settle,” the officials stated they were planning on 411 Hillsborough St. in downtown Raleigh in May 2011. The new location allowed for the organization to expand its services, create new events and by 2014, the center found itself moving to an even larger location at 324 S. Harrington St.

The center’s current location, 19 W. Hargett St. in the Commerce Building, was established in the middle of the pandemic in July 2020. After the pandemic began to “settle,” the officials stated they were “eager to get a larger space once again to bring those from the community together.”

With the highly anticipated move to Cabarrus St., the center put out a release saying it was looking for design teams and firms to work together to create a space for all of Raleigh’s queer and ally residents to enjoy.

From the Raleigh LGBTQ Center Facebook page:

“We are currently searching for design firms to help us create our vision on paper. If you know of anyone, please send them our way! Requests for Proposals will be posted on our website very soon.”

More information about the Raleigh center can be found at their website.

—Taylor Heeden
Legacy Bars of the Carolinas

Six different bars across the two-state region that opened during the second half of the 20th century and are still going strong.

by David Aaron Moore
Qnotes Staff Writer

Fragmentary seems like the most appropriate word to describe the history and culture of oppressed people, and especially the LGBTQ+ community. Our heritage and culture has often gone undocumented for fear of unintentionally providing information that could lead to unwanted trouble from our oppressors. Call it a fail safe, if you will, but the end result was/is a huge loss of LGBTQ+ history prior to the 1980s.

In other instances, our history was often deemed as insignificant or unworthy of being saved by those in a position of power to make decisions about historical preservation. As late as the mid-1990s I can still recall the shock I felt when I was informed by a periodical librarian at the Atlanta Fulton County Public Library that copies of locally produced gay and lesbian publications were thrown away when each new edition arrived, unlike the mainstream straight newspapers and magazines, which were typically archived. When I inquired as to why, the librarian shot me an incredulous look and replied with a patronizing tone: “We have to make decisions about what we save based on their literary and cultural merit. We have limited space. Do you honestly expect us to save everything?”

Tens of thousands of gay, lesbian and transgender individuals around the country who came out at a young age in the sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties have their own unique experiences — each defined by their own personal life journey, location and time period. Prior to the advent of the internet and social media apps, the place to meet others like you with shared interests, were community bars and nightclubs.

History was made in those places. Regrettably, much of that history has been lost, but not all. Here’s our list of LGBTQ+ clubs that existed during the latter decades of the 20th century, and continue to thrive today.

**Scorpio**

Opened in 1968, originally on South Boulevard. The Scorpio Lounge, as it was known at the time, was popular among gay men, lesbians and some of Charlotte’s earliest drag queens to socialize, among them Boom Boom Latour, who was just getting started in drag career that would last a lifetime.

In an interview with this writer during the late 2000s, the since deceased legendary drag diva talked about her experiences at the time. “I would hang out there (at Scorpio) with some of the popular strip- pers of the time, like Morganna, and that singer Alicia Bridges, who had a big disco hit a decade later with “I Love the Nightlife.” I didn’t perform there so much initially, because they started off turning their noses up at drag queens, but times changed and I worked there a lot by the late ’70s and throughout the 1980s.”

In its earlier days, though, the club clientele grew quickly and the business eventually moved to Freedom Drive for a larger space in then-brand new digs with a road ahead full of success, and trouble.

Among the most sensational criminal incidents in LGBTQ bar history were the Scorpio fires. The first took place during the late 1970s and closed the club for more than a year. It is thought the fire was set by criminal elements seeking protection racket money to keep the Charlotte Mecklenburg police at bay. Scorpio was only one of several clubs burned (the others were all straight) throughout a multi-year period during the last half of the 1970s. The second fire took place during the mid-1980s.

That was during a golden period for the city’s gay and lesbian nightlife, with multiple (and newer) dance clubs as options, but also pulling crowds away from Scorpio in droves. The impact of the newly competing clubs only lasted for a brief time, however.

The owners of a one such business realized that Scorpio was reclaiming its clientele, so they hatched a plan to put an end to it’s returning success.

Set in the early morning hours of a night when Scorpio was closed, the damage from the second fire once again resulted in the closing of the club, leaving nothing in the form of a dance club for the community to congregate at on the city’s west side other than – conveniently – the pyro-minded competitor’s club.

Although details on how the determination was made are unclear, two owners and one employee of the club were arrested, charged and convicted with setting the fire. Eventually, all of them spent time in prison. By decade’s end, club pyro faded into history and the Scorpio Lounge had long since closed, with the second fire once again resulting in the closing of the club, leaving nothing in the form of a dance club for the community to congregate at on the city’s west side other than – conveniently – the pyro-minded competitor’s club.

**O.Henry’s**

The oldest gay bar in Asheville and one of the oldest in North Carolina, it was initially called the Skylight Room and located at 59 Haywood Street.

Although the establishment was not initially intended to be a specific LGBTQ+ night spot, it became widely known as welcoming for our community when owners and management made the decision to switch the daytime jazz at 8 p.m. to evening dance music and jumped on board the disco bandwagon in 1977.

That move attracted a bevy of queer patrons on Friday and Saturday nights and prompted the business to change its name to O.Henry’s, which gave it a masculine over tone and allowed it to acknowledge the region’s literary heritage.

In the years that followed multiple LGBTQ+ owned and friendly businesses would find a home in the neighborhood surrounding O.Henry’s. The result was revitalization, and the once nearly lifeless downtown area rebounded, becoming a go-to destination attracting both Asheville residents and the many tourists that would come to the area.

These days O.Henry’s primary focus is on the bar business, and is located just outside of downtown Asheville, now at 237 Haywood Street. In its newer location, it even has a basement dance floor. Popular with multiple subcultures and a diverse age range within the LGBTQ+ community, just last year it was recognized by Esquire magazine as one of the best gay clubs in the country for 2022.

For additional details on O.Henry’s, visit their website at www.oahrenysasheville.com.

**The Capital Club**

Located in downtown Columbia just one block away from...
the state capital building, originally opened in 1980. It is the oldest LGBTQ Club in the city and one of the top four oldest in the Carolinas. While images on social media depict a diverse clientele revved up and ready to have fun not unlike most LGBTQ+ bars, the party spot is noted time and again across the interwebs as “South Carolina's most dignified and refined private gay bar.”

While we didn’t want to jump to conclusions about what message they were trying to convey with those words or what it implied about other gay bars in South Carolina, we’re pleased as punch to agree it is tastefully decorated and does appear to have what some might consider an “upper crust” ambiance of sorts.

However, after extensive internet research, we eventually discovered just what the “dignified and refined” tip of the hat meant: code speak for closeted, “top drawer” and “exclusive” in ways that are completely unacceptable.

An article that appeared in the Carolina News and Reporter in 2022 confirms the club’s longevity and the sad fact that a city of such size now only has two gay bars, following a time in the 1980s when it boasted 13 different gay clubs simultaneously. In the story penned by Caleb Bozard, the writer takes a look back at the LGBTQ community’s “self-segregated” past in Columbia – a time when the clubs were predominantly patronized by partners of only one gender, one sexuality and one race. Although everyone was a part of the LGBTQ+ community, they didn’t intermingle.

The Capital Club appeared to serve a predominantly white and somewhat older gay male clientele and insisted on a specified code and conduct. Wrote Bozard: “the members only club, dubbed a cigar bar, played classical, opera and Broadway show recordings on vinyl. It had no dance floor or stage; rather it boasted heavy, dark, English-pub style furniture. Collared shirts were required. Shorts were only permissible in the summer. Drag was not allowed. Judges, politicians and other high profile members of the community would come in secret.”

While many aspects of the Capital Club’s past are an unpleasant memory, the current state of mind is decidedly progressive and confirms the business needs to take a look back at some of their earlier promotional schtick and do a rewrite. These days, their membership is far more diverse, the dress code is no longer a part of policy and new owners made the decision to host drag shows in 2014, which continue to attract both straight and LGBTQ+ crowds.

While the décor hasn’t changed much and there’s still no evidence of a dance floor, ownership, employees and club-goers are diverse and welcoming. More information on the Capital Club, located at 1002 Gervais Street, can be found on their website at www.capitalclubsc.com.

Originally known as Tree Tops (ACT II), Club Cabaret opened in Hickory, North Carolina in 1980. Located at 101 N. Center Street in the heart of town, the club is housed in a historic two-story brick building that was originally constructed in 1900, which would make the structure 124 years old! While Club Cabaret has occupied the building for 44 impressive years, that’s just a small fraction of its total lifespan.

Although there have been no reports of spiritual manifestations from past clientele or previous tenants, both the club and the building have been around long enough we’re certain if the walls could talk they’d have plenty of stories to share.

Peek inside the 4,500 square foot building show that sections of the second story floor have been removed in order to provide a higher ceiling, along with the addition of a stage performance area, dance floor and multiple bars. The club attracts a mix of clientele, although most appear to range in age from 20-something to 40-something. Options for the LGBTQ+ community are limited in Hickory, so it isn’t uncommon to see clientele in their 50s and 60s on occasion, as well. As its name implies, Club Cabaret is extremely popular for drag revue shows and boasts a regular cast of performers, as well as regularly recurring guests.

Like most predominantly gay and lesbian clubs that have survived as long as Club Cabaret, the club itself has evolved along with the times and straight patrons who enjoy drag performances attend the club, as well. The best resource for more details on Club Cabaret is their Facebook page. Despite the club’s successful long term stint, their website appears to be largely inoperable.

Legends Nightclub opened in June, 1991. At 330 W. Hargett Street at the corner of South Harrington, Legends is the final entry on our list of long-lasting nightclubs. The nightclub complex has space for all to enjoy. A high energy dance floor, a quiet lounge, a large courtyard for fresh air and the Boxer and Brief store. Now in business for more than 30 years, the club’s website says they’ve hosted hundreds of entertainers and served thousands of patrons.

Considering that they’ve been in business for a period of time that has touched four separate decades, we think it’s far more likely they’ve served tens of thousands club-goers. For the time being, Legends is open Friday through Monday, offering nightly dancing and drag shows from a house cast that includes Chloe Cassidy, Kirby Kolby, Emory Starr, Dana St. James and Alexandra Vittz. However, contradicting news sources first reported in 2022 the building had been sold to make way for a 30-story residential tower, but the owners of the club had plans to reopen elsewhere, although no new location had been confirmed. A later report indicated the club would be remaining in its current location. Who knows? We’ll keep you updated as information becomes available.

In the meantime, for specific show times and special events, visit their Facebook and Instagram accounts. Their website is wonky and appears to have been only partially updated since 2016.
Thousands of North Carolina residents living with HIV in North Carolina now have lower out-of-pocket expenses after Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina changed its pricing formula for dozens of HIV treatment medications. The move came months after advocates accused the state’s largest health insurer of discriminating against these patients by placing nearly all standard HIV medications in drug tiers with the highest out-of-pocket costs.

In December, the HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute and North Carolina AIDS Action Network raised their concerns in letters to the federal health department and to North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey. They alleged the insurance giant intentionally made these medications unaffordable to dissuade people from enrolling in Blue Cross NC plans if they had HIV, which can be a costly condition for insurers.

Blue Cross NC rebutted this claim. Once a year, insurance companies release a list of prescription drugs they cover, known as a formulary, along with corresponding “drug tiers.” Generally, the higher the tier, the more patients should expect to pay out-of-pocket for the medication. Insurers often place pricey, name-brand drugs in the highest tiers to encourage patients to opt for cheaper generic medications.

However, for its 2022 and 2023 formularies, Blue Cross NC put not only name-brand HIV medications in its top tiers but also several inexpensive
Law Professor: Blue Cross Practiced ‘Adverse Tiering’

Blue Cross NC has been accused of practicing “adverse tiering” by law professor Jennifer Lang, according to a letter she wrote to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Civil Rights.

Lang, a law professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.

In an interview this week with The News & Observer, Lang said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.

Lang wrote: “Blue Cross NC is most aggressively practiced ‘adverse tiering,’” according to a letter she wrote to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Civil Rights.

Lang said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.

Blue Cross NC has been accused of practicing “adverse tiering” by law professor Jennifer Lang, according to a letter she wrote to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Civil Rights.

Lang, a law professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.

In an interview this week with The News & Observer, Lang said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.

Lang wrote: “Blue Cross NC is most aggressively practiced ‘adverse tiering,’” according to a letter she wrote to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Civil Rights.

Lang said Blue Cross NC’s tiering system was discriminatory against people with HIV/AIDS.
Out, loud and proud: the history of National Coming Out Day

National Coming Out Day will be celebrated across the country on October 11

by Taylor Heeden
Qnotes Staff Writer

The term coming out holds different meanings for members of the LGBTQ+ community. For some, it’s liberation. For others, it’s the source of their deepest fears and anxieties. Coming out for some queer identifying people may be as simple as introducing a partner or casually slipping it into conversation, while for others, sharing their true selves could mean losing their life as they know it.

National Coming Out Day is observed every year on October 11 and serves as a way to not only honor the bravery of queer folks, but as a day to support those who still have yet to come out to their loved ones and the world.

In honor of the 35th National Coming Out Day, Qnotes has created a guide to the history of the holiday, what events are taking place across the Carolinas in honor of the day and why National Coming Out Day is important to us and our community.

Behind National Coming Out Day

The first National Coming Out Day was celebrated on Oct. 11, 1988, one year after the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The march, held Oct. 8-13, 1987, was the second demonstration for the LGBTQ+ equality movement in the United States Capitol and was held to draw attention to the federal government’s failure to address the HIV and AIDS epidemic and protest the Supreme Court’s 1986 decision upholding the United States government — has been celebrated in many communities across the globe since it was established in 1994.

The celebration was born in a Mehlville High School classroom in suburban St. Louis. High school history teacher Rodney Wilson was giving a lesson on the Holocaust to his class when he explained to the class if he had lived in Germany during World War II, he likely would’ve been taken to a concentration camp and killed. The reason: He was gay.

Coming out to his class made Wilson the first openly gay teacher in Missouri, and soon, Wilson made it his mission to create a curriculum to teach students about queer history. He worked with several national organizations to create what is now LGBTQ+ History Month.

The first openly gay teacher in Missouri, Wilson made it his mission to create a curriculum to teach students about queer history. He worked with several national organizations to create what is now LGBTQ+ History Month in 1995. In 1995, the month received national recognition for the first time when Newsweek reported on the festivities. Wilson’s intention for the LGBTQ+ History Month curriculum was to share it with school districts across the country, but it was met with backlash from conservatives, including the evangelical non-profit Concerned Women for America. The month continued through the 1990s, but soon lost momentum when fewer organizations expressed less interest in observing the month and funding dwindled.

It wasn’t until 2006 when Equality Forum began picking 31 LGBTQ+ people to recognize through the month of October that LGBTQ+ History Month made a comeback. Six years later, two school districts — the Broward County school district in Florida and the Los Angeles school district — formally recognized the month. Now, many universities and school districts hold events throughout the month of October celebrating LGBTQ+ history and supporting queer students.

How National Coming Out Day is being celebrated across the Carolinas

National Coming Out Day will be celebrated across the Carolinas through events designed to not only honor LGBTQ+ history, but to show queer residents they are supported and welcomed.

Some events include:
- **North Carolina State University** will be hosting its annual PrideFest on Oct. 3. The festival, which will be at Stafford Commons, is meant to “recognize and honor the valuable contributions of LGBTQ+ members of our Wolfpack and their allies,” according to the event’s website. PrideFest will start at 3 p.m.
- **North Carolina A&T University** will host a National Coming Out Stories and Panel Discussion, where faculty, students and community members will share their coming out stories. Lunch will be provided for attendees.
- **Clemson University** will hold ally trainings on Oct. 10 for faculty, staff and students on how to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community through awareness, empathy, action and advocacy. There will also be a National Coming Out Day festival on Oct. 11.
- **Elon University**, in the week leading up to National Coming Out Day, will host various educational events for its students and faculty. Exact details haven’t been released.

Panel Discussion, where faculty, students and community members will share their coming out stories. Lunch will be provided for attendees.

Clemson University will hold ally trainings on Oct. 10 for faculty, staff and students on how to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community through awareness, empathy, action and advocacy. There will also be a National Coming Out Day festival on Oct. 11.

Elon University, in the week leading up to National Coming Out Day, will host various educational events for its students and faculty. Exact details haven’t been released.

Panel Discussion, where faculty, students and community members will share their coming out stories. Lunch will be provided for attendees.

Clemson University will hold ally trainings on Oct. 10 for faculty, staff and students on how to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community through awareness, empathy, action and advocacy. There will also be a National Coming Out Day festival on Oct. 11.

Elon University, in the week leading up to National Coming Out Day, will host various educational events for its students and faculty. Exact details haven’t been released.
National Coming Out Day is celebrat-
ed every year on Oct. 11, recognize-
ing the bravery of LGBTQ+ people
who decide to come out and live openly. At QNotes, we are dedicated to report-
ing on the LGBTQ+ communities across
the Carolinas and advocating for a world
where we all can be our true selves, re-
gardless of gender identity, sexual orienta-
tion, race, socioeconomic status and more.

This year, QNotes staff members were
asked to share why National Coming Out
Day is important to them and why it’s
important to honor the courage it takes to be
“out” in today’s day and age. Here’s what
some staff had to say:

Taylor Heeden, Staff Writer

“There will not be a magic
day when we wake up and it’s
now okay to express ourselves
publicly. We make that
day by doing things publicly
until it’s simply the way things are.”

This quote from Tammy Baldwin —
the first openly gay U.S. Senator to be
elected to office — came from a speech
she gave at the Millennium March for
Equality. She spoke directly to queer
Americans, urging them to be out and be
proud of who they are. By doing so, she
argued it would lead to the normalization
of non-heterosexual orientations.

National Coming Out Day was es-
established in 1988 a year after the 1987
National March on Washington for Lesbian
and Gay Rights and serves as a way to
honor LGBTQ+ people who aren’t afraid to
share their true, authentic selves with the
world. It’s a day to honor those activists
and community members who risked their
lives and fought tooth and nail just to exist
alongside their peers.

As a bisexual woman who is going
to marry a cis, heterosexual man this coming
April, I haven’t divulged my sexual orienta-
tion to everyone in my life, including some
of my family members, friends, former col-
leagues and others. Part of me has avoided
doing so because I am in what appears to be
a heterosexual relationship, but I would
be naive for me to say it’s just because of
my relationship with my fiancé. The truth
is it’s been easier to hide aspects of my
identity and mask myself from the world,
but I’m tired of being afraid of what others
may think of me. I want my family to know
all of me, not just the parts I’ve let them see
my whole life.

As Baldwin says, in order to designata-
zize our community, we need to be out;

L’Monique King, Staff Writer

National Coming Out Day is a great
way of provid-
ing us with
recognition
to those of us who are
members of the LGBTQ
community and desire to
live fully by ac-
knowledging to ourselves
and others who we are. How we live and
love is part of affirming our identities and
often fuels us in our quest for equity and
justice. Sometimes the equity we seek is in
our own homes while at other times we’re
working and advocating collectively for us
as a whole. Whatever the case, coming out
can be hard, frightening and even danger-
ous. Needless to say, it certainly takes cour-
age — making days like National Coming Out
Day even more important. I think this
day gives us strength and courage. Now
more than ever our voices and visibility
matter.

For me, a femme with the blessing and
burden of being able to socially camou-
flage, it’s a designated time to shout from
the rooftops, “I am lesbian, out and proud!”
It is an opportunity to be seen without be-
ing wrapped in rainbow colors or needing
a visible connection to my butch partner
or participation in an LGBTQ organization
or event. It is also a time to reach back and
assist any newly out person (struggling with
identity and acceptance) with an outpour-
ing of love and support.

David Aaron Moore, Senior Content
Editor

I came out as a
teenager before I
knew National
Coming Out Day
existed. I had a fam-
ily that was encour-
ging during a period
when most were not.

Even though some acquaintances weren’t
as accepting, I still felt fortunate. Family and
any hetero friends of significance were hap-
py to see me comfortable with myself and
supportive of my long-term relationships,
as well. I’ve never taken that for granted
because I’ve known many people who have
experienced rejection from friends and
family and witnessed their pain.

Over the past several years I’ve had the
privilege of helping my sister raise her son
after her wife passed away (mothers in
my family). One recent morning when I
was taking my nephew to school we talked
about National Coming Out Day. I told him
it made me think of the many people I
knew who were brave and bold and came
out despite the adversity they faced, espe-
cially when being gay was called a crime
and before marriage equality became law.

My nephew is now 14, and he recently
confirmed he identifies as pansexual and
part of the LGBTQ+ community, too. I asked
him what he thought National Coming Out
day meant to him.

“It’s a time people should be happy
about who they are, come out and be
proud of themselves,” he offered. “At least
people can come out without a problem.”

What about people who can’t come out
or are not out? “If you have friends or
school who have parents that don’t ap-
prove?” I asked.

“It’s a day we need to let them know
we’re the family who accepts them,” he
replied. “Especially right now. Trump made
things all weird.”

His last sentence was simple, but
straight to the point. It also made me ex-
pand my concept of what National Coming
Out Day means now, even more so. Be as
out as you can on National Coming Out
Day and every day to remind those who want
to push us back in the closet and cancel our
culture that we’ll never stop fighting for the
right to be ourselves.

Chris Rudisill, Audience Engagement

As a writer and staff member
for QNotes and an art-
ist working in the me-
diums of paint, fiber and pho-
tography, I feel it’s
important to acknowl-
edge the signifi-
cance of the Keith Haring artwork that has
become a symbol for National Coming Out
Day. Haring, who died of AIDS-related
complications in 1990, designed the
original poster in 1988 for an organization
known as National Gay Rights Advocates,
who played a large part in creating National
Coming Out Day, jubilantly “coming out” of
a black void, Haring’s signature yellow
figure bursts into a room of color (see page
14 bottom). It represents the freedom and
joy that coming out brings. I didn’t come
to out to family and friends until I was in my
early 20s and only at that time did I truly
feel like I was completely revealing myself.
As LGBTQ+ people, we spend so much of
our early lives trapped by fear that is so-
often fueled by religion, politics and human
prejudice.

This National Coming Out Day, I hope
we celebrate our full colors, our full selves.
Whether you are young or old, if you came
out this year or decades ago, being who you
are is brightens that void for others,
welcoming them into the vibrant world that
Haring’s work has represented.

Jim Yarborough, Publisher

When I was a young boy
growing up in rural
Alabama
I had fun
playing with other
kids in the neighbor-
hood, doing stuff like mak-
ing mud pies with
the girls and riding bikes with the boys.
However, when I was a doctor, I liked
to play with the boys more than the girls.
I did not talk about it, but I certainly thought
about it. As I grew in age it became appar-
ent that interest, or should I say, attraction
to others of the same gender, was not
something one talked about.

The years rolled by. I had experiences
with some other teenagers and then some
young men and a couple of young women.
When I moved away, with my job, I felt
freer to be more active. I started seeing
someone and I guess you could say he
became my first boyfriend. However, I still
did not talk about it.

One day we went to the mall. As we
were walking around window shopping and
people watching, out of the blue I turned to
Will, my boyfriend, and said, “Will, I am gay.”
A ton of weight immediately lifted off of
my shoulders. I had never even said those
terms to myself, much less said them out
loud to someone else.

To this day, I believe in the strength
of words. That is what National Coming Out
Day is all about. It gives us the
strength to put words to what we are and
how we feel. It gives us the opportunity
to share ourselves with others. Our
authentic selves. That makes us and the
entire community stronger::

Carolinas

QNotes staff share their thoughts on coming out and the history behind National Coming Out Day

By QNotes Staff

September 29 – October 12, 2023

Qnotes 15
Special days & dates to remember in October

The Qnotes guide to important days throughout the month

A as the weather turns from hot and humid to cool and crisp, various holidays are recognized. From lighthearted ones such as International Pizza Day and Halloween to the ones of reflection and honor such as National Coming Out Day and Indigenous People’s Day, the fall season is filled with a wide array of celebrations.

In fact, there are hundreds of holidays, awareness months and awareness weeks just in the month of October. But don’t worry, QNotes has created a select guide of some of October’s most important holidays and what meaning they hold.

LGBTQ+ History Month
LGBTQ+ History Month — which hasn’t been formally recognized by the United States government — has been celebrated in many communities across the globe since it was established in 1994.

It was created by Missouri high school history teacher Rodney Wilson, who made it his goal to create a curriculum to educate K-12 students on queer history. Now, many universities and school districts hold events throughout the month of October celebrating LGBTQ+ history and supporting queer students.

AIDS Awareness Month
AIDS Awareness Month, recognized every October, serves to support those currently diagnosed with HIV/AIDS as well as honor those who have died from the disease.

LGBTQ+ individuals were disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS, and as recently as 2019, gay and bisexual men made up almost 70 percent of the new HIV diagnoses.

Over 37 million around the globe are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, and AIDS Awareness Month emphasizes the importance of widely providing accurate information regarding public information about its prevention, transmission, and treatment.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Month is observed every October with the mission of educating women and men about the importance of keeping up with their breast health. Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States — with nearly 300,000 people estimated to be diagnosed. More than 43,000 people will die of breast cancer in 2023.

LGBTQ+ people actually have a higher risk for breast cancer over their heterosexual peers due to overall lifestyle differences. LGBTQ+ people statistically drink and smoke more than heterosexual patients, leading to an increased risk for cancer. However, the largest reason for the heightened risk, according to UPMC Health Beat, is the lack of inclusive health care. Our community far too often doesn’t receive cancer screenings as regularly as cisgender straight people. Cancer screenings can find changes in the breast tissue before it becomes cancer.

Asexual Awareness Week
Asexual Awareness Week is celebrated during the last full week of October and was created in 2010. Asexual-identifying individuals historically been pushed out from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ spaces, so Asexual Awareness Week is meant to recognize this often overlooked community.

According to the website Ace Week: “The Ace community has made significant headway over the years. Asexual representation in mainstream media continues to improve, major LGBTQ+ organizations now acknowledge and include us, and ace community groups have sprouted up and flourished in cities around the world. Ace Week gives us an opportunity to recognize these achievements and the efforts that made them possible.”

World Mental Health Day
LGBTQ+ people, particularly youth, are more likely to suffer from poor mental health, including anxiety and depression. According to the Trevor Project, 73 percent of LGBTQ+ youth reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety while 58 percent experienced symptoms of depression. In addition, 45 percent of queer youth seriously considered suicide in the past year, and 14 percent attempted suicide. Oct. 10 is when World Mental Health Day is recognized across the globe. The main goal of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health and drive positive change for everyone’s mental health.

Indigenous People’s Day
Indigenous People’s Day is celebrated on the second Monday of October, the same day as Columbus Day.

Indigenous People’s Day started as a counter-celebration to Columbus Day, as many people share disdain for the violence and illness Christopher Columbus and his crew brought to the Americas through colonization. North Carolina — home to eight different Indigenous tribes — is one of at least 12 states that don’t celebrate Columbus Day.

National Transgender Children Day
Oct. 26 is National Transgender Children Day and honors trans youth who are afraid to “come out of the closet” or are unable to out of fear for their safety or acceptance.

According to the day’s website: “It is a day to open your arms and welcome these children and let them feel included in the family and community. Transgender children are less likely to announce their gender status as compared to transgender adults. This is because their survival is mainly dependent on their parents’ reactions to their declaration. Hence, parents should strive to be more understanding to them from this day onward.”

Spirit Day for LGBTQ+ Youth
Spirit Day is known as one of the most recognized anti-bullying campaigns aimed at LGBTQ+ youth across the United States celebrated on the third Thursday in October. Many organizations are participating in the #SpiritDay campaign, including GLAAD, the National LGBTQ+ Task Force and more.

Q-immunity connections
space starting at $22:
call qnotes for details
704.531.9988

CARISSA EICHLER
704-910-7643
REAL ESTATE BROKER NC #346894
WEB SITE: carissaeichler.exprealty.com
EMAIL: carissa.eichler@exprealty.com

MANSCAPE:
real estate by mike thomas
704-400-2343
call or text: 704-642-2343

Relax…to a therapeutic or erotic body rub
given by attractive, experienced professionals.
704.651.6899
4 hands available, by longest couple doing so.

A Day / Night
Massages 24/7
704-713-1952

MCC
NEW LIFE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
God loves YOU, just the way you are!

NEW LIFE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
SUNDAYS AT 7:00 P.M. 1201 SOUTH NEW HOPE ROAD GASTONIA
Rev. Denise Flynn, Pastor www.NewLifeMCCNC.org NewLifeMCCGastonial@gmail.com
For LGBTQ History Month: a guide to gay America in 1972

Jesse’s Journal

by Jesse Monteagudo
Qnotes Contributing Writer

In 1971, John Paul Hudson, writing as John Francis Hunter, published The Gay Insider (The Other Traveller), “a Hunter’s Guide to New York and a Thesaurus of Phallic Lore.” One of a crop of “gay lib” books published in the wake of the Stonewall Uprising (1969), The Gay Insider featured lists of “happy hunting grounds for horny homosexuals (male), including bars, baths, streets and parks, the beaches, the restrooms and the balconies” in Manhattan as well as on Fire Island and the Hamptons. “These are fun times in Fun City … and the greatest place in the country to be ‘liberated,’” said Hudson, ignoring still persistent bar raids and other flies in the lavender ointment.

In 1972 Hudson/Hunter, by now a columnist for The Advocate and Gay, expanded his outreach to cover all 50 States (and Puerto Rico) in The Gay Insider USA (Stonehill). He referred to his new book as “an eclectic guide to where the male homosexuals can find love, companionship, truth, beauty, sex, God, liberation … anywhere in Gay America.” For this edition, Hunter included “new free gays,” groups like Gay Activists Alliance and activists like Morris Kight of Los Angeles and David Goldman of Chicago.

1972 was the year Miami Beach hosted both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, a fact that Hunter mentioned in his section on Florida. Then as now, the Sunshine State was officially antigay while accommodating an active gay community: “Whatever the political climate in Florida, my response from bar owners and management was just about the heartiest in The Union. … If the most controversial people and places are the most stimulating, Florida should provide high entertainment for all of us.”

Despite all that, Florida had more queer bars in 1972 than it does now. The Gay Insider USA lists 15 gay or mixed pubs and clubs in Miami (including Coconut Grove and Coral Gables) and eight bars on Miami Beach. It also featured venues in Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Hallandale, Hollywood, Lake Worth and West Palm Beach. (On the other hand, Key West had one listing and Wilton Manors had none.) Often, Hunter’s descriptions are as entertaining as they were useful. For example, he described Warehouse VIII, an early favorite of mine in Little Havana, as a “huge place; [with] a suspended horse-drawn cart; [and] pool tables. Upstairs is a swinging bar, but not too friendly to outsiders,” which did not keep it from being recommended. The Regency Baths, a club in downtown Miami, featured a “young crowd, very popular steam room and gym. Home away from home.” (Don’t ask me. I was never there.) If we can believe The Gay Insider, the Regency never had any police harassment, three years before the Club Miami was famously raided.

Unlike its predecessor, The Gay Insider USA limited its scope to bars and baths, leaving out other places where gay and bi men cruised, such 21st Street and Virginia Beaches; Bayfront Park; the Greyhound Bus Station, etc. Though it is no longer useful as a guidebook, The Gay Insider USA is a delightful and informative book on commercial gay male life as it was lived in 1972. Hudson ignored the vast majority of gay men who lived quiet, mostly closeted lives, centering on the bar flies and disco bunnies. Even so, it’s worth picking up a copy, if you can find one.

Jesse Monteagudo is a freelance writer and South Florida resident since 1964. Share your own experiences with him at jessemonteagudo@comcast.net.

Sweeten your love life!

Peaches
Adult Boutique & Arcade
OPEN 24/7
115 Swain Street, Fayetteville, NC. 910-339-2770
facebook.com/PeachesAdultBoutique1

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

GET TESTED
FREE Confidential Testing
Rapid HIV | Rapid HEP C
Chlamydia & Gonorrhea

WALK-IN TESTING
Monday - Thursday
8:30 am - 6:00 pm
Friday 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

STAY HEALTHY
Gay Friendly Primary Care
HIV Specialty Care
PrEP and PEP

Affinity HEALTH CENTER
877.647.6363
455 Lakeshore Pkwy.
Rock Hill, SC 29730

affinityhealthcenter.org/get-tested
"Fair Play: How Sports Shape the Gender Debates"

Out in Print

by Terri Schlichenmeyer
Qnotes Staff Writer

“Fair Play: How Sports Shape the Gender Debates” by Katie Barnes
c.2023, St. Martin’s Press
$29.00
304 pages

The jump shot happened so quickly, so perfectly.
Your favorite player was in the air in a heartbeat, basketball in hand, wrist cocked. One flick and it was all swish, three points, just like that, and your team was ahead. So are you watching men’s basketball or women’s basketball? Or, as in the new book, “Fair Play” by Katie Barnes, should it really matter?

For sports fans, this may come as a surprise: We categorize sports according to gender.
Football, baseball, wrestling: male sports. Gymnastics, volleyball: women’s sports. And yet, one weekend spent cruising around television shows you that those sports are enjoyed by both men and women – but we question the sexuality of athletes who dare (gasp!) to cross invisible lines for a sport they love.

How did sports “become a flash point for a broader conversation...?”

Barnes takes readers back first to 1967, when Kathrine Switzer and Bobbi Gibb both ran in the Boston Marathon. It was the first time women had audaciously done so and while both finished the race, their efforts didn’t sit well with the men who made the rules.

“Thirty-seven words” changed the country in 1972 when Title IX was signed, which guaranteed there’d be no discrimination in extracurricular events, as long as “Federal financial assistance” was taken. It guaranteed availability for sports participation for millions of girls in schools and colleges. It also “enshrined protections for queer and transgender youth to access school sports.”

So why the debate about competition across gender lines?

First, says Barnes, we can’t change biology, or human bodies that contain both testosterone and estrogen, or that some athletes naturally have more of one or the other – all of which factor into the debate. We shouldn’t forget that women can and do compete with men in some sports, and they sometimes win. We shouldn’t allow overinflated numbers of trans athletes to stand, and we shouldn’t ignore the presence of transgender men in sports.

What we should do, Barnes says, is to “write a new story. One that works better.”

Here are two facts: Nobody likes change. And everybody has an opinion.

Keep those two statements in mind when you read “Fair Play.” They’ll keep you calm in this debate, as will author Katie Barnes’ lack of flame-fanning.

As a sports fan, an athlete, and someone who’s binary, Barnes makes things relatively even-keel in this book, which is a breath of fresh air in what’s generally ferociously contentious. There’s a good balance of science and social commentary here, and the many, many stories that Barnes shares are entertaining and informative, as well as illustrative. Readers will come away with a good understanding of where the debate lies.

But will this book make a difference?

Maybe. Much will depend on who reads and absorbs it. Barnes offers plenty to ponder, but alas, you can lead a homophobic horse to water but you can’t make it think. Still, if you’ve got skin in this particular bunch of games, find “Fair Play” and jump on it.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

“A MUST READ GIVEN HOW DIVISIVE THIS ISSUE HAS BECOME.” — JULIE FORDY

FAIR PLAY
HOW SPORTS SHAPE THE GENDER DEBATES

3552 Beatties Ford Rd. Charlotte, NC 28216
704-394-8968

Free Rapid STI Testing
HIV | Hep C | Chlamydia | Gonorrhea | Syphilis

Need PrEP?
Let us help you get PrEP for FREE!
PRESCRIBED ONLINE, DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR.

www.qchealth.org
A Quality Comprehensive Health Center Program

AMITY MEDICAL GROUP
Adult & Pediatric Primary Care

Accepting New Patients, Private Insurance, Medicare & Medicaid

- Primary Care
- Pediatric Exams & Immunizations
- Diabetes Care
- Addiction Medicine-MAT
- LGBTQIA+ Care
- HIV & Infectious Disease Care
- On Site Pharmacy

704-208-4134 amitymed.org  @amitymedicalgroup
Carin Leon performs at Spectrum Center October 8
Charlotte performance final appearance on US tour

by Taylor Heeden
Qnotes Staff Writer

The sound of Hermosillo, Sonora will be coming to the Spectrum Center at 8 p.m. on Oct. 8, when Latin artist Carin Leon takes the stage for an evening of heartfelt ranchera, corrido, banda and sierren music. The Charlotte concert is a part of Leon’s United States tour, “Colmillo de Leche.” Leon is expected to play some of his greatest hits, including “Primera cita,” “Que vuelvas,” “El tóxico” and more.

Leon’s tour started in August when he kicked it off to a huge crowd at AllState Arena in Rosemont, Ill. Charlotte’s concert will be the final concert of the anticipated tour. Prior to coming to Charlotte, Leon will be joining other notable Latin artists — including DannyLux, Peso Pluma, Hyde, Ivy Queen, Shakira and more — for the 2023 Billboard Latin Music Week at Miami Beach from Oct. 2 to Oct. 6.

According to Billboard, Leon kicked off his solo career in 2018, which he explained was something he always wanted to do. “I grew up in a family where music was around 24 hours,” Leon told Billboard. “I don’t recall the exact moment that I began doing this as a profession but I liked it and I started to develop it as a job and make a living from it.”

He was born in Hermosillo, Sonora in Mexico, and it’s those roots where Leon finds his unique musical sound. Leon’s fusion of regional Mexicana music with pop-inspired beats have created a unique sound, but it wasn’t until 2018 that Leon had his big break when a video of him performing his former group Grupo Arranque’s song “A traves del vaso” at a festival amassed a whopping 10 million views.

After his viral video, Leon released two songs: “Me la avente” and “Tú” — that took off on the Billboard Hot Latin Songs, Latin Airplay and Regional Mexican Airplay charts. He has become one of the most streamed Latin artists with over 19 million monthly listeners on Spotify and has collaborated with artists such as Mau y Ricky and Grupo Firme.

Side by side
Q-Music

by Gregg Shapiro
Qnotes Staff Writer

The word “side” means different things to different people. For example, ask a gay man what a side is and prepare yourself for the answer. When it comes to music, “side” can take on a few meanings, including being a member of a band or orchestra. For the purpose of this column, the focus is on side projects (making music with musicians other than the ones with which they’re typically associated), as well as some solo works.

There’s something fascinating about straight men, such as James Murphy (of LCD Soundsystem) and Ben Gibbard (of The Postal Service), who make positively irresistible dance music. Will Butler, best known for his time as a member of Arcade Fire, launched his solo career in 2015 and officially left Arcade Fire a couple of years ago. With his new album “Will Butler & Sister Squares” (Merge), performed by Butler and his longtime backing band Sister Squares, featuring non-binary musician Miles Francis, he enters Murphy and Gibbard’s realm. It’s a safe bet to say that anyone listening will find it extremely challenging to sit still and not jump to their feet to move and groove to the songs “Long Grass,” “Saturday Night,” “Stop Talking,” “Arrow of Time,” “Hue Loop” and “Willows.” Non-dance numbers “Car Crash” and “I’m Standing in a Room,” are also worth repeated listens.

Juliana Hatfield has been a member of a few bands over the course of her lengthy career, including Blake Babies, The Juliana Hatfield Three and Some Girls, to mention a few. In recent years, Hatfield has focused on her solo career, which features stellar releases such as 2021’s highly recommended “Blood.” Among her solo projects, Hatfield has been exploring the work of other artists, as in the case of 2018’s “Juliana Hatfield Sings Olivia Newton-John” and 2019’s “Juliana Hatfield Sings The Police.” The interesting thing about these albums is that Hatfield is recording covers of songs by artists whose work is not known to be reinterpreted all that much. Her latest album, “Juliana Hatfield Sings ELO” (American Laundromat), is another good example. How many Electric Light Orchestra cover tunes have you ever heard? Not only is it enjoyable to hear these songs usually sung by a man (ELO’s Jeff Lynne) performed by a woman, but Hatfield also strikes a respectful balance between tribute and reinvention.

For instance, her takes on “Showdown” and “Don’t Bring Me Down” stay close to the originals, while on her versions of “Strange Magic,” “Can’t Get It Out of My Head” and “Telephone Line,” she makes her own. Along with Juliana Hatfield and Fred Love Smith (whose amazing new book “I Quit Everything” is recommended reading), John P. Strohm was a member of the above-mentioned Blake Babies. While he hasn’t been as prolific a solo artist as Hatfield or Smith, Strohm’s output has been well-received by his fans. The aptly titled “Something to Look Forward To” (Propeller Sound), Strohm’s fourth studio album, and his first in 15 years, is a thing of beauty. “Ruins” sounds like a lost track from a John Lennon solo album, “This American Lie” is a gorgeous political statement on which he’s joined by Courtney Marie Andrews on vocals. “Troubleland” and “Don’t Tell It to Your Heart” have a Blake Babies feel to them complete with female vocals by Erin Rae and Kate Tucker, respectively. Heartbreak and loss pulse softly through the title track and “Counting Backwards. “Come Fetch My Soul” (Yep Roc) by SunYears (Peter Morén of Peter Bjorn and John) is as much a solo project as it is a collaborative effort. Morén has enlisted a knockout line-up of guest artists, including Ron Sexsmith (whose new album “The Vivian Line” is one of the best of the year), Jess Williamson, the band Fruit Bats and Kathryn Williams. In addition to the American via Sweden instrumental “Two Birds, Mid-Flight,” songs such as the title cut, “Granddad’s Song” (the second song mentioned in this column that sounds like a lost John Lennon composition), the gently loping “A Dog’s Life,” the bouncy Every Brothers tribute “Last Night I Dreamt I Met Phil & Don” and the beautiful “Wake Up!” all shine brightly. Wreckless Eric (aka Eric Goulden) has been making music since the late 1970s. In recent years, the self-described “momentary pop star” and former Stiff Records recording artist has been releasing collaborative albums with his wife, gifted singer/songwriter Amy Rigby (listen to her “Diary of a Mod Housewife” album as soon as you’re able), as well as solo efforts. The latest is “Leaves & Ladders” (Tapete), a timeless collection of 15 tunes, of which “Standing Water,” “Inside the Majestic,” “Drag Time,” “They Come Free With Cornflakes” and the near psychedelic “Standing Sunday Morning” and “High Seas (Won & Lost),” prove that he’s still got it.
The season for a better you

ROSEDALE
HEALTH + WELLNESS

DUDLEY’S PLACE

Nourishing community while providing the area’s best HIV care.

704.977.2972  704.948.8582  @TheDudleysPlace @MyRosedaleHealth dudleysplace.org myrosedalehealth.com