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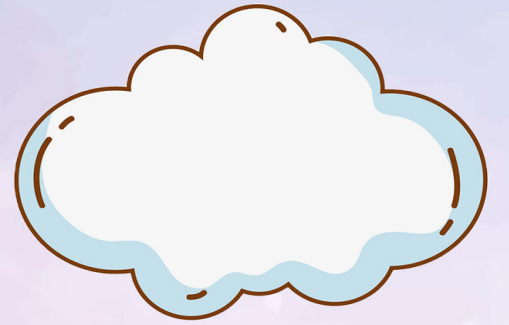
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The impact of
politics on
healthcare and
our community

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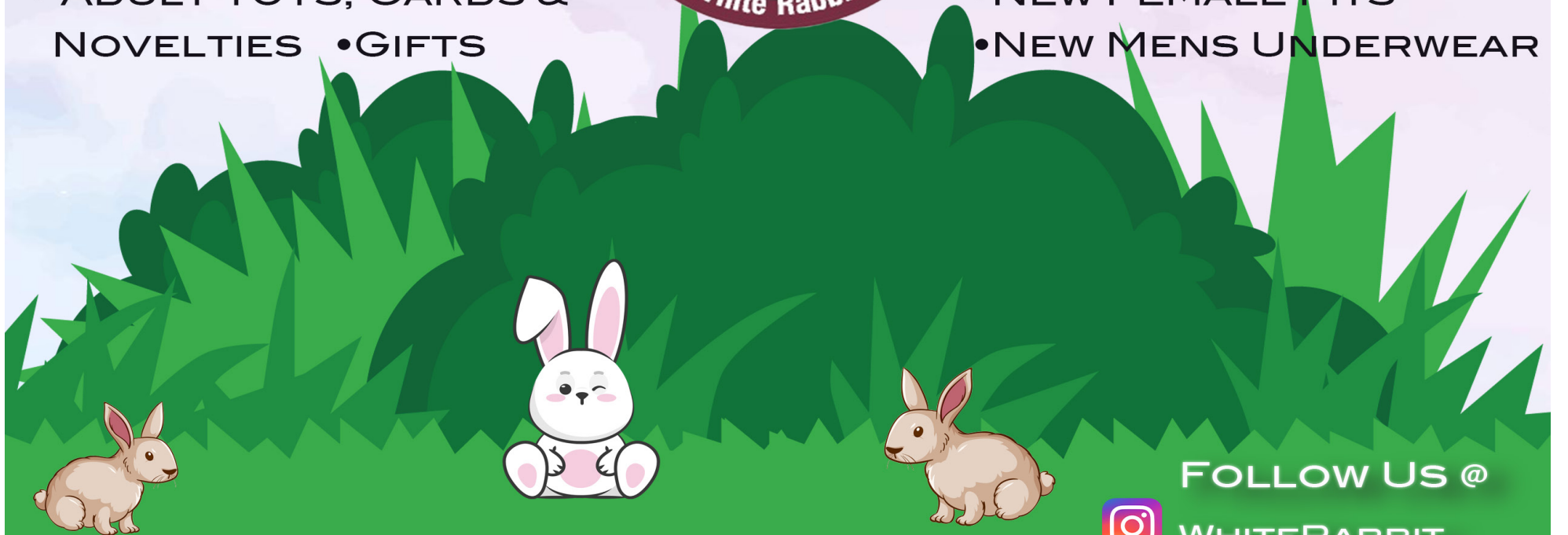


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Mission:

The focus of QNotes is to serve the LGBTQ and straight ally communities of the Charlotte region, North Carolina and beyond, by featuring arts, entertainment, news and views content in print and online that directly enlightens, informs and engages the readers about LGBTQ life and social justice issues.

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Asheville's Scandals closes after 44 Years

Since 1982, Scandals has made its home in a historic (reportedly built in 1924) building located at 11 Grove Street, along with Nightclub 11 on Grove and the live music venue The Boiler Room, all a part of Grove House Entertainment Company. More importantly, it served as a social hotspot and safe space for multiple generations of the LGBTQ+ community. Although a new location has yet to be confirmed, owners say they're in search mode.

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All about the Carolina Ascent Football Club

Team members of Carolinas Ascent celebrate victory while VP of Marketing and Communications Ashley Osiecki talks about women's soccer in the US, team and fanbase inclusivity, theme nights and involvement with the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber. "It's really exciting to see how passionate the fans are who have come out [and] how excited they are to have a women's pro soccer team based in Charlotte," says Osiecki

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Lesbian Political Action Committee director Michelle Atwood fights the good fight

Advocacy group stands up for the rights of women and the greater LGBTQ+ community



by Wendy Lyons
Qnotes Staff Writer

As the world observes Women's History Month, the spotlight turns to the critical role of gender affirmation by women's advocacy groups, while we navigate today's increasingly unsettling political climate.

Many of these groups are not only fighting for the rights of women, but are also standing up for the broader LGBTQ+ community, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their identity, are recognized and respected.

LPAC (Lesbian Political Action Committee) is an organization whose mission is to help elect LGBTQ women and non-binary individuals to political offices in an effort to promote growth, strength and stability for our entire community. This small and vital organization is dedicated to empowering and uplifting those and insuring ensuring that their rights and concerns are prioritized in political discourse. According to www.teamlpac.com: "Since the creation of LPAC in 2012, more than \$7.1 million has been raised and invested

in candidates and more than 255 elected candidates have been endorsed by LPAC."

In an effort to gain a greater understanding of what the organization does, we spoke with Michelle Atwood, LPAC's National Political and PAC Director to learn more about the organizations.

Wendy Lyons: How does your role support LPAC?

Michelle Atwood: As the National Political and PAC Director, I am the person in charge of our campaign support. I provide direct support to



our endorsed candidates. I manage the endorsement process. When folks reach out to us, we have them complete an endorsement questionnaire covering a series of intersectional issues that impact the Queer Community. I then do an endorsement interview with them and finally present them as a recommendation for endorsement to our board, who votes on our endorsements. I'm kind of available as a free consultant

to the campaign. I'm available to chat through any elements of their voter contact plan, their messaging or anything like that. A lot of times these candidates are first time candidates and they're running for smaller seats where they might not have the budget to hire actual campaign staff. That's where we come in to offer our knowledge and expertise. We're kind of a free resource for them to try to level the playing fields and help them get across the finish line.

WL: What is the primary mission of your organization, and how does it specifically support LGBTQ+ women and non-binary individuals?

MA: LPAC's mission is to elect LGBTQ women and non-binary folks at every level of office. We're a national organization and we support candidates at every level of office from town council all the way up to Congress or President. That's the reason we're really trying to build that pipeline. So often local offices are the first line of defense especially in a national environment that is so hostile to LGBTQ and Trans individuals right now. It's really our local officials and state legislators who are needing to fight the good fight and be the defense for folks in

their local districts.

WL: What are some of the current projects or initiatives LPAC is working on to promote LGBTQ+ rights and visibility?

MA: We have a PAC and also have a C4 and a C3 arm of the organization. We're building out more programs on the C3 side of things in response to the current landscape and environment. We're working on some training for the general public and elected officials on messaging around LGBTQ rights and Trans rights. So often we see people get put into these corners by conservatives and anti-LGBTQ persons. Folks are coming at them and we really want to equip people with message tested talking points to push back on that and not hurt their campaign. We want to provide them with messaging and local context that has data behind it that we know is effective. Some messaging that works in California might not necessarily work best in Texas or Florida. The bulk of our work is that campaign and candidate support.

WL: What are some challenges that LPAC found LGBTQ+ women candidates face today and how does your organization help to address those issues here in the Carolinas?

MA: In North Carolina we supported

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Michelle Atwood, LPAC's National Political and PAC Director
CREDIT: Courtesy of Michelle Atwood

that she won re-election as the only LGBTQ woman serving in the North Carolina State Senate. We supported Santana Deberry for Attorney General, LaWana Mayfield for Charlotte City Council At-Large, and several others including Vernetta Alston [and] Allison Dahle. We pride ourselves at LPAC for getting in races early because early support matters. A big issue LGBTQ women and non-binary folks contend with [against] male candidates is the big issue of whether or not they will get support early on or if people will vote for them. We did research this year and found that the reasons LGBTQ and non-binary folks are running for office is so community rooted. They are not running

to advance their own political aspirations or their own power and status. It's in response to issues in the community or their community members ask them to run. We've had a 72 percent win rate since our founding in 2012. We don't make endorsements based on whether or not we think folks are going to win, but base on what they are doing.

WL: Does a candidate need to contact LPAC or does LPAC seek out candidates?

MA: It goes both ways. Oftentimes folks will reach out to us through our contact form on our website and then I'll pass along our questionnaire. I'm always talking with partner organizations

and both national and local partner organizations. We share information on who we know is running. We're also monitoring social media and oftentimes will see for the first time that a candidate is running.

WL: Can you share a success story that stands out to you as an impactful moment that illustrates the difference your organization has made in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals?

MA: One that comes to mind is Representative Gabby Salinas, who became the first Democratic Latinx elected to the Tennessee legislature and the first out LGBTQ woman elected to the legislature in 2024. She had actually run in previous campaigns against a Republican Incumbent and came so incredibly close to unseating the Incumbent. She did not know about LPAC at that time. She was then redistricted into a safe Democratic seat and we were able to get behind her really early to make a difference in the Primary. We sent her a direct contribution. We worked really closely with her campaign as a small organization. We do what we can in terms of direct support and canvassing. We heard from her how impactful it was to her how LPAC supported her. Candidates in Tennessee and other places like North Carolina oftentimes don't feel as supported and very alone.

WL: As we try to navigate the current political climate, what are some of LPAC's goals for the next few years in terms of advocacy and support for LGBTQ women or non-binary folks?

MA: Our goal is to continue to build our community of LGBTQ women and

non-binary folks. I think every year it gets stronger despite these attacks, maybe even in response to these attacks. People turn to Community even more and get stronger because we're there for each other. You know we're all out there on the front lines and all we have is each other. We have a strong goal to continue showing up for our candidates because it's a really scary time to run for office. We want more folks to know that LPAC is there for them if they decide that it's right for them and they want to take that jump and run.

WL: As a call to action, what can readers do to support LPAC organization and the LGBTQ+ community at large?

MA: We're trying to get the word out about our work, our mission and about our endorsed candidates. This article really helps. Readers can sign up for our email list to stay in the loop about everything that we're working on so that we can all be on the same page as a community. I think that's a really great first step. Follow us on social media just in terms of building that national community as well. Pay more attention to local politics.

Additional information:

To sign up for LPAC's email list:
<https://www.teamlpac.com/join-us>

To donate to support LPAC's work:
<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/lpac>

To see current and past endorsed candidates and their platforms:
<https://www.teamlpac.com/endorsed-candidates-index>

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Trans woman Ervianna Johnson found dead in Tabor City NC

After several days of searching, a 25 year-old trans woman was found dead near her family's home in Tabor City, N.C. Multiple media reports, some of which had misgendered Johnson, indicate she left her home on Feb. 13 around 3 a.m. Reportedly, she left behind her keys, phone and other personal belongings, possibly suggesting the trip out should have been a quick one. After receiving no contact from her or an indication of her whereabouts over the weekend, Johnson's family filed a missing person's report on Feb. 16.

Johnson's body wasn't discovered

until Feb. 19. Deanna Dixon, Johnson's cousin, found her by a pond south of the Johnson family home laying face down without shoes.

As of Feb. 26, the Columbus County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) announced that Johnson's death was labeled as a homicide. To date, the state medical examiner's office has yet to turn in the final autopsy results pertaining to Johnson's case.

Johnson was fondly remembered by her family after the discovery. An extended family member, who identified as Quashema Reaves, recalled Johnson

as being the life of the party. "It was just a joyful moment every time [she] was around," Reaves said, speaking with WECT News 6. Dixon also relayed a message to the outlet from Johnson's mother. "[Her] mother said to let y'all know that's her baby. She wants justice. We're going to get justice," Dixon said.

From the posts on her social media, Johnson's bond with family was tight in the home they all shared in Tabor City. Many birthdays were celebrated, along with pictures and videos chronicling multiple gatherings. While working at a local LaQuinta Inn & Suites, Johnson also managed a side career as a digital content creator, where she used various channels to tell her story through images, videos and memes.

As reported by the Pittsburgh Lesbian TQ+ Correspondents, Johnson is the fourth trans person whose death has



Ervianna 'Baydee' Johnson was only 25. CREDIT: Screen Capture

been reported in 2025.

Anyone with information related to this case is urged to contact the Columbus County Sheriff's Office at 910-640-1428.::

—Jonathan Golian

Supreme Court agrees to hear case upholding Conversion Therapy Ban

This past March 10, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge to a Colorado law banning conversion therapy for LGBTQ+ minors, on the grounds that the law banning the practice clashed with First Amendment rights. If the court, which currently holds a 6-3 conservative majority, decides to overturn the ban, along with other state-wide bans like it, more than 20 states, including North Carolina, could see a resurgence of the practice.

Conversion therapy is the medically discredited practice of trying to change, modify or suppress a person's sexual or gender identity. The practice has shifted over the years, taking on such lengths as brain surgery, electric shocks, castration and hypnosis. Much of the theory that underlies the practice revolves around the assumption that anything

other than heterosexuality and gender nonconformity are mental disorders that can and should be "cured," a notion that has long-since been rejected by modern day mainstream medicine, psychology and psychiatry.

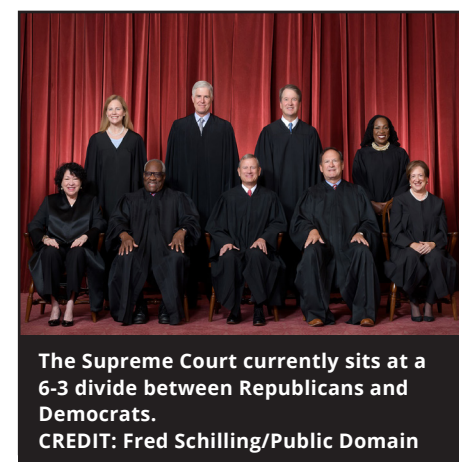
The Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law estimates that nearly 700,000 LGBTQ adults in the United States have undergone conversion therapy.

The Colorado case that has since risen to the Supreme Court revolves around a law that mostly bans the practice, which was put into place by the state in 2019. "Left out" of the writing of the law were counselors who "engaged in the practice of religious ministry," said Kaley Chiles, a licensed professional therapist with no background in ministry, yet holds

conservative Christian beliefs. Chiles challenged the constitutionality of the law in Colorado federal court, stating that it violated her rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion.

In 2024, a divided appeals court ruled against Chiles, arguing that Colorado is entitled to regulate a licensed professional's conduct to prevent such harm, along with citing evidence of conversion therapy hurting minors. Chiles's lawyers then moved to escalate the case to the Supreme Court, writing that as "a practicing Christian, Chiles believes that people flourish when they live consistently with God's design, including their biological sex."

As it currently stands, North Carolina only has a partial ban on the practice. In 2019, Governor Roy Cooper signed an executive order that stripped away any state funding that would have gone to fuel conversion therapy, including through the uses of Medicaid and Health Choice programs. North Carolina became the first state to have any sort of prohibitive action, however, the practice itself is still technically legal. Religious providers are still allowed to perform conversion therapy for adult patients who



The Supreme Court currently sits at a 6-3 divide between Republicans and Democrats. CREDIT: Fred Schilling/Public Domain

want to sign up for it.

In 2023, the Supreme Court had declined to hear a similar case which challenged Washington state's ban on the practice. However, as of the current political climate aimed against transgender issues, and with the court's recent invitation to hear the case, the previous opinions on the matter could easily be tipped, much like the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.::

—Jonathan Golian

Trump administration wants to cut CDC's HIV funding

The Trump Administration is considering eliminating funding for the CDC's HIV prevention division. According to Trump spokespeople, the CDC's responsibilities would be shifted over to a different agency in the Department of Health and Human Services.

In a memo making its way between HIV Health prevention advocates dated March 18, the time frame of the potential plan is said to be taking place in "48 hours" although the source familiar with the plan said it will most likely "be a little longer than that."

The CDC provides funds to states and territories for detecting and responding to HIV outbreaks, resources for syringe exchange, expanded testing in emergency rooms, education and awareness. The agency also promotes prevention and supports vital medications like the HIV prevention pill, known as PrEP. Roughly

one in four new diagnoses of HIV is made with agency funds.

HIV prevention advocates are sounding the alarm regarding the plot, warning that the sudden and massive change could lay the burden of prevention programs on the states. In the event the virus resurges, it could cost U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars as a result.

According to Jesse Milan, president and CEO of AIDS United, a nonprofit advocate group, there are approximately 1.1 to 1.2 million people who are highly vulnerable to acquiring HIV in the U.S.

"It would be devastating," Milan said. "The work is important because every new HIV transmission results in a person having a lifetime cost related to being HIV positive."

One prospective plan would be moving the CDC's prevention work to HHS's Health Resources and Services Administration agency, which also

participates in HIV work through The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

However, Milan is notably skeptical of this happening, saying that its work primarily deals with people with HIV, not prevention. "The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program does not fill all the HIV gaps," said Harold Phillips, deputy director for programs at NMAC, an advocacy group. "It only serves those with an HIV diagnosis."

Another potential plan being floated would be to cut as much as \$700 million from the CDC HIV division. This also hasn't been decided on yet.

In an emailed statement, Andrew Nixon, a spokesperson for HHS, said "no final decision on streamlining the CDC's HIV Prevention Division has been made."

"HHS is following the Administration's guidance and taking a careful look at all divisions to see where there is overlap that could be streamlined to support the President's broader efforts to restructure the federal government," Nixon said. "This is to ensure that HHS better serves the American people at the highest and most efficient standard."

According to a press release from



The massive cut could destabilize access and costs related to prevention medicines like PrEP.

Quality Comprehensive Health Care, the Trump administration is considering cutting as much as \$1 billion dollars.

The Charlotte-based organization is urging readers to contact members of congress immediately to prevent such action.

If you don't know your representative, you can find them here:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

You can also call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your representative or senator.::

—Jonathan Golian

Asheville's Scandals closes after 44 years

After a 44-year run, Asheville's legendary Scandals Nightclub is shutting the doors at its current downtown location.

Since 1982, the club had existed as a part of an historic building located at 1924 11 Grove Street, together with the Nightclub 11 on Grove and the live music venue The Boiler Room, all as a part of Grove House Entertainment Co.

Founded by Art Fryar, a community organizer, classical dancer, entrepreneur and drag artist, Scandals had been a safe haven for LGBTQ patrons throughout its lifetime. The night club played host to a number of events, from dance parties to drag shows, benefits for non-profits, and a center for political involvement.

In the early '80s, during a time of fear and widespread social stigma due to the AIDS epidemic, Scandals stood as one of the few gay-friendly safe spaces in the small mountain town. These days the town is much more of a city and has an abundance of queer spots supportive to the community.

"During that time, a lot of queer folks were just constantly carrying fear and hiding themselves and as soon as you walked in that door, you got to drop it," Joanna Knowles, a former Scandals bartender, said in an interview with National Public Radio. "To celebrate ourselves and to celebrate each other."

"In a world where much of society was

saying, 'You're dirty, You're disgusting,' Art was saying, 'You're gorgeous. Here's a spotlight,'" she recalled. "When things were scary and hard, he said, 'Hey, let's dance.'"

Knowles also remembered times in which Fryar, before his passing, would shift the club from a place of entertainment to one of invoking activism.

"He really activated queer folks," Knowles said. "When he was running the club, we voted in droves. It's the first time I as a young person realized that politicians work for us and that we have power and that we have a responsibility to each other to get informed and to show up."

Thankfully, Scandals itself doesn't yet seem content to remain within the annals of history. In a post from the club's Facebook, the owners explained the reasoning for the closure, along with the next moves for Scandals.

"The current landlord prefers that only one tenant occupy the entire property, and



Dancing the night away at Scandals in 2016. CREDIT: Facebook

the 22,000-square-foot, four-story building is more space than our business presently requires," the post reads. "We are actively scouting out venue spaces for Scandals Nightclub to make its grand return!" ::

—Jonathan Golian

'The Kick-off' marks Charlotte Black Pride's first event for 2025

Celebrating two decades of representing the Black LGBTQ+ community, Charlotte Black Pride (CBP) is set to blast into 2025 in style with "The Kick-off" on March 23.

The Kick-Off, which is expected to be one of many larger scale events this year, will be take place at the A1 Lounge, not far from Discovery Place.

The event is open to the public, breaking any barriers down for those who want to come and catch a glimpse of what the organization has coming up. The festivities start in the evening around 6 p.m., early enough to bring the family out but still get the kids back before bedtime.

On their event posts and pages over social media, CBP included an invitational

message for all those curious.

"Join us as we kick off 20 years of pride, community, and resilience. Charlotte Black Pride is here to empower the hearts, minds and spirits of all LGBTQIA people, embracing diversity, uplifting our community and driving social change. Together, we rise!"

In a previous interview with *Qnotes* this past February, CBP's Board of Directors Chair Shann Fulton had expressed their vision for the organization in 2025.

"We hope to [make] this the boldest year ... Charlotte Black Pride has been in existence," Fulton told *Qnotes*. "With the amount of people that we help in the community, we want that number to go up and be the biggest that we've ever

had. Most importantly this year, we want to see our organization in itself grow. As you know, the community has continued to get bigger, so those are some of our goals, because we want to have a more meaningful impact."

"My hope for 2025 in the Charlotte community is that all organizations, regardless of the background, could all just come together, and we get through not only this year, but the next three years, continuing to do the things that we've been doing, and we don't allow the current administration to discourage us from our work," Fulton offered. "Now we have to put boots on the ground even harder, along with looking at legislation and working on it. Even more so though, we all do it together as a unit and not as individuals."

"So I would like to see a lot more partnerships, a lot more camaraderie, and just a lot more of the community working together and coming together for the greater good of the whole."



Shann Fulton (Right) poses with other attendees at Charlotte Black Pride's Annual Holiday Giveback last December. CREDIT: Facebook

Charlotte Black Pride's "The Kick-Off" will be at the A1 Lounge at 616 North Tryon Street on March 23. Entry, participation and parking are all free for those attending the event. ::

—Jonathan Golian

The LGBT Center of Raleigh will open new facility in late 2025

In the latter half of 2025, the LGBT Center of Raleigh will be opening up a new center in the downtown area of the city.

After receiving a \$300,000 grant from Cooper Tacia General Contracting for the new center, the LGBTQ+ organization set its sights on opening the new location in late summer or early fall at 128 E. Cabarrus St., next to the Lincoln Theatre.

The news came as a mixture of reports from local outlets and the center itself. The LGBT Center of Raleigh's home page released a short statement.

"We are so excited to announce that we've secured a new space," the statement reads. "There is a lot of work to do to get it ready and we need your continued support. Join our LGBTQ+ History Month Fundraiser by donating today. Help us renovate the space so we can return to downtown Raleigh and provide services and host programs in a central location that is more accessible to the community."

In a separate report published by *The News & Observer*, more details are made public about the change of venue and what it would add to what the LGBT Center already offers.

In the new building, the center appears to have more resources aimed at helping people find housing. As reported by The Center for American Progress, 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ people face housing discrimination, with the numbers higher for transgender people, people of color or people who are disabled.

There is also slated to be a library that will reportedly hold the Southeast's largest collection of LGBTQ+ books and materials, along with gathering spaces for the LGBT center's support & social groups and a free clothing closet with gender-affirming clothes available.

Kori Hennessey, the executive director of the LGBT Center of Raleigh, stressed the need for areas where LGBTQ+ people can



The LGBT Center of Raleigh's current location. CREDIT: Facebook / LGBT Center of Raleigh

gather in "casual and comfortable ways."

"This is something that improves people's mental health," Hennessey stated. "Having and building community reduces the chances of other issues,

especially in the kind of violent climate that we live in right now, with a lot of people ... afraid to be themselves." ::

—Jonathan Golian

Community healthcare and the impact of politics

New administration cutting funds in areas they're desperately needed



by Wendy Lyons
Qnotes Staff Writer

The healthcare sector for the LGBTQ+ and transgender communities has faced significant challenges in recent years. Since January 20, 2025, this country has witnessed a wave of legislation aimed at restricting access to healthcare for transgender individuals and queer youth, on top of earlier Republican sponsored anti-trans bills from 2023 and 2024.

According to a recent post from *Translegislation.com*, "This year, thirty-nine bills have already passed. Of those, twenty-one have been signed into law. Eighteen others have passed, but haven't yet been vetoed or signed."

Florida and Texas for example, have enacted laws that limit access to puberty blockers and hormone therapies for minors. The implications of these laws extend beyond just healthcare. They signal a broader societal push against the human rights and dignity of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities.

Federal funding cuts to programs aimed at supporting LGBTQ+ individuals have further complicated the situation. The elimination or reduction of funding for initiatives that provide mental health services and substance abuse treatment to the queer community has left many without essential support systems. In 2024, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported a decrease in funding for programs specifically targeting LGBTQ+ populations, directly affecting organizations that provide gender-affirming healthcare and ancillary care services.

The current national political climate, characterized by alarming legislative and public funding cuts to healthcare programs and targeted political attacks



Staff and volunteers of Charlotte Trans Health.
CREDIT: Facebook

against transgender individuals and others in the queer community has worsened existing disparities.

Organizations like **Charlotte Trans Health** and **Quality Comprehensive Health Care** in Charlotte (QCHC), along with **Dudley's Place** and **Rosedale Health & Wellness** in Huntersville are at the local forefront of providing essential services

to our vulnerable communities.

This article explores the implications of some of these issues and underscores the urgent call to action for support of our local gender-affirming healthcare organizations.

Healthcare disparities in the queer community are well-documented. According to a 2024 report by the National Center for Transgender Equality, nearly 30 percent of transgender individuals reported being denied healthcare because of their gender identity. This statistic underscores the urgent need for gender-affirming and supportive medical providers.

"Medical providers who are affiliated with Charlotte Trans Health are very committed to continuing to provide quality healthcare," said Holly Savoy, Executive Director and Psychologist at Charlotte Trans Health.

Charlotte Trans Health, a key player in the region's healthcare landscape, has made it their mission to bridge these gaps. Their program "Providing Access to Healthcare" (PATH) is specifically designed to cater to the needs of the transgender community.

"You know there are different things that are starting to happen in healthcare, as we're seeing across the country," Savoy explained. "But we're continuing to provide care as best and as effectively as we can [and] we're continuing our PATH Program." The PATH program ensures that its clients feel respected and safe when receiving care.

Rosedale Health and Wellness works collaboratively with its nonprofit



Rosedale Health and Wellness at Charlotte Black Pride.
CREDIT: Facebook

subsidiary partner, **Dudley's Place**, to provide medical care and ancillary services in the Charlotte region to individuals living with HIV. The services include medical, mental, nutritional, educational and spiritual support including free and confidential testing.

Dale Pierce, Executive Director of Dudley's Place said, "We have four of the best medical providers who are either members of the queer community and can relate to their patients or are gender-affirming allies who all share the same common goal of providing equitable quality healthcare."

Rosedale Health and Wellness and **Dudley's Place** will promote their services as Huntersville's premier sponsor at the town's first Pride Festival coming up June 22.

"Seventy-five percent of the program



Dale Pierce, Executive Director of Dudley's Place.
CREDIT: Facebook

services are supported by federal and state funding," Pierce continued. "Any interruptions or funding cuts that support our programs, puts the organizations at risk of drastically scaling down services or potential closure."

Clearly, government funding cuts matter and the increase in cuts will continue to negatively impact our LGBTQ+ communities.

Dr. Ra'Shawn Flournoy, CEO at **Quality Comprehensive Health Center** (QCHC) shared a press release dated March 18, 2025, "We just heard very unfortunate news from our partners AIDS United that there is an effort underfoot to completely eliminate CDC's Division of HIV Prevention as quickly as with the next 24 hours."

QCHC offers primary care, specialized treatment, and preventive services to under served and at-risk communities. The organization is the recipient of President Biden's Lifetime Presidential Achievement award and the health center receives Health and Human Services funding.

"The current administration cut all program grant funding, which impacted services to clients and cuts to payroll and then the administration reversed their decision for now," said Flournoy.

Despite the volatile and wavering political climate, on April 3, 2025, the organization will host the grand opening of their new pharmacy, which will be a major benefit to its clients.

QCHC's program services that potentially could be impacted by future changes or cuts in federal policy and funding includes HIV testing, Substance Abuse Treatment, education on using PrEP in preventing HIV and their Power House Online platform where individuals can "Ask The Doc" confidential questions.

The aforementioned gender-affirming local organizations, as well as other similar organizations, provide essential services to our community. These organizations have seen an influx of patients seeking care amid the growing uncertainty surrounding healthcare and supportive care access. Individuals in the LGBTQ+ community are fearful and apprehensive, but many need on-going professional and peer support.

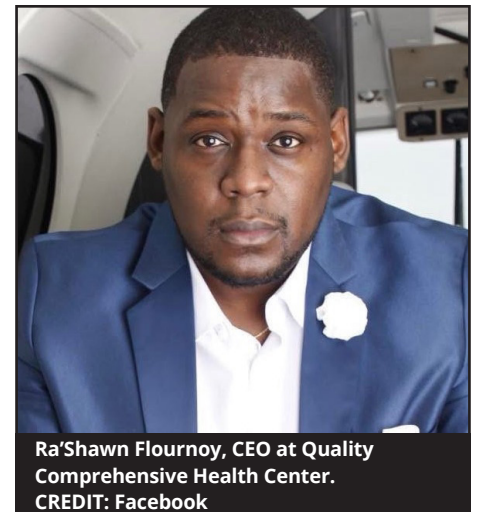
"We have a significant increase in attendance to our therapist lead support groups that we hold twice monthly," Savoy explained.

"We need more mentors and volunteers because of the increase in traffic," said Flournoy. QCHC will soon launch "Prevention in the Pulpit," a collaborative partnership with faith-based leaders and organizations to

provide educational tools and materials related to mental health and HIV prevention services.

Our queer communities need safe and affirming mental health and healthcare spaces where everyone can receive the care they deserve. Without adequate resources, support and guidance, many individuals will be left helpless and hopeless. Said Savoy at Charlotte Trans Health: "We rely a lot on government funding so we really need to increase our support to protect us, continue the work we're doing and provide that access to care. The availability of those funds is obviously on the decline. We have to have other funding resources."

Advocacy groups such as The LGBTQ Center of Charlotte, PFlag, Equality North Carolina, South Carolina Equity, Time Out Youth and others are mobilizing to push back against harmful legislation. Efforts are underway to educate the



Ra'Shawn Flournoy, CEO at Quality Comprehensive Health Center.
CREDIT: Facebook

public about the importance of gender-affirming care and the devastating effects of denying individuals access to necessary treatments. Organizations are working together to create an alliance against the political attacks that threaten the health and well-being of our LGBTQ+ community and particularly our Trans family and friends.

As our unsettled national political climate continues to evolve, the fight for equitable healthcare access for the LGBTQ+ community is far from over. Local gender-affirming healthcare organizations like Charlotte Trans Health, Dudley's Place, Rosedale Health, and QCHC remain steadfast in their commitment to provide affirming and inclusive medical, mental and supporting services.

The call for inclusive healthcare is more urgent than ever. As political attacks persist at the state and federal levels, it is imperative for our communities to come together to support one another and advocate for the rights of all individuals to access the care they need.

For more information and ways to support:

Charlotte Trans Health <https://charlottetranshealth.org>

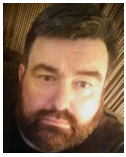
Dudley's Place <https://www.dudleysplace.org>

Quality Comprehensive Health Center <https://www.qchealth.org>

Rosedale Health and Wellness <https://myrosedalehealth.com> ::

Federal court blocks Trump's transgender military ban

Representing attorneys feel confident case will withstand appeal



by David Aaron Moore
Qnotes Staff Writer

U.S. District Court Judge Ana Reyes recently issued a nationwide preliminary injunction in *Talbott v. Trump*, the legal challenge to Donald Trump's executive ordered transgender military ban. Judge Reyes heard arguments on the motion for preliminary injunction in Washington, DC on Wed., March 12.

In the ruling, Reyes noted that "thousands of transgender service members have sacrificed – some risking their lives – to ensure for others the very equal protection rights the Military Ban seeks to deny them." Reyes also confirmed the ban violates equal protection because it both discriminates based on transgender status and sex; and because "it is soaked in animus."

"Its language is unabashedly demeaning," Reyes stated. "Its policy stigmatizes transgender persons as inherently unfit, and its conclusions bear no relation to fact."

This nationwide preliminary injunction will temporarily halt implementation of

the ban and protect transgender service members and recruits from its significant harms while the future of the ban is being decided in court. Cited damages include the delay or denial of essential medical care, paused deployments, forced administrative leave and other significant harms including what would eventually result in the end of these individuals' military careers by being discharged through administrative separation, a process used to address instances of misconduct.

Lead attorneys on the case, GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi; and NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter respond to Judge Reyes' ruling:

"Today's decisive ruling speaks volumes," said GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi. "The Court's unambiguous factual findings lay bare how this ban specifically targets and undermines our courageous service members who have committed themselves to defending our nation. Given the Court's clear-eyed assessment, we are confident this ruling will stand strong on appeal."

"The court acted quickly today to shield our troops from the harmful effects of this irrational ban. It would have ended careers of dedicated transgender servicemembers

and created personnel gaps, leaving others to fill critical roles. The ban's harmful impact and rushed implementation show that it was motivated by prejudice," said NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter. "Our plaintiffs include lifelong military personnel who served in combat in Afghanistan, come from multi-generation military families, and have received honors like the Bronze Star. This ban is unjustifiable and attacks brave servicemembers, recruits, and families who sacrifice so much for our country."

GLAD (GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders) Law's Jennifer Levi and NCLR's (National Center for Lesbian Rights) Shannon Minter, the lead attorneys in this case, are both transgender and separately have more than three decades of experience litigating landmark and key LGBTQ+ cases. Together, Levi and Minter led the legal fight in 2017 against the transgender military ban in *Doe v. Trump* and *Stockman v. Trump*, which also secured a nationwide preliminary injunction blocking that ban.

Not unexpectedly, the case will eventually work its way through the appeals process until it lands on the door step of the United States Supreme Court, which was unevenly stacked for conservative special interest groups by



Michelle Atwood, LPAC's National Political and PAC Director
CREDIT: Courtesy of Michelle Atwood

Trump during his first term. Usually – but not always – its rulings reflect Trump's lip service to his MAGA support base.

"The Court's unambiguous factual findings lay bare how this ban specifically targets and undermines our courageous service members who have committed themselves to defending our nation," said Levi. "Given the Court's clear-eyed assessment, we are confident this ruling will stand strong on appeal." ::



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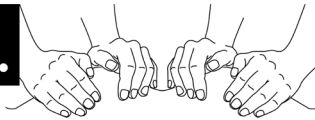
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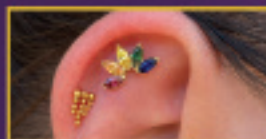
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Something Inside So Strong

by Elder Gracelynn Avion Jae'El

"The higher you build your barriers the taller I'll become. The further you take my rights away the faster I will run..." I woke up early this Wednesday morning with a deep-seated hope for my people. After mulling over what message to bring on the eve of this ever-so-critical Transgender Day of Visibility, I awakened to the lyrics by Labi Siffre "...Deny my place in time, you squander wealth that's mine. My light will shine so brightly it will blind you."



Arriving at this place of profound hope has been far from easy. I, too, wept hysterically for myself and my communities on the day after the election. January 20th was marked by me spending most of the day in bed under my "Ohana Means Family" blanket. Refusing to watch anything news-related that day, meant shrieking at the top of my lungs the following day when Kay, my therapist, broke the news of the executive orders.

With every article I read, I felt my hope dissipate more and more, and my heart sank deeper into the depths of despair. It felt like every part of my being had been fired upon overnight. As a child of GOD who is a Black American Woman that is notably Queer and Trans, it felt like I had been captured as a prisoner of political war. The first few weeks of the 47th President's administration had me feeling like a sitting duck surrounded by the enemy waiting for someone to realize I was "one of them" and come put a bullet between my eyes.

It made going to work at my mostly conservatively populated supercenter a burdensome chore of walking around on eggshells, comically pitching my alto/baritone voice into a nasalized Soprano, using makeup like war paint, and headwraps and wigs as shields. The intense sadness was coupled with this void of loneliness that is still difficult to express in words. No matter where I was I never truly felt un-alone.

February came and I felt the beginning of the break of day as I celebrated my birthday. My only wish was that I wouldn't cry on my special day. That wish was granted and I felt hope trying to spring back. That was until I received an official letter from the US State Department informing me that I would not be issued a passport nor would I have my birth certificate returned to me until they determined my "biological sex at birth". As someone who has dreamed of world travel since she was in the first grade, this was a rather crushing blow.

Que the further spiral, as depression ensued, I took a sabbatical from my church. I stopped accepting speaking engagements, and barely left my house or even changed out of my Stitch pajamas.

Then during my weekly conversation with my therapist, I was reminded of something the Bishop of my church had preached right before I took my leave. She had reminisced of a gathering with the legendary freedom fighter

Angela Davis. Bishop told how Ms. Davis while giving her takes on current affairs, said four words that blew her soul wide open. She said, "Hope is a discipline."

Scripture often teaches about hope. One of the most famous passages of the Bible is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.." Often seen during graduation season on mugs, cards, and balloons these words have almost become cliché reminders of superficial Christianity.

However, when I studied the same passage from a different translation I found comfort more than a muggable motto could give. Jeremiah 29:11 in The Message reads, "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for."

In these times of chaotic fear, it can seem like there isn't a greater plan at work. Too often we get so fixated on the residents of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue that we forget that there is still a power much higher at work. That power has bestowed upon us inalienable rights that can not be taken away by an executive order. These rights include life and hope. Our Creator has endowed us with the strength of H.O.P.E. (Holding Onto Perspective Everyday). Knowing the more they refuse to hear our collective voice the louder we owe it to ourselves to sing, because there's something inside so strong, and that strength is shown worldwide as our banners of Pink, White, and Blue yet wave.



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All about the Carolina Ascent Football Club

Women's soccer team discusses inclusivity, theme nights and involvement with the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber



by Wendy Lyons
Qnotes Staff Writer

Soccer has rapidly gained popularity in the Queen City, with local fans rallying around the sport as a source of pride and excitement. The Carolina Ascent Football Club, a new professional women's soccer team, gives members of our community something positive to cheer for and offers a much needed sense of belonging and engagement.

In fact, the team's co-captain Vicky Bruce, an internationally known soccer player, identifies as part of our community. She recently spoke at the the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce "Thrive" gala, discussing her life journey and excitement about being able to play the sport she loves and living out and proud.

The month of March is Women's Month and as women's athletics continues to evolve, Carolina Ascent represents a triumph for female athletes and is a reflection of inclusivity in a world where gender equality remains a pressing issue.

The team's launch serves as a timely reminder of how sports can break down barriers and promote unity. We spoke with Ashley Osiecki, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, about the team's impact on the community and the future of women's soccer in Charlotte.

Wendy Lyons: What is the mission of Carolina Ascent Football Club?

Ashley Osiecki: It's a new division women's professional soccer league here in the United States. We announced the Carolinas women's pro soccer team in 2023. We launched the brand in March 2024 and launched its inaugural season in August 2024. The mission of the USL Super League is to provide more opportunities for more women to compete in professional soccer, for more opportunity for women to work in the front office and coach as well. We were really inspired by that mission and then working with a lot of soccer fans across the Carolinas built the brand of the Carolina Ascent to really focus on growing the women's game here in Charlotte, across the Carolinas, and elevate the community. While we do that, another piece of our mission is also to support a more sustainable future for residences



Ashley Osiecki, VP of Marketing and Communications for Carolina Ascent Football Club.
CREDIT: Courtesy CAFC



Cheer squad and team fans celebrating Ascent spirit.
CREDIT: Courtesy CAFC

of the Carolinas. We're really investing in partnerships that help us do that. NuCor Corporation is one of our biggest sponsors along with Catawba River Keepers. They are sustainability partners who are helping us.

WL: What's your role with Carolina Ascent and how do you support the organization?

AO: I'm the VP of Marketing and Communications overseeing a little bit of everything, but kind of focusing on the marketing, communications, public relations, social media, photography and videography. I work with a very talented group of creators, who have been integral to helping bring the brand in this club to life. Everything you see across our social media, our marketing and advertising is part of my team and what we do. Our goals are to highlight the club, tell the stories within the club, and get people out to the games.

WL: What are some of the challenges that you have encountered as a new sports club and particularly a women's club setting up here and in the Carolinas?

AO: It's really exciting to see how passionate the fans are who have come out. How excited they are to have a women's pro soccer team based in Charlotte. To see people in embrace women's pro soccer has been really exciting. I think one of the continuing points that we are looking at is educating people because the USO Super League is a new league. and people don't realize that it is Division I women's pro soccer, which means it is the highest level of women's professional soccer in the United States. With it being new, you're seeing a lot of players who originally were forced to play overseas in Europe or Australia. They're now able to come home to the US and play at the highest level whether it's their home state or their home country. So it's been really exciting to be part of that movement.

WL: How do you promote inclusivity and support diverse communities in the current political climate?

AO: Everyone is always welcome to every Carolina Ascent match. This is a women's sport team. It's not just about soccer. We're seeing a lot of support from everyone in the community from all different backgrounds coming out to enjoy the sport. Soccer really is a uniting

sport. Recently, we started working with the Carolinas LGBT+ [Chamber] organization on a partnership. We are working intentionally with partners who are aligned with our mission as well.

WL: Do you have any specific community engagement projects or initiatives that your organization has undertaken to support the LGBTQ+ community?

AO: Our partnership with the Carolinas LGBT+ [Chamber of Commerce] is just getting started. We were welcomed at their gala in December [and] we're really excited to learn more about how they are impacting the Carolinas. You'll definitely see more of our work there in the future.

WL: When does your season run?

AO: It's a little unique. It runs from August to May with playoffs happening in June. There is a Winter break from about the middle of December to the middle of January.

WL: So you're coming up on your first play-offs as a new team?

AO: Yes, a couple more months and hopefully we will make the playoffs. The team is doing pretty good so we're excited about playoff chances.

WL: Do you have themed events?

AO: Yes, we do. We have our Pups at the Pitch Night on March 29th so that is our next home game. After that, we are doing a Youth Sports Day on April 12th. We're doing a green game which is like it's titled; Keep It Clean, Keep It Fun on April 19th. Then May 17th is our Fan Appreciation and Beach Party night. It's our last game.

WL: Where is the playing field?

AO: American Legion Memorial Stadium off 7th Street in Charlottetown. (east of Uptown at 1218-38 Armory Dr.)

WL: Looking ahead, what are the organization's goals for the next few years, in terms of community impact, and even more specifically, supporting the LGBTQ+ community through the sport?

AO: Our goal as an organization is to continue to grow and continue to work through our partnerships to have an impact in the community. We want our club to be a reflection of our fan base and we know that is all encompassing. We

are really working to be intentional with our partnerships and to be intentional when we're out in the community, making sure that what we're doing is making a difference. It's year one and we definitely have a long way to go. Step-by-step, working towards our mission every day.

WL: Do you have fan levels or is it too new for that?

AO: Yes, we do have different seat sections and our tickets are tiered. We do have season ticket members who are fans who invest in tickets for every home game. We have partial plans, which we don't have right now because we're nearing the end of the season. We are getting ready to launch our 2025-2026 season tickets so that will be coming soon. Season tickets, partial plans and then just single game tickets.

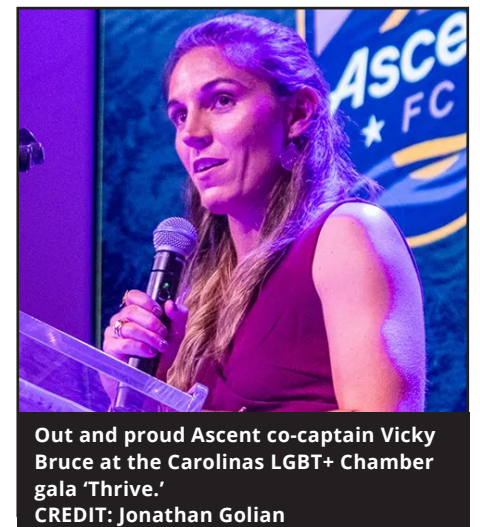
How can we as a community support Carolina Ascent?

The biggest thing is to come out to a match. Our atmosphere is very family friendly. Our prices are extremely affordable and when you come out, you're going to see world class women's professional soccer. They are very talented and very skilled players so you're definitely going to see a great game. Come out to a game and cheer on the women is a really great way to support. We also have some programs if you want to bring groups out like businesses or organizations, we can work with them. A lot of times we even do some kickback offers. If you're looking to bring your organization out, we can provide a ticket link where you help get tickets and we'll make a donation back to your organization. I think just coming out to a game and showing support for the team are the biggest ways to help. We just want to create a great community around this club. We have really enjoyed meeting all the fans who have come out so far.

More Info

Tickets
<https://www.carolinaascent.com/single-game-tickets/>
Promotion Schedule (Theme Nights)
<https://www.carolinaascent.com/promoschedule/>

Follow team co-captain Vicky Bruce on social media:
<https://www.facebook.com/trickyvicky64>
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Out and proud Ascent co-captain Vicky Bruce at the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber gala 'Thrive.'
CREDIT: Jonathan Golian

A legacy on wheels – catching up with the Charlotte Roller Derby

2026 will mark two decades in operation for the QC Original



by Jonathan Golian
Qnotes Staff Writer

All around Charlotte during the 1990s, rollerblading and inline skating had been one of the coolest ways to get out and have fun with friends, or just spend time navigating the streets equipped with a Walkman. After a few years into the 2000s, skates and blades had faded from mainstream sports culture into underground scenes, allowing skating to thrive in different ways.

One of those ways is in the reinvention of roller derby. While the sport itself has been around since the 1930s, the modern version was retooled in 2001 and is played internationally. In 2006, Charlotte gained its own competitive team under the banner name “Charlotte Roller Girls.” After almost 20 years in existence, and one name change later, the Charlotte Roller Derby (CLTRD) is a Queen City original that brings ferocity to the track, while also positioning itself as a beacon of camaraderie and inclusivity among its members, as evidenced by players from the LGBTQ+ community and multiple gender players. As the 2025 season starts to warm up, *Qnotes* got to talk with team members May Q. Sick and Tara Byte about the team, their origin stories and what’s in store for the year.



The CLTRD team having fun as they prepare for an upcoming match.
Credit: Lee Flythe



Charlotte Roller Derby team members pose for a group shot at a recent practice session.
Credit: Lee Flythe

Jonathan Golian: Thanks for taking the time to talk about the team today. How long have you been a part of Charlotte Roller Derby?

May Q. Sick: So, I joined via skater school in 2023 in a non-Derby related accident. I like making that explicitly clear. I sprained my ankle about three weeks into skater school, having zero skating experience beforehand, but decided to try something new. So unfortunately, my progress was put on hold for a couple of months, but I did stay involved with the league as what’s referred to as an NSO, a non-skating official. I was still very much welcomed in the community, even though my skating skills are, even after a year and a half, still lacking. I just joined the board of directors this year as our head of PR, so that’s super fun. As far as the exciting stuff in skating, I will let Byte talk to that because she’s way cooler than me (laughs).

Tara Byte: No, it’s all relative. I’ve been with the league just one year longer than May. I started roller skating as a pandemic hobby in 2020 and had been skating around tennis courts, watching YouTube videos, trying to learn what I was trying to learn. And then, when the world started opening up again in 2022,

that was the first year that CLTRD offered another boot camp to the public. That’s where they train up people on basic skating skills and give them a pathway into derby, or just go off and do your own roller skating thing. I got hooked, and I’ve been there ever since. I’m head of training, also on the board of directors.

JG: What, or who, has been your biggest competition out on the floor?

MS: The biggest competition right now is ourselves because we set really lofty, competitive goals for this season. At the start of the year as a league, we voted on goals, and we wanted to be ambitious and go after the playoffs. To do that, we really have to put in a lot of hard work and better ourselves as a team. So, it’s not really about who we play, it’s about how we play ourselves. Our most recent home game was against Twin Valleys, and that was our season opener. Our first game set the tone as we go for these competitive goals, and we won that game. But, there’s a game within the game because it’s not only about who wins or loses. The way earning rank points works in our governing body is that a team will earn incrementally more rank points if they double, triple or quadruple the score

that the opposing team got. Given that, it’s really important that we maximize how much value we get out of each game. Against the Twin Valleys, our goal was to double the score. We ended up doing that and [it] moved us up 11 whole ranked spots to be number eight in our region at the time. It was a good way to start.

JG: What do you feel CLTRD’s role is in the Charlotte community, and in the LGBTQ+ community?

MS: At the core of our values, we celebrate inclusivity, diversity and making sure we remain a safe space for any and everyone. We’re an open gender team, and everyone is welcome. With the political climate and different things happening, we definitely are making sure that we were addressing all of that on our social media and publicly. I felt very privileged that I got to be part of that voice, like just reminding the community of what we stand for. Beyond that, we want to make sure we’re also fostering the community that already exists within Charlotte roller derby. We also want to make sure we are holding ourselves responsible for continuing to learn and evolve. When my interest first started with the league, it was referred to as Charlotte Roller Girls. Then in 2018, we realized that didn’t really reflect who we were and who we wanted to continue to be. That’s when it changed names to Charlotte Roller Derby. I have two children, both identify as queer. One is nonbinary, and I want to make sure that this next generation can also look at this successful group of adults that are also part of that community and be like, “Hey, it gets better.” There will be safe spaces for you, and we’re going to do our part to make sure that that continues to exist.

TB: We do really take inclusivity seriously, and we always welcome everyone. We’ll find a space for you if you don’t fit in into this or that. I think a lot of our skaters and our community find peace and solace knowing that we’re a safe space and we’re not judgmental. It goes beyond our league values.

Charlotte Roller Derby’s next Home Game, Throwdown Thursday in Wonderland is on April 3 at the Grady Cole Center. Tickets are on sale now. ::

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BOOM Charlotte takes on University City in April 2025

The change of venue brings new views and experiences for this year's event



by Jonathan Golian
Qnotes Staff Writer

In a little over a month, North Charlotte's University City will have its first major test in how it can handle large-scale events when BOOM Charlotte officially brings its festivities to the plaza.

While there have been other conventions in the area previously, like Con Carolinas and Queen City Anime Con, these barely went beyond the Hilton Hotel. BOOM Charlotte aims to utilize so much more, from the local businesses to set up shows in, to giving attendees reasons to trek across the area in performance setups put up by the festival.

Moreover, BOOM has a great opportunity to recenter a spotlight on what had previously been a large area of commerce in the late '90s and 2000s. As *Qnotes* previously covered in a story regarding BOOM's move, within the last few years, demolition and reconstruction had cleaved plots that once housed department stores like Office Depot and Michaels, along with a few eateries and night dives. In an effort to update the buildings that once filled the area with life, University City gained a fresh look and opportunities for new generations to explore the lakeside walks.

"Partnering with BOOM Charlotte was the easiest yes for our team, as supporting local arts and culture is a major pillar in UCP's vision plan," University City Partner and CEO Keith Stanley said in an interview with QC Metro about the upcoming festival. "It's incredible to see leaders like [BOOM Charlotte founder Manoj] Kesavan recognize the value that University City brings, and we're truly honored that BOOM Charlotte has chosen to trust us to host their event in our corner of the Queen City."

From April 25-27, BOOM Charlotte will welcome locals of the region to a three-day array of performances, local artist installations and a whole host of other experiences for all-ages to check out. Attendees will be able to take part in two distinct versions of the festival's components, BOOM Fringe and BOOM Intersection.

Boom Intersection offers family-friendly performances in outdoors spaces, whether on the festival presentation stage or throughout the plaza. BOOM Fringe will take place entirely indoors, with various types of content covered requiring tickets for entry.

Here are a few examples of what will be coming in 2025's BOOM festival you should check out.

Adrian Parrish's "A Secret, Third Thing"

Type of Event: Multi-Disciplinary
Location: Fringe Arcade

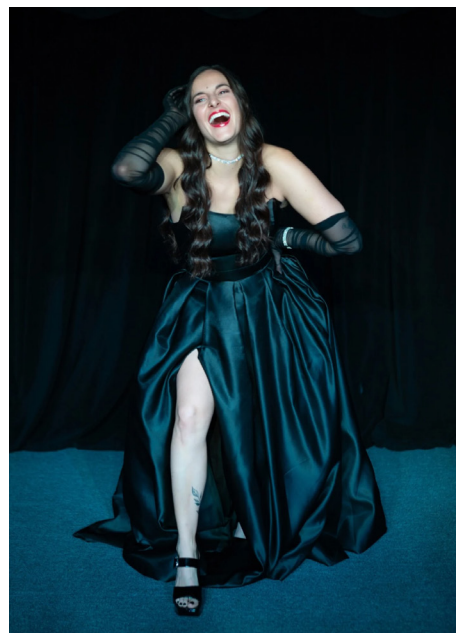
Dates & Showtimes: Sat. 4/26 12:00 – 1:00 p.m., 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.; Sun 4/27 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.



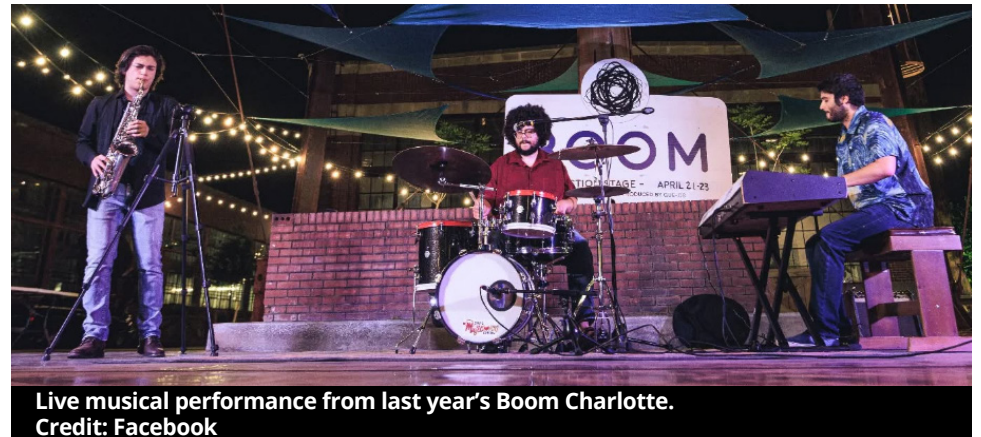
A Secret Third Thing is a one-person show that combines poetry, comedy and storytelling to break down binaries of all types. It challenges the binaries of what it means to be man/woman, religious/spiritual, married/divorced, family/friend. It follows the story of one person and their journey from being a cis, heterosexual, married, devout Christian to a nonbinary, queer, curious artist.

Brooke McCarthy's "How to Be an Ethical Slut"

Type of Event: Theatre
Location: Famous Toastery
Dates & Showtimes: Sat. 4/26 8 – 9 p.m.; Sun. 4/27, 8 – 9 p.m.



Experience the ride of your life as an unethical slut penetrates lies, STDs, triads, orgies, and love in her musical journey to becoming an "Ethical Slut." In this bold, sexy and vulnerable story, watch how one woman tackles topics that are often unseen onstage such as sexual health and unconventional relationship styles like polyamory and swinging. This is an award-winning original, one-woman musical comedy show by and starring Brooke McCarthy, and it features a variety of music genres including jazz, pop, musical theater parodies and original songs, so there is music for everyone.



Live musical performance from last year's Boom Charlotte.
Credit: Facebook

Frank Expression's "PowerPoint Poems: Necessary Evil Edition"
Type of Event: Poetry/Spoken Word
Location: Dance Studio Theater – Lake Side Entrance

Dates & Showtimes: Sat 4/26 9:00 – 10:00 p.m.; Sun. 4/27 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.



"PowerPoint Poems: Necessary Evil Edition" combines captivating poetry and visual storytelling through slide presentations to explore life's "necessary evils"; loss, rejection, haters and self-sabotage. Frank Expression uses these mediums to craft a powerful narrative, helping audiences confront and embrace life's toughest moments. The show inspires resilience, self-discovery and growth, proving that these challenges shape us into who we're meant to be. Join us for a transformative experience that turns life's struggles into art.

JOYEMOUMENT's "Love Notes"

Type of Event: Dance
Location: BOOM Canvas Hall
Dates & Showtimes: Fri. 4/25, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.; Sat. 4/26 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.; Sun. 4/27 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.



"Love Notes," choreographed by Alexandra Joye Warren in collaboration with poet Lavinia Jackson, explores human connection through movement. This interactive dance piece invites the audience to impact the performance through its influence and to be seen from multiple perspectives.

SHAE Movement African Arts' "Rooted in Her: She Is the Rhythm"
Type of Event: Dance
Location: Dance Studio Theater - Lake side entrance

Dates & Showtimes: Fri. 4/25 9:00 – 10:00 p.m.; Sat. 4/26 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.; Sun. 4/27 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.



"Rooted in Her: She Is the Rhythm" is a vibrant celebration of Black women as the heartbeat of their communities, told through the powerful mediums of African dance and drumming. This dynamic performance honors the strength, resilience and creativity of Black women, weaving together ancestral traditions and contemporary expressions of pride. Through electrifying rhythms and soul-stirring movements, the show illuminates the central role Black women play in shaping culture, fostering unity and carrying the legacy of their ancestors forward. ::

For more information
<https://boomcharlotte.org/boom-charlotte-2025/>

Our People: Bryce Moffett

History enthusiast and Stonewall Sports president shares thoughts on life, work and today's political climate



by L'Monique King
Qnotes Staff Writer

Stonewall Sports is just bursting with dedicated and wonderful staffers to help any interested participant find their footing while making new friends doing something healthy. During this interview **Qnotes** is pleased to share with you some insight into one of those individuals. Bryce Moffett has been working and living in Charlotte since moving to the area from Kentucky in 2016.

Surrounded by a spring breeze and the sound of birds outside the large open windows of his home office, Moffett spoke with us from his Colonial style home in East Charlotte about his experiences working with Stonewall Sports, life in the Queen City and his love for shopping at Dillard's Department Store.

L'Monique King: What brought you to Charlotte?

Bryce Moffett: I actually moved to North Carolina to take a job at BB&T, which eventually became Truist. I've since left Truist. I'm now at First Citizens Bank which is based in Raleigh.

LMK: What do you like about Charlotte?

BM: The weather is great! I have built a good community here and it reminds me a lot of the town I went to college in. It has a young energy and is always changing. I really like seeing that, the change.

LMK: Where did you go to school?

BM: I went to the University of Kentucky. I went twice for two degrees; one in business and one in accounting. I then went to UNC-Charlotte and got my MBA in 2023.

LMK: Let's get a little more personal. Do you have any siblings?

BM: Yes, I have a younger sister. She teaches school back in Kentucky. I try to visit about once every two months. I enjoy spending time with her. She has a soft heart and is always looking for the best in people. I'm very practical, very solution driven and sometimes we clash a bit, <chuckling> but I'm myself with her and she's accepting, though we're not as involved in each other's lives as we'd like to be.

LMK: Is there someone closer you share your life with? Are you partnered?

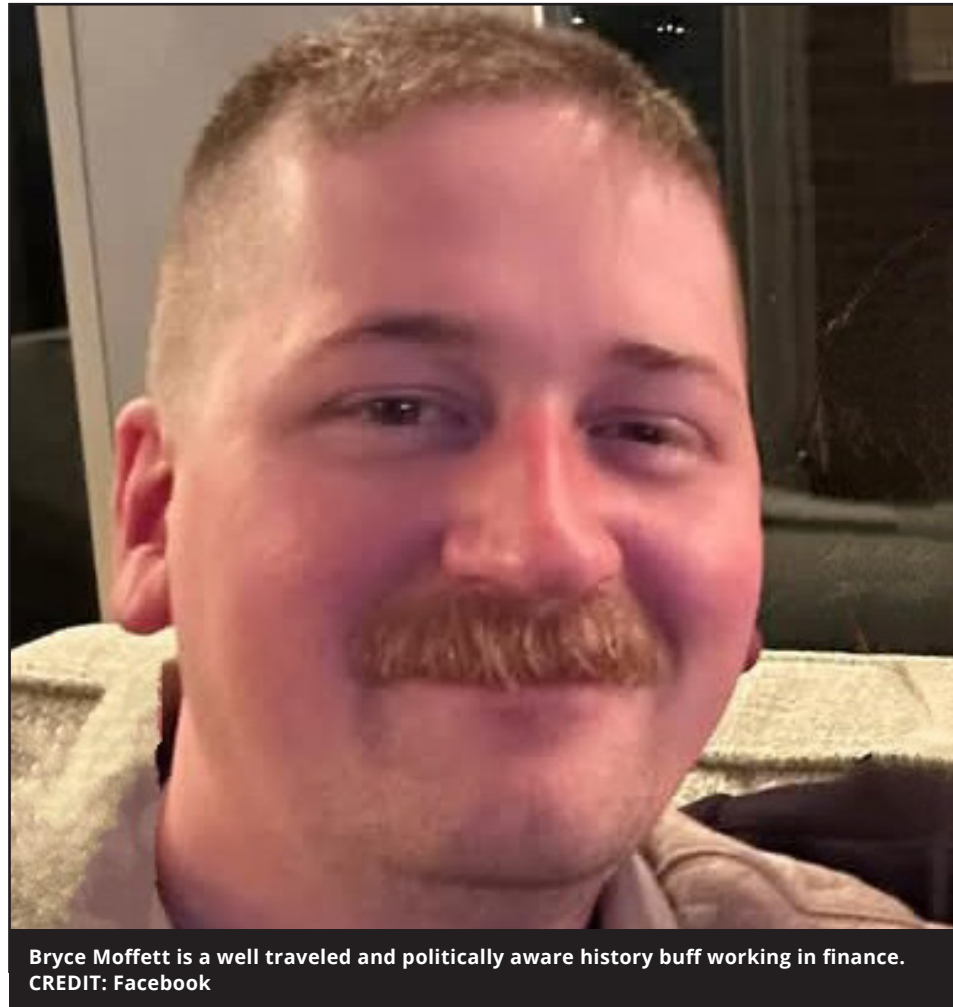
BM: <Very bluntly> No.

LMK: Would you like to have a partner?

BM: Maybe. I think that I have a lot of independence with my life currently and I would need to keep some of that independence if I were to enter a relationship. But I don't want to be codependent on anyone - that doesn't interest me at all.

LMK: What about offspring, do you have any children?

BM: People place their hopes and dreams on their children's backs and that's a hard burden to carry. They could be gay



Bryce Moffett is a well traveled and politically aware history buff working in finance.
CREDIT: Facebook

and not accepted. I've never wanted to do that to someone - pressure someone to live up to my ideal of my personal happiness. I also volunteer at Davidson College as a graduate advisor, so I guess that also scratches the parenting itch for me. Seeing them come out of high school and spending the next four years developing who they are as an adult and then leave to enter the world for the first time on their own is really rewarding for me.

LMK: What's your connection to Stonewall Sports?

BM: I am the second president the Charlotte chapter has had. I've been involved in a leadership capacity since 2018. Essentially the role is like the queen of England - like I'm a ceremonial member of the board without voting power but am there to be the figurehead and to make sure everything is getting done for the organization. A lot of what I do is conflict management. If something occurs at a sporting event, I'm usually the independent party called upon to resolve any kind of conflict that may arise. But that doesn't happen often. I'm also a sounding board for the board members and their ideas. Stonewall Sports is an organization that's about building community through sports. It's about connecting with people and making new friends. Sports like bowling offer people an opportunity to meet each other and make new friends.

LMK: Switching gears a bit, what makes you smile, no matter what?

BM: Oh man! <Thoughtful pause> I

guess I smile whenever I get a random text from someone I haven't spoken to in a while. [When that happens] it means people are thinking about you and that feels good.

LMK: What annoys you?

BM: What drives me crazy at work is misplaced commas. I review people's writing all day long and I blame the U.S. Educational System for not teaching people how to write. You have to be able to communicate your thoughts and feelings. The other thing is people who don't read books and don't know what kinds of books they like to read. You've got to invest time in yourself and expand your worldview. Reading does that. When you don't read, you miss an opportunity for quiet self-reflective time as well.

LMK: Would you consider yourself an introvert or an extrovert?

BM: I'm an extrovert. When it comes to the weekend, I've generally planned everything. I'm not content sitting at home. I want to be traveling or experiencing adventures. I'm leaving tomorrow to go to India for a week. It's a work trip but we'll have some free time to explore and have fun.

LMK: As a travel enthusiast, what are your top three travel destinations?

BM: Lyon, France, Amsterdam and New Orleans. I take a trip to New Orleans every year.

LMK: Let's talk a little bit about home. Do you have any concerns about

the current U.S. administration?

BM: Well, I renewed my passport the day after the election, but I have no extreme concerns. I'm not planning on evacuating. But I do think that looking at what's going on across America with the hostilities towards outside groups, people who are not white and Christian has echoes of a not-so-distant past; like World War II when you had powerful countries invading small countries, other countries standing by watching it happen and the situation not being deescalated. The nationalism, identity politics and classism [we're seeing and experiencing] are reminiscent of something from a Nazi playbook.

LMK: We're heard you're a history buff. How do you feel about the current government initiatives and directives erasing so much of American history?

BM: I am and we are living in the shadow of the decisions of people who came before us - usually white men. Right out of the Nazi playbook where they only want us to have access to what they want us to know. When you think about - it's like how the Chinese government has censored internet searches for things that don't make them look good. Things like the Tiananmen Square incident. When we censor Black writers or take a sky-high view of history and don't look at the individuals and things that actually happened because it makes you uncomfortable instead of challenging yourself to find out how those views from the past influence what's going on today, that's dangerous. When we erase the stories of people who look like us, believe the things we believe or were affected by things we might be going through now, it divorces us from humanity.

LMK: Considering all the erasure we're seeing right now, where do you think we're headed, as a nation?

BM: Three weeks ago, I would have said we're headed for a breaking point. Today I think that the government layoffs, the stock market and the implications that will directly hit his voters are breaking down because they too are being impacted by laws and people they thought would protect them.

LMK: When you're not reading, traveling or thinking about our current sad state of affairs, what do you do for fun?

BM: I'm usually hanging out with friends or shopping at Dillard's. Love Dillard's. My friends tease me because I'm there so often the employees know who I am.

LMK: Fast forwarding, where is Bryce 20 years from now?

GM: <Laughter> Where is Bryce tomorrow? I don't right now. I hate to make long term plans because as soon as you do, something gets thrown your way. It's best not to have expectations because you'll live for the future and not in the present.

LMK: Before we let you go, would you offer a word of advice to the LGBTQ youth in our community?

BM: Find people that make you happy, not people you are trying to impress. ::



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