

**Our democracy is at risk!**  
**If we are complacent it will FALL**

# Trans Awareness

## Remembering those who have left us

**Stonewall Activist**  
**Miss Major Griffin-Gracy**  
**Oct. 25, 1946 – Oct. 13, 2025**



**Our People:**  
**Sonja Lee**  
- pg 15

**Polls show**  
**Buttigieg leads**  
- pg 6





# HOLIDAZE

## DRAW BRUNCH

SUN DEC 07 2025  
11A AND 2P



**KAREN AFFECTION**



**MINK SHOALS**



**JUSTINE  
LINDSAY**



**NOVA STELLA**



**LILLIFROST**



*The*  
**DEGENERATE**

**2116 N DAVIDSON ST SUITE A  
CHARLOTTE NC 28205**





### contributors this issue

Writers: Lynn Bonner, L'Monique King, Wendy Lyons, David Aaron Moore, Keith Sargent, Terri Schlichenmeyer, Liz Schob, Gregg Shapiro, Lucas Thomae

### on the cover

Graphic Design by Daniel A. Mannanov  
Photographer/Illustration:  
Facebook/Adobe

### 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.

Pride Publishing & Typesetting, Inc.,  
dba *Qnotes*

P.O. Box 221841, Charlotte, NC 28222  
ph 704.531.9988 fx 704.531.1361

Publisher: Jim Yarbrough

Sales: x201 adsales@qnotescarolinas.com

Nat'l Sales: Rivendell Media, ph  
212.242.6863

Managing Editor: Jim Yarbrough, x201,  
editor@qnotescarolinas.com

Director of Strategic Initiatives:  
Liz Schob

Digital Engagement Specialist:  
Tim Kendra-Dell

Sr. Editor: David Aaron Moore,  
Editor@qnotescarolinas

Copy Editor: Bailey Sides

Production: Daniel A. Mannanov, x205,  
production@qnotescarolinas.com

Printed on recycled paper.

Material in *Qnotes* is copyrighted by Pride Publishing & Typesetting © 2025 and may not be reproduced in any manner without written consent of the editor or publisher. Advertisers assume full responsibility — and therefore, all liability — for securing reprint permission for copyrighted text, photographs and illustrations or trademarks published in their ads. The sexual orientation of advertisers, photographers, writers, cartoonists we publish is neither inferred nor implied. The appearance of names or photographs does not indicate the subject's sexual orientation. *Qnotes* nor its publisher assumes liability for typographical error or omission, beyond offering to run a correction. Official editorial positions are expressed in staff editorials and editorial notations and are determined by editorial staff. The opinions of contributing writers and guest columnists do not necessarily represent the opinions of *Qnotes* or its staff. *Qnotes* accepts unsolicited editorial, but cannot take responsibility for its return. Editor reserves the right to accept and reject material as well as edit for clarity, brevity.

charlotte  
NEWSALLIANCE

charlotteobserver.com/1166/  
a local news partner of  
The Charlotte Observer

# inside this issue



## feature

10 Trans remembrance



## news

- 4 How is the federal shutdown affecting NC residents?
- 5 Creators of Project 2025 urge FBI to designate members of Trans community as terrorists
- 6 Texas Supreme Court rules judges may refuse same-sex weddings
- 6 Federal Judge strikes down healthcare protection based on gender identity
- 6 New presidential poll shows Pete Buttigieg ahead for Dems
- 7 RAIN taps emergency funds as federal reimbursements freeze
- 7 Federal judges allow North Carolina redistricting opponents to add new 1st District to lawsuit
- 7 Trump releases George Santos, state may send him back to jail



## a&e

- 12 Out in Print: 'Radical Family: Trailblazing Lesbian Moms Tell Their Stories'
- 13 Tasty Holiday Treats: Dolly Parton's Walnut Pie
- 14 An interview with James Magruder



## life

- 8 Organizations in NC serving the transgender community
- 15 Our People: Sonja Lee

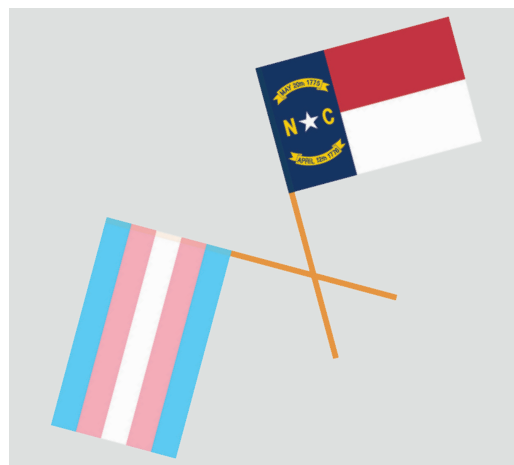


## views



## events

For event listings, visit  
goqnotescarolinas.com/events-  
calendar.



### Organizations in NC Serving the transgender community

Across North Carolina, transgender and gender-diverse individuals face extraordinary challenges from limited access to affirming healthcare, housing, discrimination and political attacks on their rights and identities. In the face of these challenges, a network of organizations and community centers offer lifelines of support, safety and empowerment.

PAGE 8

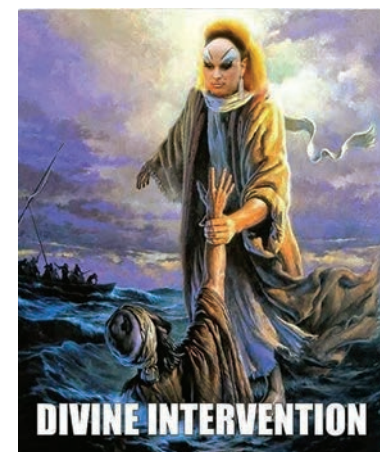
### Trump releases Santos. What's in his future?

Former New York Congressman George Santos was released from prison Oct. 17 by President Trump after serving less than three months of his seven-year prison sentence for wire fraud and identity theft. Legal authorities in New York are considering charging him on a state level while Santos is considering a celebrity podcast.

PAGE 7



### The People speak on Social Media



For entertainment only. *Qnotes* does not vouch for factual authenticity.

**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 = \$62 ☐ 1/2 yr - 13 issues = \$32

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

name: \_\_\_\_\_ phone: \_\_\_\_\_

address: \_\_\_\_\_

city: \_\_\_\_\_ state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

card #: \_\_\_\_\_ sec. code: \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_

signature: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBSCRIBE!



# How is the federal shutdown affecting NC residents?

Essential services, staffing of federal offices, US courts and some relief funding for NC may be in doubt as federal shutdown continues

by Lucas Thomae | *Carolina Public Press*

As the federal government shutdown continues, deadlines for when some essential services that affect North Carolina residents will run out of funding are quickly nearing, or have already passed.

Food and nutrition programs. Federal court operations. Disaster relief funds. All of these will be put on hold if the shutdown remains in place, to the detriment of many North Carolinians.

The political stalemate began on Oct. 1 after Democrats and Republicans in Congress failed to come to an agreement over a spending bill that was necessary to keep the government running. Democrats stood firm on wanting to extend tax credits for the Affordable Care Act health insurance policies that were set to expire this year. Republicans want to nix the subsidies that keep health care affordable for many Americans but cost the government billions of dollars each year.



The U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., hosts both chambers of Congress. CREDIT: Screen capture

So far, nine votes to reopen the government have failed as both sides dug in their heels.

The battle in Washington, D.C., has real consequences for North Carolinians, state leaders have warned, the most pressing of which include social-safety-net programs that may soon go broke without new appropriations.

Counties administer many of these services through their Department of Social Services offices. So far, information from the federal government has been "minimal," Sharnese Ransome, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, told Carolina Public Press.

"Counties are very concerned about the impact the federal government shutdown will have on the residents of the state," Ransome said.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known generally as food stamps, has been the first of the human services to be affected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which funds the federal program, told states in a letter that SNAP had enough money to last through October.

However, those funds will not be

enough to fully fund November benefits, and the Department directed states to delay sending next month's issuance information to their vendors in charge of distributing SNAP benefits.

"We are working to get a better understanding of exactly what that disruption will mean for North Carolina," said Summer Tonizzo, a spokesperson for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

More than 700,000 households in North Carolina receive SNAP benefits each month, and a majority of participating families have either a child, senior or an adult with a disability, according to DHHS. About 582,000 children in North Carolina rely on SNAP for nutritious food.

Chatham County DSS director Jennie Kristiansen said she's "particularly concerned" about SNAP, which serves about 5,000 people in the county.

"Chatham County, like many other counties in N.C., is heavily reliant on federal funds to serve residents, so we are paying close attention to the federal shutdown" she said.

A separate supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (WIC) has not yet been funded but remains operational, DHHS said. About 262,000 North Carolinians receive benefits from WIC.

Right now, state and county health officials are playing the waiting game as they seek more information from the federal government.

"Our leadership team is reassessing the situation daily," DHHS spokesperson Hannah Jones said.

## Some Helene recovery funds are on pause

The federal government has exempted programs fueled by its Disaster Relief Fund from the effects of the shutdown, meaning most FEMA-run programs should continue to operate. That includes the federal home repair and buyout program and public assistance for local governments.

However, programs housed within other federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been affected, according to a letter penned by Gov. Josh Stein to federal budget director Russell Vought.

Farmers in Western North Carolina haven't been able to access federal reimbursements for the nearly \$5 billion in crop losses and other agricultural impacts as a

result of Tropical Storm Helene.

Meanwhile, the state's home repair and rebuilding program, which is funded by a \$1.4 billion grant from HUD, has been delayed by its inability to draw down federal money.

FEMA also hasn't been issuing new flood insurance policies or renewing expired policies since the shutdown began. That could become a serious problem in the event of a major storm.

"The people of North Carolina cannot afford any more delays or setbacks, especially as we face the rest of this year's hurricane season," Stein wrote.

Stein requested that the Office of Management and Budget, which provides guidance on federal programs that are considered essential, also exempt those recovery programs not paid for through the Disaster Relief Fund.

So far, there's been no response to the request.

"Support from the federal government is critical to Helene recovery," Matt Calabria, director of the Governor's Recovery Office for Western North Carolina, told CPP in an email.

"We can't run short on resources, especially on the eve of the winter season."

## US courts running out of cash during shutdown

Federal courts will continue paid operations through Friday, Oct. 17, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. If the Judiciary runs out of money while the shutdown is still in place, courts will have



The NC Division of Motor Vehicles (left) and the U.S. Post Office will continue to operate as usual. CREDIT: Modified social media

to reduce their operations to only essential functions. That could mean furloughing staff and delaying legal proceedings.

The three U.S. District Courts in North Carolina are headquartered in Raleigh, Greensboro and Charlotte, respectively, with additional federal courthouses in cities across the state. The majority of criminal and civil legal cases are dealt with at the state level, and state courts continue to operate without the shutdown directly encumbering them.

## Medicaid faces cuts, but not because of shutdown

NC Medicaid, which is the state-administered health care plan for low-income individuals, has cut provider rates this month, leading to some diminished services, but DHHS said that's not a result of the federal shutdown. Instead, the problem is a result of gridlock in the state legislature, which has failed to adequately fund the health plan for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

"NC Medicaid is not currently impacted by the federal shutdown," DHHS spokesperson Hannah Jones told CPP.

## What services won't be affected?

Mandatory government programs that don't rely on annual federal appropriations to continue running include Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. However, the respective agencies which run those programs furloughed large chunks of their staff, so actions like replacing Social Security cards or talking to an insurance representative over the phone could take more time than normal.

Similarly, air traffic controllers and TSA agents are reporting to work but in fewer numbers, potentially leading to flight delays at airports.

The U.S. Post Office will continue business as usual during the shutdown, as well as federal law enforcement agencies. The Division of Motor Vehicles, being a state-run agency, will also operate as normal. ::

*This article appears courtesy of our media partner Carolina Public Press.*



'The people of North Carolina cannot afford any more delays or setbacks,' says Governor Josh Stein. CREDIT: Screen capture



# Creators of Project 2025 urge FBI to designate members of trans community as terrorists

Heritage Foundation and Oversight Project taking aim at transgender advocacy



by David Aaron Moore  
Qnotes Staff Writer

Two organizations largely responsible for Project 2025, the well-known conservative anti-LGBTQ+ Heritage Foundation and a spin-off group known as The Oversight Project are calling on transgender advocates and their allies to be designated as terrorists. The initial effort was announced shortly

after the murder of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, and refers to trans advocates and allies as TIVE (Transgender Ideology-Inspired Violent Extremism). The LGBTQ+ advocacy group GLAAD offered some exacting insight into the misinformation campaign in their Guide to Anti-LGBTQ Online Hate and Disinformation. “Transgender Ideology-Inspired Violence and Extremism” (TIVE) is a common anti-trans trope used by right-wing political figures and media to fearmonger and fuel false narratives about transgender people. As inflammatory rhetoric and hate tropes targeting

transgender people are on the rise, it’s critical to recognize that such terms are being deliberately deployed to fearmonger and dehumanize. This fearmongering trope was manufactured by the Heritage Foundation’s Oversight Project as part of a specious campaign suggesting the FBI should categorize trans people as “domestic terrorists” or “nihilistic violent extremists.” Directly drawing on related false tropes (“trans terrorism” and “gender ideology”), this malicious narrative is entirely unfounded. Research consistently shows that transgender people are far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators. Perpetuating the false and inflammatory idea that transgender people are violent extremists is part of a broader right-wing strategy enlisting such narratives as a pretense for crackdowns, retracting rights, and creating an atmosphere of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ animus. On the website *out-rightinternational.org*, writer Alberto de Belaunde offered the following insight: “The campaign claims that ‘TIVE’ has played a role in the majority of mass shootings at schools, in flagrant disregard for statistics, [which] demonstrate that the common thread underlying most school shootings and other mass shootings is that they are committed by cisgender men. By framing trans advocacy as a potential source of domestic terrorism, the proposal risks turning constitutionally protected speech into grounds for surveillance and criminalization.” If Heritage and Oversight are successful



Despite widespread support for the trans community, the far-right continues to wage a dangerous campaign of hate and false information. CREDIT: Patrick Perkins / Unsplash

with their false campaign to convince the FBI and Trump supporters that ‘TIVE’ is an actual organized national group of violent transgender terrorists, the anti-trans and non-binary actions in the United States will continue to escalate. ::



OVERSIGHT PROJECT  
IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT



The Heritage Foundation

### Transgender Ideology-Inspired Violent Extremism (TIVE)

Background and FAQs on Need for an FBI Domestic Terrorism Designation

**Transgender Ideology (TI)** is a belief that wholly or partially rejects fundamental science about human sex being biologically determined before birth, binary, and immutable. **Transgender Ideology-Inspired Violence and Extremism (TIVE)** This threat encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, including incitement to unlawful violence, in furtherance of ideological agendas derived from Transgender Ideology (TI) and related beliefs, including:

1. the belief that violence is justified against people who oppose TI, who decline to support or affirm TI, or who are silent or indifferent regarding TI; or
2. the belief that opposing TI, declining to support or affirm TI, or remaining silent or indifferent regarding TI,
  - a. itself constitutes a form of violence towards people who identify as any variant of transgender or gender nonconforming;
  - b. is a true threat to the existence of such persons; or,
  - c. poses an imminent threat to such persons' emotional, psychological, or physical safety, including through self-harm or suicide.

The assassination of Charlie Kirk has shaken the nation. It is the latest example of a perpetrator brainwashed by a corrosive and disjointed transgender ideology to carry out horrific acts of violence against innocent Americans. The first step in solving a problem is identifying that one exists. The time has come to identify the threat to safety posed by this particular violent transgender ideology on Americans. The Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") has immense legal, intelligence, and law enforcement tools available to it to keep Americans safe. Chief among them include its capabilities to counter acts of Domestic Terrorism and gather intelligence on other individuals that share ideological commonalities in order to prevent future attacks.

The Oversight Project and the Heritage Foundation urge the FBI to designate "Trans Ideology-Inspired Violent Extremism" ("TIVE") as a Domestic Terrorism threat category and use the full toolkit of the FBI to prevent future attacks inspired by this ideology.

The Oversight Project posted this press release to social media detailing their false claims of 'radical transgender ideology.'  
CREDIT: X / Twitter

## Connie J. Vetter, Esq.

Attorney at Law, PLLC

Your LGBTQ+ Law Attorney  
serving Clients from across  
North Carolina

Website/Email at CJVLaw.com

Talk/Text 704-333-4000



## 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



877.647.6363  
455 LAKESHORE PKWY.  
ROCK HILL, SC 29730

affinityhealthcenter.org/get-tested



## Texas Supreme Court rules judges may refuse same-sex weddings

On Oct. 24, all nine justices of the Republican-led Texas Supreme Court voted to amend the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct to allow judges in Texas to refuse to perform a marriage if it violates their sincerely held religious beliefs.

The amendment added a single line to Canon 4 of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct: "It is not a violation of these canons for a judge to publicly refrain from performing a wedding ceremony based upon a sincerely held religious belief."

The court's ruling takes effect immediately, and no explanation for the decision was given. The ruling does not specifically mention same-sex marriages, but it comes after years of debate about whether Texas judges are required to adhere to federal court decisions regarding same-sex marriage.

The debate came to a head when Waco Justice of the Peace Dianne Hensley was publicly chastised by the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct in 2019 for refusing to perform same-sex marriages. Hensley subsequently sued. In 2020, Jack County Judge Brian Umphress also sued the Commission, claiming the admonishment they issued against Hensley violated judges' civil rights.

The Texas Supreme Court was eventually asked to weigh in on both cases, and the amendment they added on Oct. 24 appears to be their response.

On Oct. 29, the Texas House LGBTQ Caucus released the following statement on their Facebook page:

"The Texas House LGBTQ Caucus is disappointed, but not surprised, to learn that the Texas Supreme Court is not willing to

stand up for the rights of LGBTQIA+ Texans. Our right to marriage should never depend on someone else's religious beliefs.

"This change in the Judicial Conduct Code will only further erode civil rights in Texas. [The] decision will keep two million Texans who identify as queer from accessing the same rights and privileges as their cisgender counterparts. Without marriage, so many LGBTQIA+ Texans will not be allowed to make lifesaving medical decisions for their partner, raise children with them, or be afforded numerous other rights that they would have if they were married. Restricting access to these rights is blatant discrimination, and we cannot stand idly by while our Supreme Court subjects us to second-class citizenship."

The decision from the Texas Supreme Court seems certain to invite future lawsuits. In an interview with The Hill, Jason Mazzone, a constitutional law professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said the court's broad language could allow judges to deny not



**Marriage Equality in danger: Judges in Texas can now refuse to perform any marriage based on their 'sincerely held religious beliefs.'**

only same-sex marriages but opposite-sex weddings as well. He added that interracial marriages could also be affected.

"Denying a wedding because of sexual orientation would violate the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and its Equal Protection Clause," Mazzone added. ::  
— Keith Sargent

## Federal Judge strikes down healthcare protection based on gender identity

In a significant setback for the transgender community, a federal judge in the Southern District of Mississippi struck down a rule created during the Biden administration that would have banned healthcare discrimination based on gender identity.

The rule, which had not yet taken effect, was created by the Department of Health and Human Services in May 2024 in order to broaden Title IX protections in the Affordable Care Act and focused on expanding prohibitions based on sex, in particular discrimination based on "sex stereotypes, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics."

The rule would have been applied to any organization or health insurer that received federal funds or did business under the Affordable Care Act and was challenged by a coalition of 15 attorneys general from Republican-led states.

This ruling is the latest volley in a policy

back-and-forth that began when the rule was initiated under the Obama administration in 2016, then reversed by President Trump during his first term, then revived by President Biden.

In his ruling Judge Louis Guirola Jr., who was appointed by President George W Bush, wrote the following: "In the opinion of the Court, Congress only contemplated biological sex when it enacted Title IX in 1972. Therefore, the Court finds that HHS exceeded its authority by implementing regulations redefining sex discrimination and prohibiting gender identity discrimination."

In addition, the ruling states: "A statute cannot be divorced from the circumstances existing at the time it was passed."

In a response statement, Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti appeared to cheer the decision.

"Our Fifteen-State coalition worked together to protect the right of health care



**Mississippi Judge Louis Guirola Jr. ruled the Biden-era HHS decision to offer healthcare protection based on gender identity through Title IX 'exceeded its authority.'**  
CREDIT: Facebook

providers across America to make decisions based on evidence, reason, and conscience. This decision restores not just common sense but also constitutional limits on federal overreach, and I am proud of the team of excellent attorneys who fought this through to the finish,"

Considering that President Trump's Department of Health and Human Services is the defendant in this case, the ruling is unlikely to be appealed.

Originally the Republican plaintiffs also challenged the section of the rule that prevented discrimination based on sexual orientation, as well. For reasons currently unknown, no support for that aspect of the challenge was presented, and it was not considered.

In a footnote in Judge Guirola's opinion, he states, "In their Complaint, Plaintiffs also challenged HHS's decision to include 'sexual orientation' in its sex-discrimination definition. Since they did not present argument supporting this claim in their summary judgment submissions, the claim is deemed abandoned." ::

— Keith Sargent

## New presidential poll shows Pete Buttigieg ahead for Dems

A new poll released Oct. 27 shows that former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg leads among likely 2028 Democratic primary voters in New Hampshire.

In a Granite State Poll conducted earlier this month by the University of New Hampshire, participants were asked who they would support in the Democratic primary if the election were held today.

They were given a list of more than a dozen current and former Democratic politicians to choose from, including Buttigieg, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Vice President Kamala Harris, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

Buttigieg was favored by 19 percent, while Newsom came in second place (15 percent), followed by Ocasio-Cortez (14 percent). Others included Harris (11 percent), Sanders (eight percent), and Pritzker (six percent). Ten percent of respondents were

undecided, and the remaining candidates received three percent or less.

Buttigieg also received the highest favorable rating (81 percent), followed by Sanders (72 percent), Ocasio-Cortez (66 percent) and Newsom (58 percent). Harris was viewed favorably by 55 percent, and Pritzker 47 percent.

Most of Buttigieg's supporters in the poll identified as liberal (26 percent) or moderate (27 percent), with 14 percent describing themselves as progressive.

Buttigieg was the top choice among women (21 percent), compared with men (19 percent). His support was strongest among high-income voters, with 31 percent of those earning \$150,000 or more choosing him, compared with 13 percent of those earning \$45,000 or less.

Buttigieg performed well among likely voters of all age groups except those 18 to 34. Among voters in that group, only one percent chose Buttigieg, suggesting he is not

connecting well with younger voters, 36 percent of whom picked Ocasio-Cortez instead.

According to the poll, nearly half of self-described socialists support Ocasio-Cortez, while progressives tend to prefer Ocasio-Cortez or Newsom. Liberals and moderates tend to favor Buttigieg and Harris.

Newsom received similar levels of support from men (17 percent) and women (15 percent), with his backing also consistent across age groups: 15 percent among voters 18 to 34, 16 percent among those 50 to 64, and 18 percent among those 65 and older.

The poll also queried Republicans about potential candidates they would support in the 2028 Republican primary. Among likely Republican voters, Vice President J.D. Vance was the clear favorite with 51 percent support, well ahead of Nikki Haley (nine percent), Tulsi Gabbard (eight percent), Marco Rubio (five percent), Sarah Huckabee Sanders (four percent) and Rand Paul (four percent). Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy received three percent each.

An earlier Emerson College poll of Democratic voters conducted in June showed Buttigieg at 16 percent, Kamala Harris at 13 percent and Gavin Newsom

at 12 percent. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez came in at seven percent. ::

— Keith Sargent



**Pete Buttigieg continues to gain points as the Democratic presidential contender for 2028.**  
CREDIT: Wikipedia Commons



## RAIN taps emergency funds as federal reimbursements freeze

As the federal government shutdown continues, nonprofits across the country are struggling to keep vital community programs afloat. In Charlotte, one of the city's most trusted HIV service providers, is using emergency reserves to continue its work.

RAIN, founded in 1992, serves individuals and families affected by HIV across the Charlotte metropolitan area. The organization provides free testing for more than 120 people each month, along with case management, counseling and a drop-in center where clients can shower, wash clothes, prepare for job interviews and access food and clothing. According to RAIN, its mission is to end HIV in the community through education, advocacy, prevention and comprehensive care.

"The entire drop-in center is funded by federal funds which are currently halted," said RAIN CEO Chelsea Gulden in an interview with WCNC Charlotte. She explained

that the nonprofit has been relying on unrestricted donations from its supporters to continue daily operations. "The shutdown is frightening for all of us, for our staff, for the organization ... and for our clients and community at large. Their services are threatened and their jobs are threatened."

At RAIN's drop-in center, many clients experiencing homelessness rely on the space for safety, structure and support. "We have regular clients that we see for care and treatment purposes, but we also have clients who are homeless, who are in need, and they'll come here and just try to work on jobs all day, every day," said Deion Pendleton, the center's lead coordinator. "Within that process, we help them with résumé building and we help them with attire for interviews, attire for job fairs."

RAIN's reach extends well beyond the drop-in center. In 2024, the organization

served 540 clients, with 69 percent identifying as LGBTQIA+ and 26 percent as Latiné. It conducted 1,550 HIV and STI tests, identified 13 new positives, and hosted 36 education and prevention events. Programs like The Drop recorded 847 client visits. Although RAIN receives donations and sponsorships and organizes annual fundraisers such as AIDS WALK Charlotte, Gay Bingo Charlotte and the World AIDS Day Luncheon, federal funding remains critical to sustaining programs like the drop-in center.

The freeze on federal reimbursements has left organizations like RAIN navigating uncertainty amid a nationwide crisis. An Associated Press investigation found that one in three U.S. nonprofits depends on government funding, which has been frozen or delayed during the shutdown. The Urban Institute reported that government grants make up about a third of nonprofit revenue, and most organizations would run a deficit without that support.

Despite the funding freeze, Gulden said the community trust built over three decades remains central to RAIN's work. "People need

food, they need access to transportation, and they trust us. We've been in the community since 1992; we are a safe space," she said.

RAIN continues to provide HIV testing, prevention services and client support during the reimbursement halt and is accepting community donations to help sustain operations at [carolinarain.org](http://carolinarain.org).

— Liz Schob



## Federal judges allow North Carolina redistricting opponents to add new 1st District to lawsuit

The federal three-judge panel considering a North Carolina redistricting lawsuit will allow election district critics to update their complaints to include the new 1st Congressional District.

Two groups who sued over congressional and legislative districts two years ago asked the federal judges to allow them to amend their complaints to include the new 1st District, whose boundaries legislative Republicans approved last week.

One group of plaintiffs includes Common Cause, the North Carolina NAACP, and individual voters. The other lawsuit was filed on behalf of nearly two dozen Black

and Latino voters.

Republicans redrew the district at the behest of President Donald Trump, who is seeking to maximize Republican U.S. House wins in the midterm election.

The previous version of the 1st District, drawn for the 2024 election, was already the subject of the consolidated lawsuits filed in 2023. Plaintiffs claimed that Republicans in the General Assembly approved legislative and congressional districts that diluted the power of Black voters.

The three-judge panel heard arguments in the case last summer but has not issued an opinion.



The latest 1st District boundaries, established last week, dismantle the Black Belt, counties in northeastern and eastern North Carolina with a bloc of Black voters. Those voters have helped elect Black members to Congress since 1992.

The 1st District was the only competitive congressional district in the state last year. Incumbent Democratic Rep. Don Davis narrowly won a second term.

The group of plaintiffs including Common Cause, the NC NAACP, and individual voters, says legislators made the district even worse in retaliation for opponents filing the lawsuit.

The updated complaint filed by individual Black and Latino voters said Republicans in the legislature violated the Constitution and federal law in targeting Black voters.

Lawyers for Republican legislators said in a court filing this week that they did not oppose the plaintiffs amending their complaint.

*This article appears courtesy of our media partner NC Newsline through Creative Commons License CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.*

— Lynn Bonner / NC Newsline

## Trump releases George Santos, state may send him back to jail

Former New York Congressman George Santos was released from prison Oct. 17 by President Trump after serving less than three months of his seven-year prison sentence for wire fraud and identity theft.

In a Truth Social post on Oct. 17, 2025, President Trump wrote, "George Santos was somewhat of a 'rogue,' ... has been horribly mistreated," and that "Santos had the Courage, Conviction, and Intelligence TO ALWAYS VOTE REPUBLICAN."

Santos, who identifies as an openly gay man, has faced numerous accusations of fraud and theft over the years, including using campaign funds for Botox injections, spa treatments and purchases on OnlyFans. In 2016 Navy veteran Richard Osthoff, who was homeless at the time, accused Santos of stealing \$3000 from a GoFundMe account set up for his sick service dog, who later died.

In May 2023 federal prosecutors in

New York charged Santos with 13 counts of money laundering, wire fraud and theft of public funds. In October of that year 10 additional federal charges were added.

Santos served 11 months in the House of Representatives and was expelled by his colleagues in December 2023, after the House Committee on Ethics reported the following: "Representative Santos sought to fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal financial profit ... he blatantly stole from his campaign."

Santos pled guilty to the wire fraud and identity theft charges in August 2024, and during the sentencing hearing the Associated Press reported that "Prosecutor Ryan Harris said some of Santos' victims were 'extremely vulnerable,' including a woman with brain damage and two octogenarian men who have dementia." Santos was sentenced in April 2025 to 87 months in prison.

On the day after his release from prison Santos wrote a post on X (formerly Twitter) thanking Jesus Christ and Donald Trump and adding "I am dedicating myself to doing good, to building bridges instead of walls."

The expelled Congressman's legal troubles may not be over yet. He could still face local charges in New York. In 2019 the New York Assembly passed a law that closed the so-called "double jeopardy" loophole, allowing state authorities to prosecute someone who receives a presidential pardon.

Anne Donnelly, the District Attorney in Nassau County New York, did not rule out the possibility of additional charges for Santos in a statement released on Oct. 21, which read: "Since first learning of George Santos' actions, I have been at the forefront of bringing him to justice. I am proud of the work my office has done, and the conviction achieved in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's office. While the office cannot comment on ongoing investigations, suffice it to say that I remain focused on prosecuting political corruption wherever it exists regardless of political affiliation."

— Keith Sargent





# Organizations in NC serving the transgender community

Around the Tar Heel state multiple organizations offer a hand to trans individuals



by Wendy Lyons  
Qnotes Staff Writer

**A**cross North Carolina, transgender and gender-diverse individuals continue to face extraordinary challenges from limited access to affirming healthcare and housing to widespread discrimination and political attacks on their rights and identities. In the face of these challenges, a network of courageous organizations and community centers continues to provide critical lifelines of support, safety and empowerment. These programs represent more than services. They are sanctuaries of hope, resilience and belonging for trans people who too often are told they don't belong. Each organization listed below offers resources that trans individuals and allies can turn to for care, advocacy, community and affirmation across every region of the state.

**Campaign for Southern Equality: Regional/South NC focus, NC**

Campaign for Southern Equality is a regional LGBTQ+ organization with a strong focus on trans youth and trans rights in the South. They provide resources, training and direct support to trans individuals and families across North Carolina. Website: <https://southernequality.org/>

**Carolina Transgender Society: Charlotte Metro**

Provides community support for transgender persons in the Charlotte area, connecting trans individuals with services, peer support and local resources. Website: <https://trans.charlotte.edu/support/community-support>

**Charlotte Trans Health: Charlotte**

Charlotte Trans Health is a multidisciplinary collective of healthcare providers and community partners advancing health equity for trans and gender-diverse individuals. They provide affirming care, education, advocacy and financial assistance (PATH) for gender-affirming healthcare. Website: <https://www.charlottetranshealth.org/>

**Equality North Carolina: Raleigh**

Equality North Carolina is the statewide advocacy organization working to secure rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people in North Carolina (including transgender individuals). It engages in policy work, education, community power-building and resource-sharing. Website: <https://equalitync.org/>

**LGBT Center of Raleigh: Raleigh**

The LGBT Center of Raleigh offers community support including 'Gender Inclusion' programming for transgender, non-binary and gender-expansive adults (18+). They host peer groups, resource referrals, social activities and name/gender

marker change support. Website: <https://www.lgbtcenterofraleigh.com/>

**LGBTQ Center of Durham: Durham**

The LGBTQ Center of Durham provides a variety of programs including dedicated support for transgender and gender non-conforming persons such as gender identity groups, a youth center and Project F.A.M., which prioritizes trans womxn and queer/trans BIPOC folks. Website: <https://www.lgbtqcenterofdurham.org/>

**LGBTQ Center of the Cape Fear Coast: Wilmington (Southeastern NC)**

This center offers programming, advocacy and outreach for the LGBTQ+ community across Southeastern NC. While not exclusively trans-only, it includes trans-inclusive programs and supportive resources. Website: <https://lgbtqcapefear.org/>

**Northstar LGBT Community Center: Triad Area**

Northstar LGBT Community Center offers social support, educational programming and resource referrals for LGBTQ+ individuals (including trans and nonbinary folks). Website: <https://phmo.dukehealth.org/LGBTQ-NC>

**PFLAG (NC chapters): Various Cities in North Carolina**

PFLAG offers support, education and advocacy for LGBTQ+ people and their families—including resources specifically for transgender and nonbinary youth in North Carolina. Website: <https://pflag.org/resource/resources-for-nc-trans-nonbinary-youth/>

**Time Out Youth: Charlotte**

Time Out Youth is a nonprofit serving

LGBTQ+ youth (including transgender youth), offering free counseling, housing support, gender-affirming case management, leadership programs and inclusive community spaces. Website: <https://timeoutyouth.org/>



**Trans Care Site: Statewide, NC**

Trans Care Site lists support groups for transgender and gender-expansive individuals in North Carolina, including monthly meetings alternating between Greensboro and Durham, and other resources for trans children and families. Website: [https://transcaresite.org/?page\\_id=995](https://transcaresite.org/?page_id=995)

**Tranzmission, Inc.: Asheville**

Tranzmission is a grassroots organization serving non-binary, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people in Western North Carolina. They provide education, advocacy, name-change support, clothing/closet resources, food pantry and training for schools/providers. Website: <https://tranzmission.org/>

**Youth OUTRight: Western NC**

Youth OUTRight serves LGBTQ+ youth (including transgender and non-binary youth) with drop-in services, inclusive spaces, empowerment programming and support. Website: <https://www.lgbtqcenters.org/LGBTCenters/State/26/North-Carolina> ::


**Jim Yarbrough**  
GEMINI MANAGEMENT

**Executive Offices  
For Rent**

PO Box 221841  
Charlotte NC • 28222

Ph. (704) 965-5214  
Fx. (704) 531-1361





**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. Dawn Flynn, Pastor [www.NewLifeMccNC.org](http://www.NewLifeMccNC.org) [NewLifeMccGastonia@gmail.com](mailto:NewLifeMccGastonia@gmail.com)

**Relax...**

to a  
therapeutic or erotic body rub  
given by attractive, experienced  
professionals.

704.651.6899

4 hands available, by longest couple doing so.

**Jim Yarbrough**  
GEMINI MANAGEMENT

**Executive Offices For Rent**

PO Box 221841 • Charlotte • NC • 28222

Ph. (704) 965-5214 Fx. (704) 531-1361



# JOIN THE QNOTES PRESS CLUB.



Power the Press.  
Protect Local LGBTQ+ News.

Be one of the first 200 members to join the press club by the end of 2025. Your membership keeps trusted, independent LGBTQ+ journalism alive so we can tell the stories of our community across the Carolinas.

Join today at  
[qnotescarolinas.com/pressclub](https://qnotescarolinas.com/pressclub)



Memberships\* start at  
just \$5 per month.

Community Supporter: \$5/month  
Amplifier: \$10/month  
Champion: \$25/month  
Catalyst: \$50/month  
Trailblazer: \$100/month

\*all member benefits available on our website

300+ STORIES  
PUBLISHED SO  
FAR IN 2025

82 LGBTQ+  
EVENTS COVERED  
SO FAR IN 2025

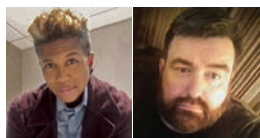
19 DEMOCRACY  
PROJECT STORIES  
PUBLISHED SO  
FAR IN 2025

39 YEARS  
SERVING THE  
CAROLINAS



# Trans remembrance

A look back at our trans and gender-expansive friends and family lost over the past 12 months



by Wendy Lyons & David Aaron Moore  
Qnotes Staff Writers

**T**rans Day of Remembrance (TDoR) recently released their “Remembering Our Dead” list for the period of Oct. 1, 2024 through Sept. 30, 2025. Since 1998, TDoR has tracked incidents of trans and gender-expanded deaths in remembrance of their lives and contributions.

This list is a combination of material from TDOR, HRC and other resources throughout the internet. It highlights the contributions of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, a Stonewall pioneer and life-long activist and examines more than 50 other transgender individuals who lost their lives from perpetrated violence or suicide.

The world we live in today is politically volatile. That instability, combined with an all-out war on transgender and non-binary individuals from a hate-filled right-wing is reflected in the violence and depression experienced by many trans folk throughout our country. As you read through this list, please note an asterisk\* indicates a North Carolina resident. Say their names out loud. In a way that seems practically beyond explanation, it energizes their memory and gives life to so many we may have never known personally.



Miss Major Griffin-Gracy at the Freedom Center during a visit to Charlotte in 2018.  
CREDIT: Facebook

**Miss Major Griffin-Gracy (78)** – Legendary transgender activist and Stonewall veteran Miss Major Griffin-Gracy passed away Oct. 13 in Little Rock, Ark. at age 78. A tireless advocate for Black trans women, her decades-long work included co-founding the Transgender, Gender Variant, Intersex Justice Project (TGJIP) and establishing the House of GG, an educational and historical center for the trans community in Little Rock, Ark. Miss Major visited Charlotte in 2018 to speak about her life journey and the importance of resistance, community and survival.

“For more than fifty years, Miss Major devoted her life to uplifting the most marginalized members of our community – particularly Black transgender

women, formerly incarcerated people, and sex workers,” said Lambda Legal CEO Kevin Jennings. “She transformed her lived experience into fierce advocacy to ensure no one would face those struggles alone.

“Miss Major cared for people with HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s, drove San Francisco’s first mobile needle exchange, mentored incarcerated transgender women as director of the TGI Justice Project, and created House of GG-TILIFI as a retreat center for Southern trans leaders. In everything she did, she sought liberation.”

**\*Tiara Love Tori Jackson (37)** – Charlotte, N.C. Tiara was a 37-year-old Black transgender woman from Charlotte, N.C. She was shot and killed on Sept. 26, 2025, at WoodSpring Suites, according to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police. Tiara was active in the ballroom community and loved for her creativity, humor and authenticity.

**Kasí Rhea (“Kaeyy Holmes”) (31)** – Lynchburg, Va. Kasí, also known as Kaeyy Holmes, was a 31-year-old Black transgender woman from Lynchburg, Va. She was tragically shot and killed outside her home on Aug. 18, 2025. A hairstylist remembered for her warmth and faith, Kasí’s life is honored for its creativity and courage.

**Onyx Cornish (17)** – Caldwell, Idaho. Onyx was a 17-year-old transgender girl from Caldwell, Idaho, known for her confidence and bright spirit. She was killed by her adoptive father on Aug. 18, 2025 in an act that drew national outrage. Onyx’s passing reminds us of the urgent need for love, safety and acceptance for trans youth.

**Blair A. Sawyer (27)** – Louisville, Ky. Blair was a 27-year-old transgender woman from Louisville, Ky. She was killed in a hit-and-run while cycling on Aug. 11, 2025. Blair is remembered for her free spirit and love of adventure. Her death underscores the need for justice and safety for all transgender people.

**Rosa Machuca (24)** – Austin, Texas. Rosa was a 24-year-old transgender Latina woman from Austin, Texas. She was shot and killed outside a Target store on Aug. 11, 2025. Rosa’s kindness and creativity touched many lives, and her story calls for respect and accurate representation of trans lives everywhere.



Tiara Love Tori Jackson was killed in Charlotte Sept. 26, 2025.  
CREDIT: Facebook

**Dream Johnson (28)** – Washington, D.C. Dream was a Black transgender woman from Washington, D.C., remembered for her vibrant spirit and confidence. She was tragically shot and killed on July 5, 2025, in what prosecutors described as a hate crime. Dream’s name calls us to protect and uplift one another.

**Arty Cassidy Beowulf Gibson (23)** – Portland, Ore. Arty, a nonbinary individual from Portland, Ore., was known for their creativity and kind spirit. They died by suicide on June 29, 2025. Arty’s memory urges us to build communities where all identities are affirmed and supported.

**Kamora Woods (27)** – Indianapolis, Ind. Kamora, a Black transgender woman from Indianapolis, was remembered for her radiant smile and love for others. She was tragically shot and killed on June 27, 2025. Kamora’s life reminds us of the ongoing need to protect trans women of color.

**Gabrielle Nguyen (“Cam”)** – Colorado. “Cam” was a transgender individual from Colorado known for their gentle nature and empathy. They died by suicide on June 22, 2025. Cam’s passing calls us to extend compassion and care to all in need.

**Lily-Dawn Harkins (age not reported)** – Colorado. Lily-Dawn was a transgender individual from Colorado, remembered for their quiet strength and light. They died by suicide on June 22, 2025. Lily-Dawn’s memory is held with tenderness and respect.

**Christina Hayes (28)** – Detroit, Mich. Christina Hayes was a 28-year-old Black transgender woman from Detroit, Mich. She was found strangled on June 21, 2025. Christina’s life reminds us why safety, justice and visibility remain urgent.

**JJ Godbey (26)** – Canton, Ohio. JJ, a 26-year-old transgender man from Canton, Ohio, was murdered on June 19, 2025. Loved ones remember JJ’s strength and kindness and continue to call for accountability and change.

**Emma Slabach (24)** – Fort Wayne, Ind. Emma was a 24-year-old transgender person from Fort Wayne, Ind., remembered for their warmth and free spirit. They died by possible suicide on June 9, 2025, leaving behind a community that loved them deeply.

**Laura Schueler (47)** – Cincinnati, Ohio. Laura, a 47-year-old transgender woman from Cincinnati, Ohio, was killed by gun violence on June 7, 2025. She is remembered for her kindness, courage and the love she shared with those around her.

**Jax Gratton (34)** – Lakewood, Colo. Jax, a 34-year-old transgender person from Lakewood, Colo., was found dead on June 6, 2025. Their cause of death was not reported. Jax’s life is honored with care, dignity, and respect.

**\*Tessa June (21)** – North Carolina. Tessa June was a 21-year-old transgender woman from North Carolina, remembered for her bright energy and kindness. She died by suicide on June 4, 2025. Tessa’s memory reminds us to be there for one another.

**Jonathan Joss (59)** – San Antonio, Texas. Jonathan, a 59-year-old transgender man from San Antonio, Texas, died from gun violence on June 1, 2025. He is remembered for the love and warmth he shared with those around him.



Tessa June committed suicide at her family home she shared with her parents in North Carolina on June 4, 2025.



**Charlotte Fosgate (17)** – Portland, Ore. Charlotte was a 17-year-old transgender youth from Portland, Ore. She died by suicide on May 25, 2025. Friends hold Charlotte’s memory close and continue to advocate for stronger youth support and understanding.

**Karmin Wells (25)** – Detroit, Mich. Karmin was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman from Detroit, Mich., who died by gun violence on May 24, 2025. Her life and legacy will not be forgotten.



**ShyParius Dupree (32)** – Memphis, Tenn. ShyParius was a 32-year-old Black transgender woman from Memphis, Tenn., known for her laughter and resilience. She was killed by gun violence on May 17, 2025, and is honored for the light she brought to others.

**Kelsey Elem (25)** – St. Louis, Mo. Kelsey was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman from St. Louis, Mo. She was killed by gun violence on April 24, 2025. Kelsey’s memory fuels a call for safety, dignity, and care for all.

**Norah Horwitz (38)** – Virginia Beach, Va. Norah was a 38-year-old transgender woman from Virginia Beach, Va. She died by suicide while in custody on April 7, 2025. Norah is remembered with compassion, respect and sorrow.

**Kaitoria Le’Cynthia Bankz (“Kai”)** (31) – Autaugaville, Ala. Kai was a 31-year-old Black transgender woman from Autaugaville, Ala. She was shot and killed on March 31, 2025. Community members celebrate Kai’s authenticity, love and vibrant spirit.

**Katelyn Rinnetta Benoit (15)** – Rochester, N.Y. Katelyn was a 15-year-old transgender girl from Rochester, N.Y. She died by suicide on March 24, 2025. Katelyn’s dreams and future are held tenderly in remembrance.

**Jordan “JJ” Maye (17)** – Ocean Springs, Miss. JJ was a 17-year-old transgender youth from Ocean Springs, Miss. They died by suicide on March 8, 2025. JJ is remembered as bright, beloved and worthy of unconditional love.

**Linda Becerra Moran (30)** – Los Angeles, Calif. Linda was a 30-year-old transgender woman from Los Angeles, Calif. She was shot and killed on Feb. 27, 2025. Linda’s community honors her life with love and resolve.

**Amyri Dior (23)** – Milwaukee, Wis. Amyri was a 23-year-old Black transgender woman from Milwaukee, Wis. She was killed by gun violence on Feb. 21, 2025. Amyri’s life is cherished, and her name spoken with care.

**\*Ervianna Johnson (25)** – Tabor City, N.C. Ervianna was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman from Tabor City, N.C. Her death, categorized as violent, was reported on Feb. 16, 2025. She is remembered for her courage and light.

**Sam Nordquist (24)** – Canandaigua, N.Y. Sam was a 24-year-old transgender man from Canandaigua, N.Y. He was tortured and beaten to death on Feb. 14, 2025. Sam’s memory strengthens the call for justice and protection for trans lives.

**Tahiry Broom (29)** – Southfield, Mich. Tahiry was a 29-year-old Black transgender woman from Southfield, Mich. She was killed by gun violence on Feb. 11, 2025. Tahiry’s loved ones honor her life of grace, grit and determination.

**Aubrey Dameron (25)** – Ottawa County, Okla. Aubrey was a 25-year-old Two-Spirit and transgender woman from Ottawa County, Okla. She was murdered on Jan. 31, 2025. Aubrey remains in the hearts of many who continue seeking truth and justice in her memory.

**Eliza Rae Shupe (61)** – Syracuse, N.Y. Eliza Rae was a transgender woman from Syracuse, N.Y. She died by suicide on Jan. 27, 2025. Eliza is remembered with tenderness, respect and compassion. She made history by forcing the federal government to acknowledge nonbinary identity.

**Parker Savarese (15)** – Setauket, N.Y. Parker was a 15-year-old transgender youth from Setauket, N.Y. They died by possible suicide on Jan. 8, 2025. Parker’s memory calls us to show up for young people with care and understanding.

**Meka Shabazz (46)** – Columbus, Ohio. Meka was a 46-year-old transgender woman from Columbus, Ohio. She died by suicide on Dec. 23, 2024. Meka is held in love, remembrance and peace.

**Cam Thompson (18)** – Tuscaloosa, Ala. Cam was an 18-year-old transgender individual from Tuscaloosa, Ala. They were killed by gun violence on Dec. 16, 2024. Cam’s community grieves deeply and honors their life and light.

**Aziza Barnes (“Z”) (31)** – Oxford, Miss. Aziza “Z” was a 31-year-old transgender person from Oxford, Miss. They died by suicide on Dec. 15, 2024. Z is remembered for their brilliance, artistry and heart.

**Roy Mora (15)** – Fort Bragg, Calif. Roy was a 15-year-old transgender youth from Fort Bragg, Calif. He died by suicide on Dec. 7, 2024. Roy’s memory invites compassion and vigilance for the well-being of all youth.

**Ra’lasia Wright (25)** – Minneapolis, Minn. Ra’lasia was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman from Minneapolis, Minn. She was killed by gun violence on Dec. 1, 2024. Ra’lasia’s life is honored with love, dignity and resolve.

**\*Quanesha Shantel (“Cocoa”) (25)** – Greensboro, N.C. Quanesha “Cocoa” was a 25-year-old Black transgender woman from Greensboro, N.C. She was killed by gun violence on Nov. 10, 2024. Cocoa is remembered for her warmth, joy and unwavering light.

**Kyla Jane Walker (39)** – Austin, Texas. Kyla was a 39-year-old transgender woman from Austin, Texas. Her death was the result of vehicular homicide on Nov. 10, 2024. Kyla’s community mourns her loss and continues to speak her name.

**Sydney Leigh Phillips (“Syd”) (22)** – East Islip, N.Y. Sydney “Syd” was a 22-year-old transgender person from East Islip, N.Y. They died by suicide on Nov. 5, 2024. Syd is remembered for their creativity, compassion and heart.

**Spencer James Kastl (22)** – St. Louis Park, Minn. Spencer James was a 22-year-old transgender person from St. Louis Park, Minn. They died on Oct. 31, 2024, in what has been described as an accidental death. Spencer is deeply missed by all who loved them.

**Serenity Birdsong (21)** – Murfreesboro, Tenn. Serenity was a 21-year-old transgender woman from Murfreesboro, Tenn. She died by suicide on Oct. 28, 2024. Serenity’s spirit is held close by her friends and family.

**Leah Jo (37)** – Denver, Colo. Leah was a 37-year-old transgender woman from Denver, Colo. She died by suicide on Oct. 25, 2024. Leah is remembered with compassion, care and respect.

**Jay Floris (23)** – Stockton, Calif. Jay was a 23-year-old transgender person from Stockton, California. They were intentionally killed by a vehicle on Oct. 24, 2024. Jay’s name is spoken with love, strength and resolve.

**Allyson Ketchum (“Alex”) (29)** – Mesa, Ariz. Allyson “Alex” was a 29-year-old transgender individual from Mesa, Ariz. They died by suicide on Oct. 22, 2024. Alex’s memory continues to inspire deeper community care and understanding.

**San Coleman (48)** – Athens, Ga. San was a 48-year-old transgender woman from Athens, Ga. She was murdered on Oct. 20, 2024. San’s life is honored and remembered with love and resolve.

**Rick Alastor Newman (29)** – Bozeman, Mont. Rick was a 29-year-old transgender man from Bozeman, Mont. He was killed by gun violence on Oct. 17, 2024. Rick’s community keeps his memory alive with love.



**Phoenix Cassetta (age not reported)** – Colchester, Vt. Phoenix was a transgender person from Colchester, Vt. They died by suicide on Oct. 14, 2024. Phoenix is remembered for their authenticity, courage and truth.

**Raven Syed (age not reported)** – Lawrenceville, N.J. Raven was a transgender person from Lawrenceville, N.J. They died by suicide on Oct. 14, 2024. Raven’s loved ones honor their life and lasting legacy.

**Megan Jordan Kridli (22)** – Miami, Fla. Megan was a 22-year-old transgender woman from Miami, Fla. She died by suicide on Oct. 9, 2024. Megan is remembered with love, tenderness and grace.

**Jill Heathers Bouvier (54)** – Omaha, Neb. Jill was a 54-year-old transgender woman from Omaha, Neb. She died by suicide on Oct. 3, 2024. Jill’s life is honored by her community and friends.

**Honee Walker (37)** – Rochester, N.Y. Honee was a 37-year-old transgender woman from Rochester, N.Y. Her death was the result of vehicular homicide on Oct. 2, 2024. Honee is remembered for her resilience, grace and strength. ::



# 'Radical Family: Trailblazing Lesbian Moms Tell Their Stories'

Out in Print



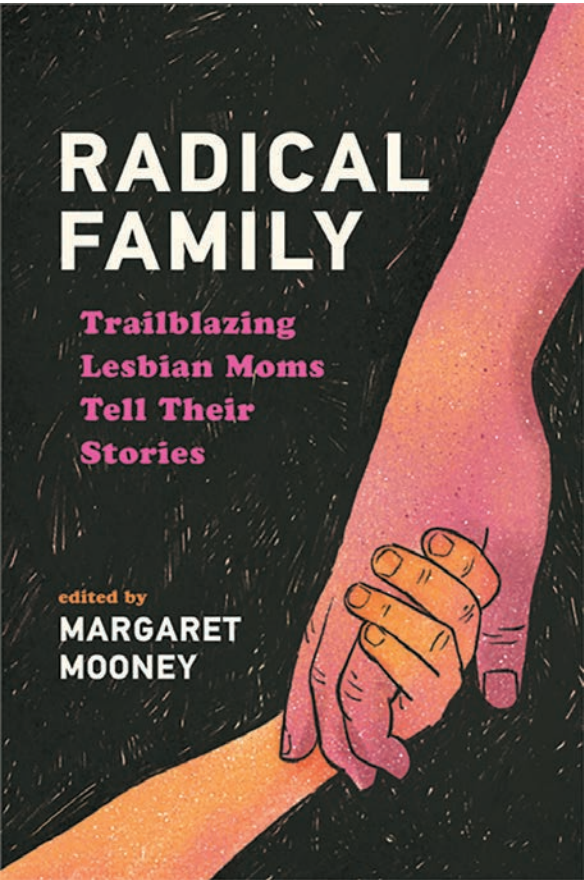
by Terri Schlichenmeyer  
Contributing Writer

"Radical Family: Trailblazing Lesbian Moms Tell Their Stories,"  
edited by Margaret Mooney  
©2025, Wisconsin Historical Society Press  
\$20.00  
150 pages

You don't have a white picket fence with an adorable gate. The other parts of the American Dream – the house in the suburbs, a minivan, and a big back yard – may also be beyond your reach. You've never wanted the joyous husband-wife union, but the two-point-five kids? Yeah, maybe that's possible. As in the new book **"Radical Family,"** edited by Margaret Mooney, it's surely more so than it was in the past.

Once upon a time, if a lesbian wanted to raise a family, she had two basic options: pregnancy or adoption. That is, says Mooney, if she was willing to buck a hetero-centric society that said the former was "selfish, unnatural and radical" and the latter was often just simply not possible or even legal.

Undaunted, and very much wanting kids, many lesbians ignored the rules. They



built "chains" of women who handed off sperm from donor to doctor to potential mother. They demanded that fertility clinics allow single women as customers. They wrote pamphlets and publications aimed to help others become pregnant by themselves or with partners. They carefully sought lesbian-friendly obstetricians and nurses.

Over time, lesbians who wanted kids were "emboldened by the feminist movement and the gay and lesbian rights movement" and did what they had to do, omitted facts when needed, traveled abroad when they could, and found workarounds to build a family.

This book tells nine stories of everyday lesbians who succeeded.

Denise Matyka and Margaret McMurray went to Russia to adopt. Martha Dixon Popp and Alix Olson raised their family, in part and for awhile in conjunction with Popp's husband. Gail Hirn learned from an agriculture publication how to inseminate herself. MC Reisdorf literally stood on her head to get pregnant. Mooney

says that, like most lesbian parents then, she became a mother "without any safety nets..."

Such "struggles likely will feel familiar as you read about [the] desire to become parents..." says Mooney. "In short, these families are ordinary and extraordinary all at once."

In her introduction, editor Margaret Mooney points out that the stories in this book generally take place in the latter part of the last century, but that their relevance is in the struggles that could happen tomorrow. There's urgency in those words, absolutely, and they're tinged with fear, but don't let them keep you from "Radical Family."

What you'll see inside these nine tales is mostly happy, mostly triumphant – and mostly Wisconsin-centric, though the variety in dream-fulfillment is wide enough that the book is appropriate anywhere. The determination leaps out of the pages here, and the storytellers don't hide their struggles, not with former partners, bureaucracy, or with roadblocks. Reading this book is like attending a conference and hearing attendees tell their tales. Bonus: photos and advice for any lesbian thinking of parenthood, single or partnered.

If you're in search of positive stories from lesbian mothers and the wall-busting they did, or if you've lived the same tales, this slim book is a joy to read. For you, "Radical Family" may open some gates. ::

*Sweeten your love life!*



**Peaches**  
Adult Boutique & Arcade  
**OPEN 24/7**  
115 Swain Street, Fayetteville, NC, 910-339-2770  
[facebook.com/PeachesAdultBoutique1](https://facebook.com/PeachesAdultBoutique1)



**Jim Yarbrough**  
GEMINI MANAGEMENT  
**Executive Offices  
For Rent**  
PO Box 221841  
Charlotte NC • 28222  
Ph. (704) 965-5214  
Fx. (704) 531-1361



**CAROLINAS**  
LCB Chamber of Commerce  
**WE ARE THE CAROLINAS**  
JOIN TODAY!

[clgbtcc.org](https://clgbtcc.org)





# Dolly Parton's Walnut Pie

Tasty Holiday Treats

by Qnotes Staff



Dolly dressed as 'Granny Claus' and her legendary Walnut Pie.

In early October, following surgery for issues purportedly related to complications for kidney stones, music legend and long-time LGBTQ+ ally Dolly Parton announced to her friends and fans via social media that she was recovering at home and doing fine. "I ain't dead yet," she posted.

In honor of her longtime commitment to the LGBTQ+ community, we've chosen another of Parton's favorite recipes for our annual collection of holiday eats: **Walnut Pie**.

According to multiple sources across the internet, Dolly Parton's favorite things to do during the Christmas holidays revolve around being at home with her family, cooking traditional Southern meals and lots of decorating.

For her nieces and nephews, she has a special tradition of dressing up as "Granny Claus" and coming down her elevator, which is painted to look like a chimney with flames, and handing out presents.

Of course, we're wishing her a continued recovery and happy holidays. We hope you'll enjoy the holidays, too, with this special treat from Dolly Parton's collection of favorite holiday desserts.


## WALNUT PIE

- 1 fold-out pie crust (thawed)
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup of sugar
- 3/4 cup of light corn syrup
- 1 1/2 cups of finely chopped walnuts
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 Tbsp butter, melted
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- whipped cream

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roll out the crust and line a 9-inch pie plate with it. Beat eggs in a large bowl with hand mixer. Gradually add the sugar, corn syrup, vanilla, and salt. Continue mixing until combined. Add the melted butter and beat until well-blended. Pour the egg mixture into the pie shell. Add the walnuts, spreading them evenly within the mixture. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to 300 degrees and bake 45 minutes more. Place a collar of foil around the edge of the crust after 30 minutes. Serve with whipped cream. ::

**We buy interesting & worthwhile used books & Compact Discs.**



**Books Do Furnish A Room**  
1809 W Markham Avenue • 286-1076  
(Between 9th & Broad) Durham

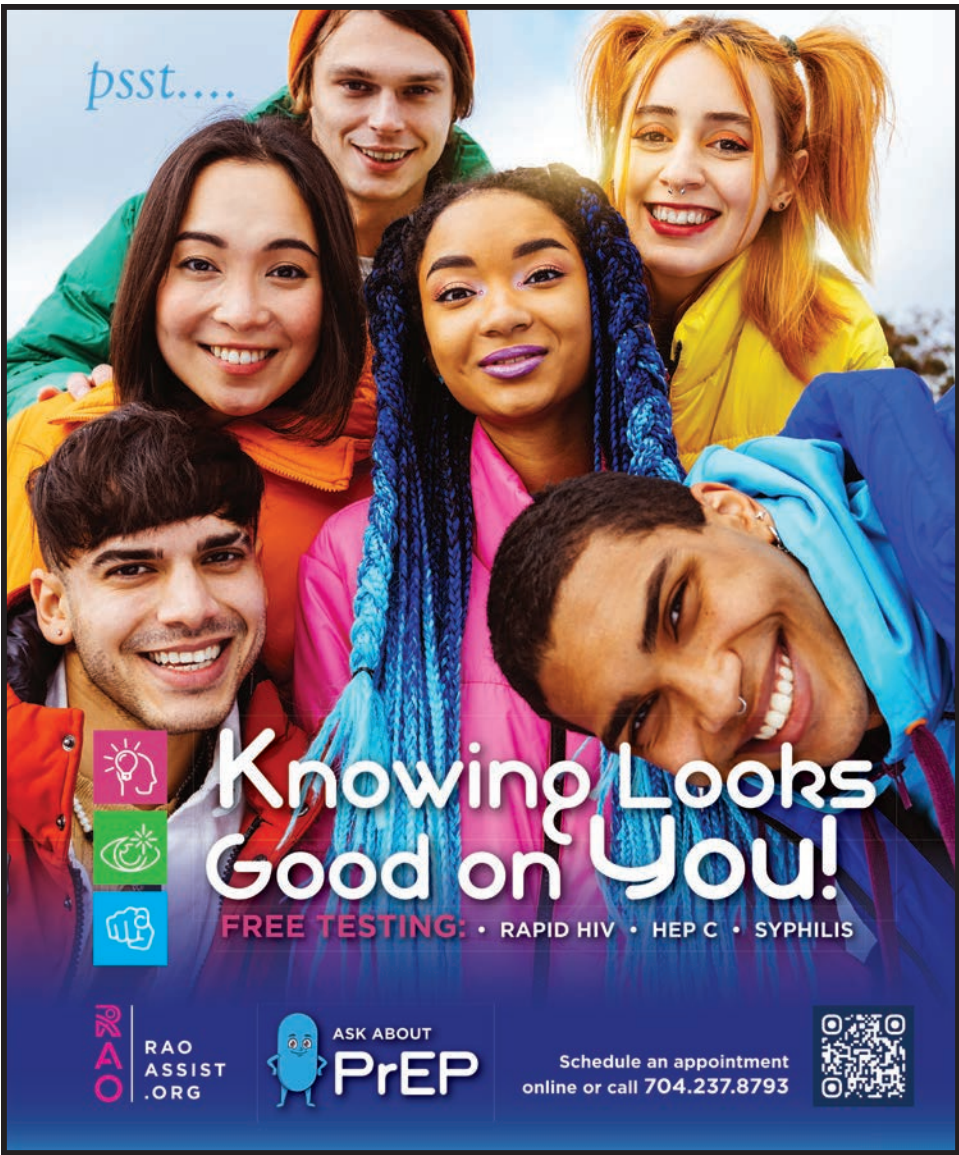
**Lupie's Cafe**

**HOME OF THE EMPTY PLATE CLUB!**



2718 Monroe Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28205  
704-374-1232  
101-A Old Statesville Rd.  
Huntersville, NC 28078  
704-948-3959  
Email: lupie@lupiescafe.com  
www.lupiescafe.com

psst....




**Knowing Looks Good on You!**

FREE TESTING: • RAPID HIV • HEP C • SYPHILIS

RAO ASSIST .ORG

ASK ABOUT PrEP

Schedule an appointment online or call 704.237.8793




**SADU**

BODY MODIFICATIONS

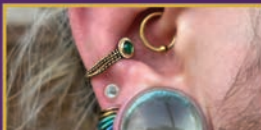
PROFESSIONAL BODY PIERCING & FINE JEWELRY

Experienced Piercers • Safe & Sterile • Award-Winning

[www.sadupiercing.org](http://www.sadupiercing.org)



1515 Central Avenue  
Charlotte, NC



Services By Appointment - Book Online



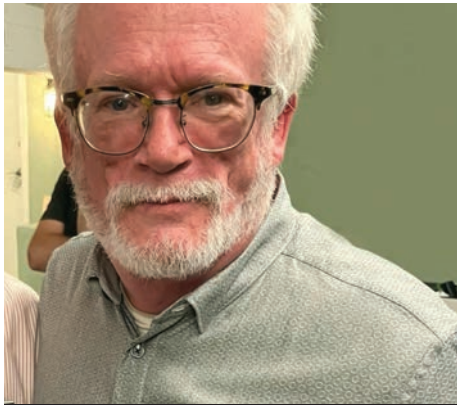
# An interview with James Magruder

Gay writer discusses life journey and new book



by Gregg Shapiro  
Contributing Writer

**A**claimed, Baltimore-based gay writer James Magruder's new book, "No One is Looking at You" (Rattling Good Yarns Press, 2025) is a collection of linked short stories and has everything we've come to expect from him, including rapier wit combined with the most extraordinary observations on the ever-evolving queer human condition. Divided into two sections, the first half is sure to inspire nostalgic pangs for readers of a certain age, while possibly stirring up envy in younger readers. The second half, closer to the present day, practically boils with its shared sense of rage during these trying times. Magruder was gracious enough to make time for an interview at the time of the book's publication.



Author James Magruder.  
CREDIT: Facebook

**Gregg Shapiro:** Your new book, "No One is Looking at You," is dedicated to two people. One was you wrote about, Gwynn MacDonald, was the first to suggest you try your hand at short fiction.

**James Magruder:** Gwynn is a theater director pal of many years. Around 2000, I was gaining no traction as a playwright. Gwynn remarked that the final gesture in a play I had written was the perfect capper to a short story – a genre I hadn't tried since I was an undergraduate. I mulled Gwynn's suggestion that I try short fiction when I went to MacDowell in August 2001 to write a play. I finished a full draft a week early, and rather than enjoy even more reindeer games with the other residents, I wrote a tiny little story. It felt good. When I got back to Baltimore—literally three days before 9/11—I wrote some more stories, generally about older men I'd hooked up with in the twenties, and they began to get picked up by literary journals. I consider my second book, a linked collection titled "Let Me See It," my unofficial MFA – I got so much help from the women in my writing group here in Baltimore.

**GS:** You previously mentioned to me that there's a story about the book cover photo of you, taken by Carla Jackson.

**JM:** Among dozens of preppies in Fair Isle and Laura Ashley, Carla Jackson stood out as the "It Girl" of the 1980-81 Sweet Briar Junior Year in Paris cohort. Asymmetric

hair. Leather jackets. Super long scarves. Cropped pants. Bisexual vibes. She'd lend me a multi-striped tube top and apply my eye makeup whenever we went out. Having witnessed my pelvic undulation skills on the dance floor, she decided to cast me in her thesis film (during) our senior year at Cornell. There was no script – I just writhed around an empty rehearsal space in the theater building while she rolled film. It was arty and very of the period. Was I Pan? Was I Eros? Baby Lucifer? I definitely wasn't Tom Sawyer. I remember having French Lit after the shoot and how my lipstick, and eyeliner, and the leotard under my trench coat completely unnerved my closeted professor. All these years later, neither Carla nor I can agree on what she titled the movie. I say it was "Requiem: Grey" but she says it's something else. We'll have to ask her.

**GS:** There's often a fine line between fiction and memoir. For example, "Origin Stories," the first part of "No One is Looking at You," is set during the '70s and '80s at Cornell University, at the time when you were a student there. At any point, did these stories begin as a possible memoir?

**JM:** I don't do memoir because I can't/won't stick to the truth. The six "origin stories" were all scavenged from my first unpublished – and, I see now, unpublishable—novel that I wrote in three months in late 1988, subsequent to my HIV-positive diagnosis. I wanted to write something before I died, as AIDS was a death sentence at the time. I drew its title from one of my favorite Dickinson poems – "Done With the Compass, Done With the Chart." It covers the first great love affair of my life.

**GS:** How much of you, if any at all, can be found in the characters Gordon, Kevin, Jason, Marc, Sam, Boyd, Kurt?

**JM:** They're all me, with different names and home states. Well, Boyd in "Cufflinks" was my great love, and I'm his desperate antagonist, Kurt. He's also the repressed Irishman that Maggie dismisses in "Orality." I don't stutter like Kevin does in "Tree Surgeon," but that's exactly how I lost my gay virginity, from the graffiti in the bathroom stall to the chemistry lecture and the "Don't Touch My Tits" t-shirt the morning after.

**GS:** When reading a novel, it's not uncommon for a reader to have favorite sections of the whole. But when it comes to short stories, with each piece being distinct from the others, choosing a favorite, such as "Faculties," which is mine from the first section, becomes easier. Do you have favorites from both sections? Which ones, and why?

**JM:** I'm glad you picked "Faculties" – the long paragraph where Marc (is it Marc?) describes the faculty living room is without a doubt the purplest prose I have ever penned, and I was 27! When I started scavenging the novel in 2016, I kept that section intact. I couldn't write it that way today. It would embarrass me. On the other hand, the wrap-up to "Faculties," where Marc meets the daughter of the lover in a toy store, was added twenty-eight years later. As for my favorite in Part One, I might be partial to the yearning and sadness in "Hoo-Whew."

**GS:** In "Coil," the first story of the second section, "Parting Shots," Roger, the main character of this section, says "I am a middle-aged, tenured smorgasbord of white cis-male privilege, so no one is looking at me," a line from which the book's title is derived.

**JM:** Two thoughts here. "No one is looking at you," is an Irish-Catholic curse (the other Irish curse) parents put on their children from an early age. Its twin is "Who do you think you are?" Both are designed to promote the idea that you are not special, so don't try anything to stand out. Stay in your lane, or you will be CUT DOWN by God, a nun, or by me.

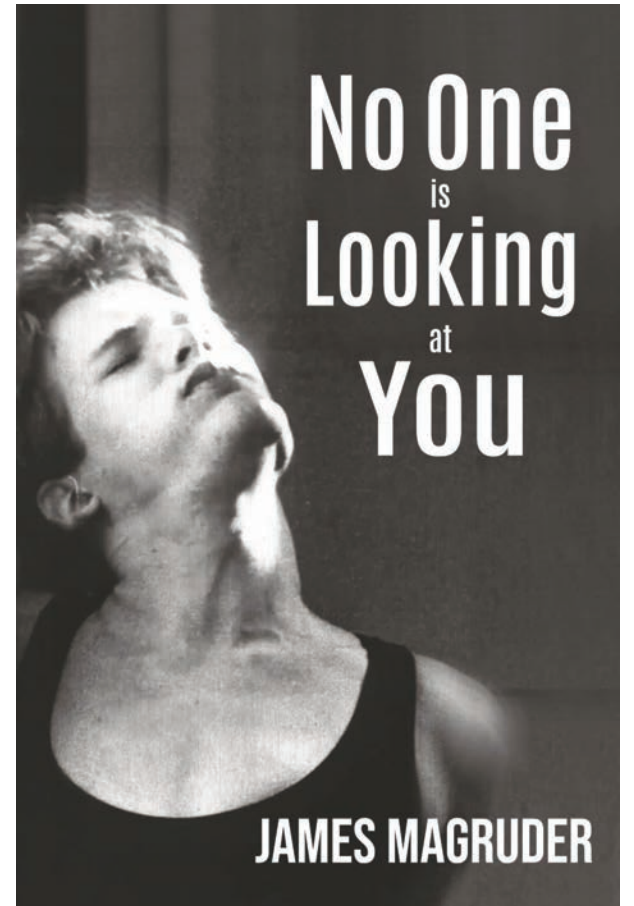
The title is also a tongue-in-cheek reference to my "positionality" in today's culture, which has been in a necessary, overdue state of overcorrection. At least until the Orange Shit-Gibbon in the White House fences Blacks, gays, and Mexicans in their choice of Great Plains States. I am old, white, educated, and of means. In other words, I am a gay elder of privilege who is experienced and successful enough to have lost the crippling (and hilarious) self-consciousness of the young. Don't get me wrong—straight white men had a good long run, fucking up the planet over millennia in the process, but poor Roger wants to share his *wisdom*, so different from knowledge.

**GS:** Since you are an educator, as well as a writer, and you incorporate a variety of theatrical and poetic references in the book, including in "Coil." Would it be fair to say that, on occasion, you are compelled to educate as well as entertain your readers?

**JM:** If you mean in the Horatian sense that all art should aspire to a balance of *dulce et utile* [the sweet and the useful], yes. But not in a high-toned way. "Coil" also reminds (or teaches) the reader that there used to be things called travel agents, and paper plane tickets, and King Charles once said that he wanted to be a tampon inside Camilla Parker-Bowles. And that before 1990, there were virtually no Thai restaurants in this country.

**GS:** Roger has some intense encounters in the stories of the second section. As I recall, you have spent time on the African continent. Was the story "Service Learning" inspired by that?

**JM:** Putting the eight puzzle pieces of Roger's life in "Parting Shots" was something of a chronological nightmare. I lost my hetero virginity in Munich as an undergraduate in 1980, as it were, but I had to move the experience to Sénégal, because Roger needs a job after graduating from Knox College in 1983, when they figured out that AIDS was transmitted through a virus. I spent a year in East Africa in Uganda, where they don't speak French. I had to find a French-speaking African country where



Audrey and Roger could meet up. Of all the Roger Hauf stories, "Service Learning" is the least autobiographical, but the overarching lesson—every woman of quality should have at least one boyfriend in her past who turned out to be gay—is an essential piece of Roger's wisdom that he (and I) needed to tell. I'm proud of this story because I completely invented the Vistock family. All that is "real" is Audrey, who remains one of my closest friends after 45 years.

**GS:** "Worth Our Breath," about gay fatherhood, made me think about your own personal experience with a partner who had children prior to the relationship. Additionally, "Amulet," about cognitive loss, also feels very personal to me.

**JM:** My husband of 26 years, Steve Bolton, "caught" four of his six children on a commune outside Santa Cruz. He came out in his thirties, and we now have three grandsons. "Worth Our Breath" features E.F., but he's not the main event. As I was finishing the collection, my writing girlfriends, who all know and adore Steve, thought E.F. should get his own story. Hence, "Amulet," which manages to demonstrate the infinite marvels of Steve and allows me to exorcise the demon of asking for my own omelet on our trip to Thailand. "Amulet" was written in the month before we sailed on the Queen Mary 2 in June 2024. This January he received a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. My caregiver learning curve has been intense this year, but this role reversal—for Steve's care had allowed me to flourish as a writer over the decades—reminds me every single day how much I love this man. The boys in "Origin Stories" have no idea of the ways and means of love, but if they are extremely lucky, they will be ready for their E.F. ::



# Our People: Sonja Lee

A local minister discusses her joys, service and journey to recovery



by L'Monique King  
Qnotes Staff Writer

On a damp and chilly fall day in the Carolinas there's a soft warm ray of light coming from Indian Land, South Carolina. The neighborhood is about a half an hour from Charlotte if you take I-77 or I-485; close enough for Sonja Lee to commute and be a fixture in Charlotte (where she once lived and worked) and a resonating voice.

Lee is a quintessential advocate for the underserved and a listening ear for anyone needing comfort and/or a spiritual uplift. During our interview, she's nestled in a comfy recliner, facing a window with a breathtaking view of a fountain (she had it installed for visiting Cardinals) and trees boasting brilliant colors of fall foliage. In her typical calm and laid-back demeanor, Lee shared her joys, concerns and hope for a better future for our community.

**L'Monique King: Are you a North Carolina native?**

**Sonja Lee:** No, I'm a native Washingtonian. I'm from Washington DC

**LMK: How long have you lived in South Carolina?**

**SL:** I moved from Charlotte to Indian Land in 2009 with my wife and our two kids. Our son was having some academic struggles in CMS so we made the effort to move in order to support him. [Prior to that] I moved to Charlotte from DC in 1999. At that time, I was working with the Red Cross in their finance department. They were a wonderful employer. I moved to Charlotte to help establish a financially shared services center for the Red Cross. The idea was to consolidate the accounting systems across all Red Cross chapters and regional offices. I retired from the Red Cross in 2015.

**LMK: Is that when you started your own organization?**

**SL:** No, it was before that. In 2005 my brother Lionel Lee Jr, died from heart complications. It was so sudden, my family and I were devastated. He was truly a big brother you'd want to have. So, to do something positive with my grief, in 2006 I established the Lionel Lee, Jr. Center for Wellness. In 2008 we received our 501c3 status. I serve as the founder and Executive Director.

**LMK: What does your organization do?**

**SL:** Our center supports and empowers people (especially those with chronic illness) who do not have adequate insurance coverage. We assist people who are uninsured and/or under insured obtain their medications, get to doctors appointments and other basic needs as we're able. The organization will be 20 years old next year. At the time of starting, we received no funding and heavily relied on community donations to do the work. We didn't receive our first grant until somewhere around 2010 from The Charlotte Lesbian and Gay Fund (now The Plus Collective).

**LMK: Word has it that your impact on our community runs even deeper than being an Executive Director with a financial background but it's also spiritual. Can you tell us a little about also having the title of Reverend?**

**SL:** I am a clergy member of Unity Fellowship Church. My first exposure to them came via attending a social function they had. It was festive and well attended. I was greeted by a warm and friendly gentleman at that gathering - unaware he was a clergy member. He was engaging, personable and didn't lead with his title - which really made an impression on me. The following year I moved to Charlotte and ran into Gwen Woodard. She called me and offered me the opportunity to show her and her partner (Bishop Tonja Rawls who she later married) around Charlotte - with the intention of possibly starting a church in Charlotte. At the time, I didn't have a church home and the experience felt divinely ordered. Shortly thereafter the church (Unity Fellowship Church - Charlotte) was established on MLK Sunday of 2001. At that time Unity Fellowship Church Charlotte was the first African American led [LGBTQ] affirming church in Charlotte and I became a founding member under the leadership of Pastor Tonya Rawls.

**LMK: Wow, so that's how it all began. Fast forwarding to today, we're living in tumultuous times. As a clergy member and Out lesbian clergy member at that - how do you support folks during such turbulence and uncertainty.**

**SL:** Everyone that I engage with recently has some type of worry, stress or trauma because of our current political climate. I've also seen an uptick at the Wellness Center in requests for food. People are calling with concerns about their Food Stamps being cut. For those people we make referrals - trying to fill the gaps between having food and hunger. I've had to do that even more than I have for medication. And sadly, that is most likely to change [as more and more cuts to basic needs come down the pike from Capitol Hill]. There's such despair in many cases and in others, people are just pissed off about the current political climate; especially this blame game that's taking place in congress. While we're shut down, congress is just chilling, still getting six figure salaries while others are really struggling. So, I address this with a listening ear, sometimes prayer and other times by offering next steps in trying to find solutions. Overall, I'm there to support and advocate for our people.

**LMK: As a 72-year-old Black lesbian living, working and supporting community during this administration, are you fearful?**

**SL:** I'm concerned of course, but I'm not fearful. My spiritual anchoring says, this is all going to work out the way it's supposed to. I'm concerned about our people, absolutely - the erosion of our rights as LGBTQ folks; the denial of gender affirming health care, our rights to marry, adopt children and just love who we love.

**LMK: You do so much for so many. Who is there for you? Who do you lean on?**

**SL:** Friends and family. It means so much to me when friends and loved ones ask me how I'm doing. And there's always my incredible son. If I didn't do another darn thing right, it's him, with the help of my village. I can talk to him about anything; we touch base at least once a week. He's a source of strength, compassion and love personified. [Outside of my son] I also have family, grand babies and church family, especially my Senior Bishop Jaquelyn Holland. She's a confidant, spiritual anchor and very good fiend. And one day, I may have a partner to add to that list <gentle chuckle>.

**LMK: Describe the partner you'd like to add to your list of supportive loved ones.**

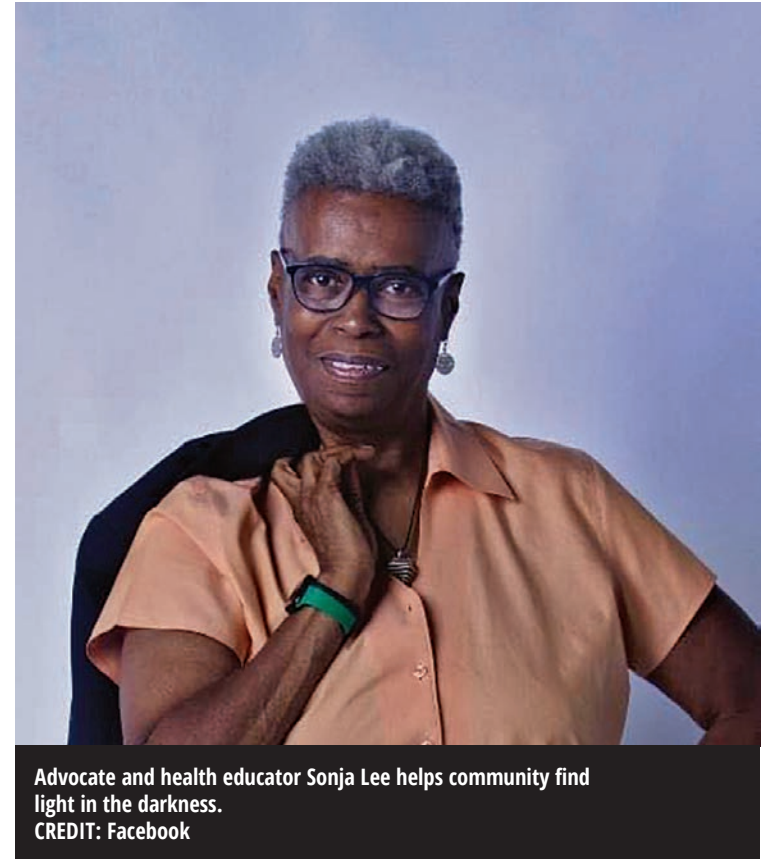
**SL:** She is so femme. She's a Black woman whose also spiritually anchored. She's fun to be around, family oriented, smart, loves to travel and loves to be home.

**LMK: Looking at your life journey, what are two of your proudest moments?**

**SL:** There have been so many. But the day I took my son to college was a big one. He went to Florida A&M. My father and I drove him to school and I felt like "job well done mom," while still crediting my village. It was a sense of accomplishment seeing my son go off to college. When I think about it, no one in my immediate family had gone to college. My son was the first born of the grandchildren. None of my siblings had attended at that time. My second proud moment would be my own graduating - from Union Presbyterian Seminary where I received my Master of Arts in Christian Education.

**LMK: When you hear the word regret, what's the first thing that comes to mind?**

**SL:** That first drink. On my 18th birthday, I thought I was grown and had a drink. It made me sick as dog, the rum and coke. The next day I decided to try something different - Yago Sangria. I then transitioned from wine and beer to weed and then I was off to the races. From the age of 18 to 42 alcohol and drugs were a major part of my life. At age 42 I'd had enough and decided to get some help. Over my 30 years of sobriety, I have focused on being a source of experience, strength and hope for those who suffer from the disease of addiction.



Advocate and health educator Sonja Lee helps community find light in the darkness.  
CREDIT: Facebook

**LMK: Congratulations on your longevity in being sober and drug free. How do you start your days? Are you a breakfast person?**

**SL:** I am. I love breakfast! I like preparing my own breakfast and having the first meal of the day in my home. I like eggs, grits (which I never ate until I moved to the south), bacon, fruit and tea.

**LMK: If you could go back in time and meet someone you admire who would it be?**

**SL:** There would be many. Probably Maya Angelou. Further back, Josephine Baker - even further back, Harriet Tubman.

**LMK: Speaking of traveling, where have you traveled that you want to go to again and again?**

**SL:** Aruba. When I grew up, I lived in a three-bedroom house with one bath, my grandmother, mom and my five siblings in a working class mostly segregated nice neighborhood. So, I always sought out and appreciated quite places. As a child I wanted to live on Gilligan's Island. <laughter>. So, I just love Aruba, the water, it's quiet, it's serene. The people are friendly and there aren't too many of them. It's a desert island in the middle of the ocean - just the irony of that blows my mind. It's very beautiful. I'm going back in December.

**LMK: Is there anywhere you haven't been that you look forward to visiting?**

**SL:** East Africa. Specifically, Tanzania and Zanzibar

**LMK: Before we go, can you offer a few words of wisdom to our youth community?**

**SL:** Don't use no matter what. Pursue the vision that you have for your life. Stay focused. ::



# WHITE RABBIT

KS NG



**920 CENTRAL AVENUE  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA  
704 - 377 - 4067**

**YOU'RE**

**WELCOME;)**



**WRABBITNC**



**WHITERABBIT**



**SHOPWHITERABBIT**