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Editor's Note

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

February extravaganza



to have a vocal and visible presence, especially as the media turned their attention to the curious, "happencance" placement of the anti-gay, "ex-gay" Focus on the Family conference Love Won Out on the same day as the annual Human Rights Campaign Gala.

Queer February. It happens every year. There's always so much to do and so little time with which to get it all accomplished. It seems I'm forced to go into a state of sheer mania just so I can check off everything on my to do list.

This year's queer extravaganza was definitely magnified, and for the better. It was amazing to see the LGBT community of the greater Charlotte area and the Carolinas come together as a truly united front against the antics of our area's anti-gay, fundamentalist radical right.

Every year for the past four, the Human Rights Campaign has held their Carolinas Gala in the Queen City. The radical right never fails to find some way to counter an event designed to celebrate our community's achievements and successes. At first, the anti-gay countering showed up in the form of loud and obnoxious protests outside the Charlotte Convention Center by the radical street preaching group Operation Save America — the same folks who find it necessary to grace our community with their presence at the Pride Charlotte and NC Pride Festivals. It wasn't long until one of Charlotte's most outspoken anti-gay religious leaders, Dr. Michael Brown of the Coalition of Conscience, decided he'd gain a little publicity with his week-long lecture series on homosexuality.

For a couple of years, the LGBT community ignored Operation Save America's antics and Brown's lectures and media stunts. In 2008, the Human Rights Campaign sent their religion and faith director, the Rev. Harry Knox, down to Charlotte for a debate with Brown.

But it took the radical right upping the ante ten-fold in order for the local LGBT community to organize and ensure fair, equitable media coverage and discussion of our issues.

I was one of the community members helping to organize the new group, Charlotte Rainbow Action Network for Equality. I thought it was extremely important for the community

A local blogger on Brown's website, Voice of Revolution, told me that the Love Won Out conference's placement on the same day as the Gala was purely "coincidental." I'm not going to assume Brown, a speaker with Love Won Out and the Charlotte area's premier perennial HRC challenger, is that stupid or naïve.

The unity of our local, state and national LGBT and progressive communities was amazing. Local groups like the University of North Carolina-Charlotte's LGBT student group, Gay Men's Chorus, One Voice Chorus, the Charlotte Coalition for Social Justice and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte officially teamed up with state and national groups like EqualityNC, Truth Wins Out, the Human Rights Campaign and Faith in America to promote a non-violent, peaceful counter to the harmful "alternative" Focus on the Family claims to offer those "suffering" with "same-sex attractions." Individual members from several other Carolinas community organizations, including the Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte, SC Pride Movement, the Charlotte Gender Alliance, Unity Fellowship Church, Raleigh St. John's MCC and the Charlotte Interfaith Network also lent their helping hands.

Through mid-February, as the obligations continued to pile up, burn out became more and more of a reality for me. But, looking back at all the amazing action taken by our LGBT and progressive community members, I'm inspired and filled with hope for the future of this city and this state. I'm proud to work at this paper, proud to be your editor and servant and proud to call Charlotte and the Carolinas my home.

I hope you'll read the wrap up of all the wonderful Queer February events in this issue (page 7) and check out Q-Notes Online for the fabulous photo and video coverage from several of the events. ▀

Q-Notes unveils new online features

The staff of Q-Notes is proud to unveil two new online tools to better serve our LGBT and straight ally readers.

Organizations, businesses and other groups can now submit their event listings for our Out & About calendar through a quick, easy to use online form.

Log on to www.q-notes.com/out-and-about/submit/ to send your events to our staff. As always, you can still send your event information and press releases to editor@q-notes.com.

Q-Notes is also moving forward with our online and multimedia reporting. A microsite has been created at www.q-notes.com/multimedia/ to showcase our staff's audio and video reporting. Click over to the Multimedia site often to see new videos and new multimedia stories.

The Q-Notes blog, assemblage, is still rolling along and accepting free registration! Sign up for an account at blog.q-notes.com today and start posting your comments and submitting posts. ▀

'speakout'

Send your letter to the editor or any other thoughts to editor@q-notes.com or click on over to our website at www.q-notes.com and join the conversation there. Web comments will be featured in each issue. Limit letters to the editor to 150 words or less and include your name, city and state and a phone number where you can be reached.

'online q-poll'

Do you think the era of the gay bar/club is ending?

See the options and vote at www.q-notes.com