

Q Notes

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Blooming with Pride

Economy and financial matters a concern
as organizers gear up for 2009 Pride season

Ogwoods bloom. Trees regain their leafy greens. April showers soon give way to sultry, southern summer days. Spring is in the air, and LGBT community organizers around the Carolinas are hustling to get their plans ready for this year's season of Pride celebrations and festivals.

It is a banner year for Pride, nationally and locally. We celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots this June. The South Carolina Pride Movement celebrates its 20th anniversary in September. A new local Pride takes root in the upstate of South Carolina.

Q-Notes spoke to Pride organizers across the region to gauge their planning progress in the face of a seemingly disastrous climate. Despite the national financial meltdown, organizers say they'll pull through and provide the joyous celebration and sense of community LGBT folks have come to expect from their annual Pride festivals.

Jay Ault, publicity co-chair for the new Upstate Pride, says their group expects 250-300 people will participate in their first-ever march and festival on June 20. He says local community members felt it was time to have their own celebration.

"We felt it was time to hit home and allow the people in the GLBTIQ/ Straight Ally community to show their support and pride instead of having to travel at the least an hour to be part of a Pride," he says.

Ault is encouraged by the financial support the group has received thus far. "We as a new organization are actually fairing pretty well," Ault says. "We are receiving donations from dozens of individuals (and they just keep coming) and a couple of groups."

He says they've found it more difficult to solicit contributions from area businesses. Ault thinks the economy isn't necessarily to blame. "We

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