

Financial concerns while gearing up for upcoming Pride season

At a glance: Carolinas Prides

Triad Pride (Greensboro, Winston-Salem, High Point) — May 27-31 — Featuring several kick-off parties, Guilford Green Foundation's "Green Queen Bingo," comedy show, day festival, family picnic and Mr. and Miss Pride pageants. www.triadpride.org.

Wilmington Pride (Wilmington) — June 10-14 — Featuring a movie night, street festival and headlining evening performance by RuPaul. www.outwilmington.com.

Boone Pride (Boone) — June 12-14 — Featuring a festival and other events, more information to be announced. www.boonepride.org.

SC Black Pride (Columbia) — June 18-21 — Featuring Mr. and Miss Pride pageants, welcome reception, Black LGBT film fest and town hall, HIV/AIDS awareness events and community expo. www.southcarolinablackpride.com.

Upstate Pride (Spartanburg) — June 20 — Featuring a parade and community festival. upstatepride.homestead.com.

Charlotte Black Gay Pride (Charlotte) — July 16-19 — Featuring a town hall meeting in conjunction with Time Out Youth, diva party, Pride parties and community expo. www.charlotteblackgaypride.com.

Pride Charlotte (Charlotte) — July 25 — Featuring a day-long festival with local and regional entertainment, several pre-Pride events including Miss Pride Charlotte pageants, mass choral concert and more. www.pridecharlotte.com.

SC Pride (Columbia) — Sept. 12 — Featuring a parade, day-long festival with local, regional and national entertainment, South Carolina Business Guild expo and more. www.scpride.org.

NC Pride Fest & Parade (Raleigh-Durham) — Sept. 26 — Featuring annual Pride festival grounds and parade in Durham with nightly events in Raleigh and surrounding areas. www.ncpride.org.

Blue Ridge Pride (Asheville) — Oct. 10 — Featuring a festival and other events, more information to be announced. www.blueridgepride.com.

Learn more and keep up-to-date throughout the 2009 Pride season at Q-Notes Online's special Pride section, www.q-notes.com/pride.

Pride organizers say the economy has prompted them to come up with creative ways to fundraise.

South Carolina Black Pride chair Todd Shaw says his group will be hosting several small fundraising events before their main week of activities. He says that sponsors have contributed about the same amount of funds as last year.

OutWilmington's Frank Eford says his group will focus on their main event — a RuPaul performance — and keep costs down on other, smaller events during their Pride week. He also thinks that focusing on the community-involvement component of Pride will help to draw in more participation and financial support.

Likewise, Alternative Resources of the Triad President Richard Gray says Triad Pride organizers have partnered with local community organizations and businesses to ensure successful and fun events. He says they'll create ways for people to get involved through

their own organizations, such as volunteer opportunities.

Whatever comes the way of Pride organizers, Pride Charlotte's Palm-Beck says keeping the emphasis on community is important, if only to give people a chance to escape from the push and pull stresses of everyday life.

"The economy puts such a damper on people's spirits," she says. "People need something like this." ▀

"Feeling good shouldn't have to be a luxury."

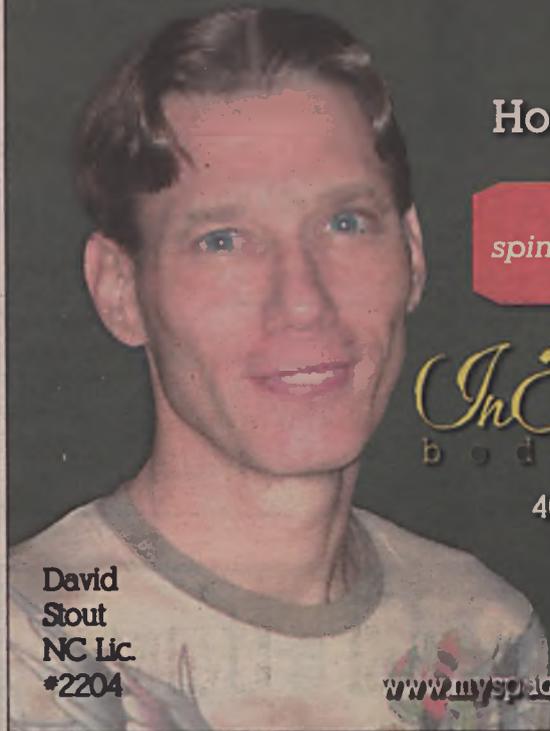
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