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## Festival brings Pride to the mountains

Blue Ridge Pride set for Oct. 10

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Organizers are gearing up for Asheville's restructured Pride festival, set for National Coming Out Day weekend.

On Oct. 10, LGBT community members in the town and folks from surrounding rural areas will make their way to the Blue Ridge Pride Festival in downtown Asheville's Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The event runs Noon to 8 p.m.

Featured entertainers this year include Cantaria, Asheville's Gay Men's Choir; Now You See Them, a folk rock and alternative band; Izzy and the Kesstronics, a surf, soul and swing band; Blondie tribute band Heart of Glass; female impersonators Natalie Productions; and soul, funk and R&B band Boogie Hustlers.

The festival will also include vendors such as Equality North Carolina, *The Purple Pages*, several LGBT-affirming churches and LGBT non-profits. So far, almost 50 vendors have

signed up to attend the festival.

This year's festival is a far cry from last year's organizing snafu, which almost resulted in the event's cancellation. Formerly known as Asheville Pride, Blue Ridge Pride rebranded and brought on new organizing committee members after founder Kali

Brewer allowed a major sponsorship and the festival's event space to fall through at the last minute. The new festival's organizers have also committed to ensuring a greater depth of inclusion and community involvement than in years past.

Sponsors this year include Value Place, Homewood Event and Conference Center, The Grove House, Tomato Jam Cafe, Families Together, Inc., PFLAG, City Real Estate, Malaprops Bookstore, Amanda Miles-Greater, CPA, *The Purple Pages*, Unitarian Universalist Congregation

of the Swannanoa Valley, Patton Counseling Services, Inc., R.O Franks Aviation Company, LLC, North Carolina Stage Company and Jack's Boxes, among others. ▀



BLUE RIDGE PRIDE • 2009

### If you go

Blue Ridge Pride  
Oct. 10, Noon-8 p.m., Free.  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park  
50 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.  
Asheville, NC  
www.blueridgepride.com

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Weekend

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**ROCKY HORROR**

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## Legal seminar covers important topics

Lesbian attorney presents  
'Gay Law 101'

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

In America, the law is supposed to offer equal protection to all citizens. For LGBT individuals and couple alike, the law is often an enemy.

The majority of LGBT couples don't have equal access to civil marriage. In some states, including North Carolina, LGBT employees aren't protected from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender-identity. LGBT parents find it difficult to navigate adoption statutes and procedures.

Charlotte attorney Connie Vetter plans on helping community members answer some of the challenging legal questions affecting their daily lives. On Oct. 15, she'll present "Gay Law 101" at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center in Charlotte.

"It is going to be a bit of a potpourri with a little bit on a lot of different things," she said. "We'll talk about doing wills and health-care power of attorney agreements, give an update on adoptions and in particular second parent adoptions."

Vetter's colleague, Chris Connely, will be present to talk about criminal issues, especially those affecting gay men.

"I imagine we'll also touch on gay marriage," Vetter said. "We get a lot of that in my

office. Questions about what that means in North Carolina."

North Carolina does not recognize marriage between same-sex couples and has a statute specifically banning such recognition. The state doesn't have a constitutional amendment addressing the topic.

That's good news for couples entering into joint healthcare power of attorney agreements and wills. In some states with constitutional amendments defining marriage, some challenges have been filed claiming joint power of attorney agreements can't be recognized.

"I'm not aware of any problems people have had in North Carolina," Vetter said.

The "Gay Law 101" presentation isn't meant to be an in-depth study of the law, the attorney said, but she'll try to give an overview of as many topics as she can. She also wants to leave time for a question and answer period.

She said her Oct. 15 presentation will be of benefit to a wide range of people, but that it will specifically focus on gay and lesbians and couples.

"It really is such a short amount of time," Vetter said. "I've done full seminars just on transgender issues."

The program will be held Oct. 15, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte, 820 Hamilton St., Suite B11. For more information, visit [www.gaycharlotte.com](http://www.gaycharlotte.com) or [www.cjvlaw.com](http://www.cjvlaw.com). ▀