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Cole

Continued from page 1

CC: As you know, *Q-Notes* has been more supportive — not in the sense that I thought you were unsupportive two years ago — but you seem to think more seriously about me than you did, which makes sense because you know me better, politically speaking, and I also think I'm doing a better job. Two years ago, I was not out publicly. My friends knew and that was about it — so there was a lot more coming out stuff that got mixed in with everything else. It was much more complicated and difficult for me. Since all that's done, I started with it out of the way and I've been speaking vocally and frequently.

QN: Other than *Q-Notes*, have you had any trouble finding forums to get your message out?

CC: Well, I've also been written up in *The Leader* [a free weekly newspaper distributed in Charlotte]. I don't know why, but *The Charlotte Observer* won't talk about Libertarian candidates. It's not just me, but anybody. A few years ago, we had a candidate in the county commission race, Dale Grote, a professor at UNCC. The *Observer* had a photo shoot with commission candidates and didn't invite him. Someone else told him and he just showed up. They couldn't make him leave so that's how he got in. I make it a point to always send my press releases to Jim Morrill, their political writer, but he's never responded...never mentioned my name in any article.

QN: As a Libertarian, how are your positions different from the typical liberal Democrats that the community usually supports?

CC: Well, the differences between Libertarians and both Republicans and Democrats is that we believe a person is sovereign over himself. We differ from Democrats in that we apply it to economic issues and we differ from Republicans in that we apply it to lifestyle issues. For example: I believe very strongly in drug legalization. I think drugs are a poor choice, but if a person chooses that for himself, then he's only hurting himself and no one else has any right to interfere with that decision. Certainly, what applies most directly to gay issues is that we believe a person has the right to choose who he loves, who he sleeps with, who he lives with and as long as he's not hurting anybody else or violating someone else's rights, then the government has no place interfering or objecting or saying anything about it. Now, [Libertarians] versus Democrats; we also believe a person is responsible for his own economic decisions. We believe in very little regulation so that a person can decide for himself how to run his own business. As long as he's not defrauding anybody, producing faulty products or stealing, then the government has no place getting involved with his business...that's his personal property. This would also apply to issues like employment discrimination. Discrimination is immoral, it's shortsighted, it's bad business practice, but if a person wants to hurt his business that way, that's his choice because it's his property.

QN: To continue this line of thinking about government subsidies, one of the big issues that came up last year was the decision to stop funding the Arts and Science Council. Would you vote to restore that money?

CC: I was at that April Fool's meeting and I was very vocal in objecting to what the county commission was doing. Arts were not the is-

sue, they just saw that as a way to hurt gay people. My view of the arts is that the government has no business subsidizing anybody's business. So if a person chooses to be an artist, then he gets all the benefits and takes all the risks. If he's not able to support himself in that way, he has the option of getting a different career. I also think it hurts the arts to accept public funding because then there's the potential for censorship. The government always thinks that if its dollar goes in there, it should have some say in what goes on. When the arts chose to receive those funds, they put themselves in the position of having to deal with that censorship. If there's no money connection, there's nothing county commissioners or city council members or state legislators can do.

QN: Do you think the public majority supports funding of the Arts & Science Council?

CC: I think the public issue has been framed improperly. People have been put into the position of thinking that disliking funding for the arts is saying that they are bad. I certainly don't believe that — and I think most people don't believe that — but we've gotten so used to hearing that we have to provide tax money to the arts to improve our society that nobody questions it. I believe the arts are beneficial; I don't think anybody questions that. However, I also believe shoe stores are beneficial, but I don't want them subsidized, either.

QN: Is it more difficult for you running as a third party candidate?

CC: I've had a couple of people tell me that I would be drawing votes from the Democrats and making it easier for the Republicans to win. My response is that the Democrats have been in control in NC for 200 years. The past couple of years the Republicans have been picking up, but, in general, for the past 200 years it's been a Democrat ballgame. We still have the Crimes Against Nature laws. We have the ban on same-sex marriages that passed when the House was controlled by the Democrats. I don't consider the Democrats our friends. Now, I will grant that they're not as vicious as the Republicans, but to me there's not much difference between a rottweiler and a rottweiler with rabies when you're getting slashed.

The Libertarian party in North Carolina is very gay positive...very supportive of the community. The perception I had was that Andrew [Reyes, a gay, Democratic candidate who withdrew from the commission race] had no support from his party. He denies it, but it looked to me like they pressured him to go from the at-large race to the district race in a safe Republican district [5] so they could just brush him off and he would cost them nothing. My party is standing behind me 100 percent. They have nowhere near the resources of the other parties, but they're offering more support.

QN: Do you mind being "the gay candidate?"

CC: I think that title gets me into the game. If someone is willing to look at me just as the representative of our community, that'll start them listening to what I have to say. I think I have a consistent philosophy that is not just about gay issues. I have views on drug issues, private property issues, free enterprise issues, gun issues, abortion — that's not really in this campaign — so, hopefully, they'll notice this and think of me as a comrade and then we can start talking about the other stuff. If being the gay candidate gets me into the discussion, I'm willing to bear that cross. [Laughs.] ▼

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