

North Carolina News Notes

by Lainey Millen . Q-Notes staff

Save the center

CHARLOTTE — There will be a town hall meeting to discuss the state and future of The Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 1401 Central Ave., on Feb. 13 at 7 p.m.

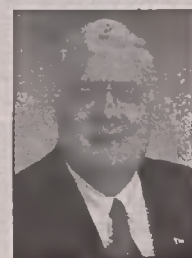
Members of the board will be there to talk with the community, answering questions and brainstorming. Members of the PRIDE Charlotte Task Force will also be in attendance.

The entire LGBT community and friends are encouraged to attend to find ways to save the Center and keep its vision alive.

For more information, call 704-333-0114.

Take action for equality

RALEIGH — On Jan. 25, Sen. Jim



Forrester (R-Gaston) (pictured) once again introduced an anti-LGBT, anti-marriage state constitutional amendment, S. 13.

Equality NC (ENC) is asking for help to stop this attack on our

Constitution and our families.

As in recent years, the proposed amendment is so broad that it not only puts the state's denial of marriage rights to same-sex couples into the Constitution, it also bans any other form of relationship recognition for all unmarried couples. It could even stop private companies from offering partner health benefits in N.C.

We must act now to send a message to the legislature that North Carolinians oppose this kind of bigotry and discrimination. Let your voice be heard by visiting eqfd.org/campaign/amendment07/7wies5206e7e75?

A similar bill is expected in the House.

ENC and its allies prevented this amendment from passing in 2004, 2005 and 2006, but they have to fight hard to stop it again this year.

In order to become law, the amendment must pass both houses of the legislature with a 3/5 majority and be approved by a simple majority of voters on a statewide ballot.

Take action now to help us keep discrimination out of our state constitution.

Email your senator and representative now.

Guild to feature Carter

CHARLOTTE — Durham-native Mandy Carter, one of the nation's premier lesbian rights activist and founding board member for the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC) will speak at the Feb. 20 meeting of the Charlotte Business Guild at the VanLandingham Estate, 2010 The Plaza, from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

NBJC is a civil rights organization dedicated to empowering Black same-gender-loving, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. The Coalition works with communities and allies for social justice, equality and an end to racism and homophobia.

In 1993, Carter helped found SONG — Southerners On New Ground — to help build allies throughout the South, connecting peoples of different races, classes, cultures, gender and sexual identities. Carter has devoted most of her life to the social justice movement, educating audiences about LGBT rights. She is also a mem-

ber of the national steering committee of the Freedom To Marry project and a former board member of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and of the International Federation of Black Prides. Recently, she was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize as part of the 1,000 Women for Peace nominations.

Beginning with the February event, the program portion of the evening will begin at 6:45 p.m. rather than 7 p.m. Cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for guests and non-members.

To make reservations, call 704-565-5075 or email businessguild@yahoo.com by noon on Feb. 16. Individuals making reservations who do not attend will be charged for the event. \$5 will be added to the entrance cost for those without reservations.

In other news, the Guild has started a monthly social on the second Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. The venue will be Jolina, 500 S. College St., Suite 150.

For more information, email businessguild@yahoo.com.

ENC across the state

RALEIGH — The 2007 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly began in January. Among the first orders of business was the election of a new Speaker of the House. Rep. Joe Hackney (D-Orange) was selected as speaker on a 68-52 vote, with all the Democrats supporting him. He was opposed by Rep. Paul Stam (R-Wake).

Speaker Hackney, who previously served as majority leader, has been a long-time ally of Equality NC (ENC) and has consistently received the endorsement of Equality NC PAC.

In the Senate, Sen. Mark Basnight (D-Dare) was re-elected as President Pro-Tempore, that chamber's leader.

ENC looks forward to working with Speaker Hackney, Sen. Basnight and the rest of the legislature to make North Carolina a state that treats its people fairly, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Also announced was that respected lobbyist Randolph Cloud will be representing the organization in the 2007 General Assembly.

Over the past 20 years Cloud has represented over 40 organizations before the N.C. General Assembly. Among other groups he currently represents are the American Lung Association, the N.C. Psychological Association, the Autism Society and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. He also is a contract lobbyist for the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers.

In the 2005 ranking of lobbyists by the N.C. Center For Public Policy Research, Cloud was ranked 15th, most effective out of the roughly 450 registered lobbyists in the state.

"Having a lobbyist of Randolph's stature and expertise is an exciting step forward for Equality NC and LGBT North Carolinians," said Ian Palmquist, ENC executive director.

Cloud will be working on ENC's policy agenda, including blocking anti-LGBT legislation, securing anti-discrimination protections for state employees and working for legal changes that will provide additional protections for same-sex couples in the absence of marriage equality.

Cloud is the president of Randolph E. Cloud and Associates. He is a native of

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