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NC Pride Preview: what you can expect

Back for another year, the annual celebration promises more fun and a special celebrity guest

by Donald Miller

DURHAM — North Carolina's annual gay Pride march and festival is slated for Sept. 29. Under the theme "United for Equality," a week-end-long celebration will actually kick off Sept. 28, continuing through Sept. 30 and will include events in Durham, Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Morrisville and Greensboro.

"We're expecting about the same size crowd this year as we had last," speculates NC Pride Spokesperson Keith Hayes. "Around 7,500. What we've really achieved is a wonderful sort of stasis. The parade is as long as it can be. We have secured the maximum number of vendors we can, which is about 120. We've got a great relationship with Duke University, the local police and the businesses along the parade route. One of our goals was to build bridges with the non-gay community, and we have done that. We're totally welcome there. It's lots of fun and it's really kind of a joyous event."

One of the new features this year is the addition of some bigger name celebrity acts

that will appear at events leading up to the Pride celebration and during Pride itself. Set for pre-party appearances at the Steel Blue Club in Durham on Sept. 28 at 9 p.m. are performances by Someone's Sister and Disappear Fear. On the day of the march and festival attendees will be treated to performances by the Atlanta Freedom Marching Band, The Common Woman Chorus, The Imani Singers and former Village People member Randy Jones.

Jones is a native of Raleigh and performed as the original "cowboy" member of the group during its heyday. After the group left Casablanca Records in the early '80s, Jones left the Village People, saying it was time to move on. It was, perhaps, a smart move on his part. The Village People went on to sign a contract with RCA and took a stab at new wave pop with their only album on the label, "Renaissance." Although they would later resurface and see further success as a popular nostalgia act, Jones only performed with them again just briefly, preferring instead to branch out on his own and pursue independent projects. In recent years he's released a new compilation of dance music entitled "Ticket to the World" and took on the role of God in the Off-Broadway hit "Sodom and Gomorrah."

"We're also very excited to have Sen. Ellie Kinnaird as our keynote speaker at this year's



Randy Jones, a Raleigh native and former member of the iconic gay disco group The Village People, will take to the Pride mainstage.

festival. She's been extremely supportive of the LGBT community and has been a long-time ally," Hayes reports.

Re-elected in November 2006 by an overwhelming 74 percent of the vote, Kinnaird is

now in her sixth term in the North Carolina Senate representing the people of Orange and Person Counties. She continues to push for good jobs and better healthcare security, for further campaign and lobby reform, for effective improvements in the education system and for a safe and healthy environment.

Leading off the parade as the Grand Marshall this year is Gary Palmer, the assistant vice president of community affairs from Replacements Limited. From the Triad area, Palmer's selection as Grand Marshall is in keeping with tradition of picking a representative each year from a different part of the state.

"That's why it's important for everyone from all over North Carolina to attend," says Hayes. "Because this truly is about the entire state." ▀

— For more details about NC Pride events see the schedule of events on page 12.

Kate Bornstein to perform at UNC-Charlotte

Trans activist, author and performance artist will host workshops and a lecture/spoken word presentation

by David Moore . Q-Notes staff

Kate Bornstein is a beautiful mass of contradictions.



"I know I'm not a man and I don't feel like a woman. That makes me laugh so that must mean I'm getting it all right."
— Kate Bornstein

Photo Credit: Anita Khempka

She had gender reassignment surgery 21 years ago at the age of 38. "I never felt like a heterosexual male," she recalls. It was like an acting job. "So after the surgery I found myself living the life of a woman and learning to do the day-to-day things a woman does."

Throw another item into the mix that leaves a lot of people — including some in the LGBT community — scratching their head: after gender reassignment surgery Bornstein eventually settled down into a long-term relationship with genetically-born female, author, sex educator and theater artist Barbara Carellas.

So why bother having the surgery to become a member of the opposite gender when you already enjoy

having sex with partners of the opposing gender, you ask?

For Bornstein and fans of her books and performance pieces, the answer to that is obvious. "It's about your gender identity, not your sexual orientation," says Felicia Mackenzie, a 22-year-old trans woman from San Francisco who identifies as bisexual. "Sexual orientation and gender identity are two totally different things. Gender identity is who you feel like inside. Sexual orientation is who you find yourself physically attracted to. The two aren't mutually exclusive."

Now over two decades later, Bornstein says she's neither a man nor a woman. And even though she's about to turn 60, she concedes that she feels a bit like a 21-year-old girl.

Fact of the matter is, Bornstein does possess the enthusiasm of someone far younger than her chronological years. It's evident in her observations and her sense of humor. She likes to laugh. She likes to make you laugh, too.

Talking to Q-Notes from her brownstone

apartment in New York City's Spanish Harlem neighborhood, Bornstein says she and her partner have the best deal in town because they're living in the last slum in all of Manhattan.

"We have 15-foot ceilings and our own backyard," she offers enthusiastically. "We get along great with our landlord, too."

Still, it's evident that Bornstein, despite all her years advocating the life of a big city girl, is somewhat ready to slow down. "We'll be here a couple of more years and then go somewhere else," she says. "Probably someplace quiet, a little seaside town, but then we'll probably keep a smaller place in the city."

The author of such noted books as "Gender Outlaw," "My Gender Workbook" and "Hello Cruel World," Bornstein began life as a Jewish boy from New Jersey named Albert. She says she revolted against Judaism as a young hippie boy following an argument with a Rabbi.

"I ran off and left graduate school to fast

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