

news notes: carolinas

compiled by Lainey Millen & Matt Comer

Transgender activist awarded

CHARLOTTE — Transgender leader and Democratic Party activist Janice Covington Allison was awarded the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party's Rosa Parks Award at their annual county convention on April 18.



The award is given annually to an individual who has been a trailblazer for equality.

Allison has been an outspoken proponent of LGBT equality in Democratic circles and the broader community in Charlotte and across the region. In 2012, she became the first openly transgender person elected as a North Carolina delegate to a Democratic National Convention, held that year in Charlotte. Recently, Allison made news when she was confronted by anti-LGBT street preacher Flip Benham and others at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center's restrooms; she had been at the government center in support of proposed LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination ordinances ultimately rejected by Charlotte City Council at the March 2 meeting.

info: meckdem.org.

— M.C.

Charlotte

Hero's life to be celebrated

CHARLOTTE — A community celebration honoring the memory and life of Donaldson (Don) Wells King will be held on May 2, 3 p.m., at the Metropolitan Community Church, 1825 Eastway Dr.

King's countless contributions to the LGBT community during his lifetime spoke to his passion for inclusiveness. One of his departing wishes was to sponsor a gathering for all to celebrate one's life.

During the event, community members will share stories about King.

info: 704-563-5810.

— L.M.

Youth scholarship deadline nears

CHARLOTTE — Time Out Youth Center, 2320 N. Davidson St., has announced that its annual Tonda Taylor Scholarship Fund application process is open and approaching its deadline of May 8.

Two \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded to LGBT-identified youth who are residents of Union, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg counties in North Carolina and York county in South Carolina. Applicants must be a high school senior or graduate under the age of 21 as of May 8. Applicants who are seeking a two- or four-year undergraduate degree of their choice must be planning to enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student at an accredited non-profit academic or vocational institution in the fall of 2015, TOY said.

"Providing youth leadership and ensuring the success of LGBTQ youth is a core value for our organization," stated Malone Lockaby, board member and scholarship committee chair for the center. "Past awardees have been successful in completing their education and leaders in the LGBTQ college movement."

Awards will be announced in June.

The application is available online. For more information, email O'Neale Atkinson, director of youth programs, at atkinson@timeoutyouth.org.

info: timeoutyouth.org.

— L.M.

Arts groups hold concert

CHARLOTTE — The Charlotte Pride Band will present their season-end concert, "Life Out Loud," on May 16, 5 p.m., at Heaton Hall, Myers Park Baptist Church, 1900 Queens Rd.

They will be joined by The Gay Men's Chorus of Charlotte and One Voice Chorus in recanting self-discovery through the show's musical narrative.

Tickets are \$13/individual and \$22.50/family pass (two adults, all children under 12).

info: charlotteprideband.org.

— L.M.

PAC hosts fundraiser

CHARLOTTE — Mecklenburg LGBT Political Action Committee (MeckPAC) will have a "Mingle with a Purpose" fundraiser on May 19, 6:30 p.m., at Cathode Azure, 1820 South Blvd.

This event's purpose is to build local LGBT equality and non-discrimination in Charlotte and is sponsored by Paul Kelly, director of technical account management, Tanium; Nate Turner, Your Custom Catering and Events; and Doug Lemmon, Cathode Azure owner. For those who wish to also become sponsors, email meckpac@gmail.com.

Admission is a \$25-50 contribution at the door or online prior to the event.

info: meckpac.org.

— L.M.

Picnic slated

CHARLOTTE — A community family picnic will be held on June 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at Veterans Park, 2136 Central Ave.

Organizations hosting the event are Charlotte Black Gay Pride, Charlotte Pride, Human Rights Campaign and PFLAG Charlotte, among others.

Admission is free.

info: charlottepride.org.

— L.M.

Smith tour hits the Carolinas

CHARLOTTE — British Grammy Award-winning artist Sam Smith will head to the Carolinas on his upcoming tour.

First stop on his journey will be at Time

Warner Cable Arena, 333 E. Trade St., on July 18 at 8 p.m.

On July 23, 7:30 p.m., he will visit Raleigh where he will perform at the PNC Arena, 1400 Edwards Mill Rd.

Smith won Best New Artist, Record of the Year and Song of the Year ("Stay With Me") and Best Pop Vocal Album ("In the Lonely Hour") at the 57th Grammy Awards this year.

Tickets are \$49-125 and are available online. info: samsmithworld.com. ticketmaster.com.

— L.M.

Openly gay leader elected

CHARLOTTE — Jamie Hildreth, an openly gay leader with the LGBT Democrats of Mecklenburg County, was elected secretary of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party at their county convention on April 18.

Hildreth, 25, began the race with several opponents but took the position uncontested at the convention. He currently serves as secretary of the LGBT Democrats of Mecklenburg County and is vice chair of MeckPAC. He also volunteers with a number of community groups, including Charlotte Pride. Last year, Hildreth worked as a field organizer with the North Carolina Coordinated Campaign for Kay Hagan's 2014 U.S. Senate bid.

Hildreth is thought to be among the first openly LGBT people elected to the county Democratic Party board in at least a decade. In 1999, local Democrats elected their first, and so far only, openly gay county party chair.

info: meckdem.org.

— M.C.

Seniors' 'buddy system' launched

CHARLOTTE — The LGBT Aging Solutions Network has announced that its buddy system component has begun to take shape.

Lynne Helms, who serves as a volunteer for the organization's communications group, hopes that bringing its members together to supporting one another will help during times of need. It is targeted toward those who are physically challenged, may be alone or a host of other situations.

Tasks include picking up groceries, stopping off at the pharmacy, as well as others that do not require heaving lifting.

Abating isolation for seniors is an important component of the buddy system program. Volunteers can lessen loneliness by making calls or sending text messages. "Feeling a sense of belonging and the security that someone is aware we are there," Helms added, provides solace to those who would otherwise experience angst, among other emotions.

The group is working on setting up a calling tree by geographical location. Members are being asked to complete a volunteer form in order to make the program more successful. Simply provide first and last name, email address, phone number, address and whether one would be willing to serve as a lead in one's area.

To learn more, email lhelms@bellsouth.net.

info: clt.lgbt.elders@gmail.com.

— L.M.

Eastern

PFLAG interest meeting held

GREENVILLE — Twenty-five participants attended an interest and organizational meeting to start an area chapter of PFLAG on April 9 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Greenville, 131 Oakmont Dr.

Also in attendance was Linda Stroupe, South Atlantic Region regional director for

PFLAG. She hails from Greensboro, N.C. Along with her were representatives from the Rocky Mount and Triangle chapters.

Members of the local LGBT community, as well as parents and friends participated in the meeting.

Organizers were Deborah Thomson and Rich Elkins. Thomson is a mother of a transgendered middle school child and Elkins in an area activist. Thomson sought support for her child through a local school, but found it lacking. The research led her to explore starting a local PFLAG chapter.

Volunteers were solicited to form a steering committee to work on establishing the chapter and beginning meetings. Over half of the local participants volunteered. The committee will meet in May to start plotting the course, and regular meetings could start as early as June.

The group has received an offer of free meeting space from the Unitarian Universalist church. The facility features a large multi-purpose space with kitchen, video projection and sound system, as well as all gender-neutral restrooms.

info: pflag@outgreenville.com.

— L.M. and releases

Triad

Crowns abound at bingo

GREENSBORO — Guilford Green Foundation's Drag Bingo event, "Pageant Bingo," will be held on April 24, 7 p.m., at the Elm Street Center, 203 S. Elm St., in the Empire Room.

Reigning pageant princess and host Mary Kmart, special guest Kia Nichelle Lordwith and other guest stars will provide entertainment throughout the evening.

Arrive at 6 p.m. and have drinks with Queens and Kings.

Attendees are encouraged to gussy up. The best dressed wins a prize.

Tickets are \$15/advance (until noon on April 24), \$15/student and military and \$20/at the door and are available online.

info: ggfnc.org.

— L.M.

Triangle

Pasta, poetry highlighted

DURHAM — Shades of Pride, in conjunction with the LGBTQ Center of Durham, will bring out the mics for its poetry and pasta fundraising event on May 2, 8 p.m., at The Bar Durham, 711 Rigsbee Ave.

As part of the evening's entertainment, Blaize the Poet, Ms. Ego and others from the Triangle and Triad will share spoken word presentations. DJ Chaz will spin during interludes.

Admission is free. Food will be sold for \$5 which includes pasta, salad and wings.

Shades of Pride merged with the center in March. The fundraiser is being held to bring awareness of Shades' new direction. The proceeds from the event will go toward the Shades of Pride event from July 24-26.

info: shadesofpride.org.

— L.M.

Stand up for equality

RALEIGH — Equality North Carolina will bring its Lobby Day of Action to the State Capitol on May 5.

Advocates from across the state will descend on Raleigh in support of LGBT Carolinians

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