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Ride 'em cowboy! Queen City Stomp spurs up

Proceeds to benefit Gay Center, Time Out Youth
by Collier Rutledge . Contributing Writer

CHARLOTTE — Grab your lasso, pop on your cowboy hat and slip on those boots. The Queen City Stomp is heading into town and hot cowboys and cowgirls will be stampeding to the Charlotte Eagle for a weekend



chock full of fun and exciting activities for country-western music and dance lovers of all ages and stripes.

Southern Country Charlotte presents their unique three-day gathering April 18-20. With no other event like it in the Carolinas, they expect

to draw a crowd of 1,000 or more. The Stomp will feature dance swaps, team exhibitions, entertainment and cocktail mixers.

Popular line dance instructor and choreographer Don Curran and Atlanta instructors Scott Schrank and Pepper Sharpe will join local instructor Kenneth Davis in leading dance workshops on Saturday. That evening, singer/songwriter Josh Zuckerman will perform at the Charlotte Eagle.

The group is currently selling their first-ever beginner dance instruction DVD, for a minimum donation of \$10.

"Many folks are buying the DVD and learning dances at home before they head to our events," Southern Country Charlotte President Gary Mathis told *Q-Notes*. Those who are already bold enough to venture out join the group for their weekly Wednesday night free dance lessons at their home bar, the Charlotte Eagle.

In addition to all the planned dancing and fun, Queen City Stomp is also a fundraiser. "Queen City Stomp brings together like-minded people who enjoy country music and dancing," Mathis said. "We give people an opportunity to come out and enjoy themselves while giving back to the community at the same time."

In fact, since its inception in 1991, Southern Country Charlotte's members and supporters have shown remarkable dedication to the community, contributing over \$100,000 in cash, goods and services to

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Center finds new home

Open house scheduled for Apr. 11
by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

CHARLOTTE — The Lesbian & Gay Community Center of Charlotte is celebrating its move to a new home, right on the outskirts of Uptown.

The full move from the Center's former home on Central Ave. was completed in just one day, said Board of Directors Chair Denise Palm-Beck.

"The move was fantastic," she told *Q-Notes*. "About 20 people helped us and we got everything moved in only two trips from the old space to the new."

The Center has been open at the new N.C. Music Factory Complex in Uptown's Fourth Ward since late February. Since then, the board and volunteers have spent time planning how they'll organize the space to make

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Technology tests candidates

A blogger gives his perspective
by Andrew Belonsky
Special to Q-Notes

It would be naive for a political candidate to ignore cyberspace this election cycle. No, not naive. Disastrous.

As obvious a statement as this may be, an online presence helps candidates reach their constituents. Whether it's through official websites or social networking sites, our political hopefuls work tirelessly to establish online outposts. And U.S. Senate candidate, N.C. state Sen. Kay Hagan (D-Guilford) is no exception. Her effort, however, indicates more than just her 21st century savvy.

Though one would expect a nine-year sen-

ator to already realize the power of the internet, the Democratic politico only recently revamped her digital digs, which had been languishing in an unsightly beta swamp.

In honor of the occasion, Hagan released this celebratory, painfully self-aware statement: "Whether it's fantasy sports, Facebook, MySpace, community bulletin boards, our local newspaper or citizen blogs, North Carolinians are coming together online to build communities, and political campaigns ignore that power at their own peril."

Hagan definitely needed to compete. Her competitor, the openly gay Jim Neal, had already established himself online, founding the requisite Facebook and Myspace pages, snatching up his domain name. The

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N.C. House expulsion could have LGBT impact

Thomas Wright first state rep. ousted in over a century

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

RALEIGH — For the first time in almost 130 years, the N.C. House of Representatives expelled a member who refused to resign after being indicted on charges of mishandling or hiding campaign contributions and other finances.

Former Rep. Thomas Wright (D-New Hanover) was ousted Mar. 20 by a vote of 109-5. His refusal to step down prompted his colleagues to remove him for actions unbecoming a member of the House.

According to Equality North Carolina Executive Director Ian Palmquist, Wright was one of the leading champions of HIV/AIDS funding in the House and a longtime supporter of eligibility increases for the state's AIDS Drug

Assistance Program (ADAP).

In 2006, due in part to work by Wright and Rep. Pricey Harrison (D-Guilford), the maxi-

mum annual income level for those eligible for drug assistance was raised from \$12,250 to \$19,600.

On the other hand, Palmquist said, Wright supported a proposed state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage and other legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

For the LGBT community, the important question now is who will replace Wright.

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Thomas Wright's expulsion from the N.C. House could make the balance of gay-friendly legislators better or worse.