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just news

OLGA Network off and running

Statement of purpose adopted: "To promote lesbian and gay liberation through legislation, education and direct action"

BY NANCY WALSETH

On November 9, 600 people marched and rallied in downtown Portland to protest the passage of Ballot Measure 8. A meeting was announced for the next evening, at the Oregonians For Fairness (OFF) office, to organize the outpouring of energy into action.

More than 100 people met on November 10. After general discussion, the assembly broke into interest-group committees (Media, Outreach, Education, Legislative, Organization and Structure, Direct Action, and Burnside 18). At the end of the evening, the large group reconvened for reports from a spokesperson from each committee at which time the Foursquare Church demonstration was planned.

The next large meeting was scheduled for November 16. In the meantime, the structure committee met with spokespersons from the other committees to discuss organizational forms and to plan the November 16 meeting agenda.

On November 16 about 300 persons met at the Northwest Service Center. The structure committee facilitated. The committees were described, an organizational structure was suggested, and after discussion, the assembly broke into the same groups as formed in the first meeting. The committees hurriedly passed phone lists around and planned their next meetings.

The large group met two weeks later for development of a purpose statement. Less than 15 participated, and no agreement was reached on a purpose statement for the large group.

The committees met separately several times throughout the holiday season. The media committee contacted a producer about a cable TV presentation; the legislative committee worked on an omnibus gay rights bill for the 1989 legislative session; and the education committee broke into subcommittees to conduct a thank you projection for counties which rejected Measure 8, a voluntary compliance project targeting high state employees, a research project, and a speaker's bureau project.

OFF held a community meeting on December 7 to discuss, in retrospect, the strategies

employed by the campaign. The structure committee of the large group (still unnamed) and other committee spokespersons attended. The structure committee announced that the new group's next large meeting would take place January 10 at Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).

On January 10, persons showed up at MCC. After generally decrying the lack of cohesion, those attending decided not to adjourn until the group had a name and statement of purpose. After discussion the name "Oregon Lesbian and Gay Action Network" (for short, OLGA Network) was adopted with this purpose statement: "To promote lesbian and gay liberation through legislation, education and direct action." Other topics discussed were fear of leadership, ACLU plans for the 1989 legislature, and the legislative committee's plan to appoint an omnibus gay rights bill.

OLGA meetings have taken place weekly since January 10, on Tuesdays at 7 pm at MCC. The OLGA legislative committee has introduced an omnibus gay rights bill in the Oregon Senate, (SB 631) which would not have otherwise occurred due to ACLU's need to conserve its resources for defensive action on the OCA-sponsored anti-gay bills.

The legislative committee has organized Lobby Day for March 15, 1989, with a morning of lobby training and an afternoon of lobbying in Salem on bills concerning gay rights issues (several are under consideration). OLGA Network seeks the participation of as many persons as possible to make our voices heard on Lobby Day.

OLGA Network is presently concentrating on legislative matters, since the Oregon legislature is now in session and is considering bills vitally important to the gay community. Some of the other committees have fallen into relative inactivity, but perhaps they will now rise and regroup.

OLGA Network welcomes the participation of all persons in agreement with its purpose — "to promote gay liberation through legislation, education and direct action." MCC, Tuesdays, 7 pm, Info: 232-5826.

Phoenix Rising hires new director

Steve Dotterer, President of Phoenix Rising Foundation, has announced the appointment of M. Stephanie Holloway as Executive Director. Holloway, who holds a Masters Degree from the University of Oregon, comes to Phoenix Rising with management skills developed in twenty years experience in not-for-profit, volunteer programs including tenure as an Executive Director for another United Way agency.

"From my perspective, Phoenix Rising is at a very important point in its journey. The challenge that offers me to be a part of the

development of new programs and the continuation of Phoenix Rising's already successful counseling and other programs is exhilarating! I'm anxious to have the opportunity to meet and work with the other agencies and groups in the gay and lesbian community because, together, we can accomplish things we never dreamed possible or, should I say, probable," says Holloway who assumes her duties March 6.

Phoenix Rising is a service center promoting wellness and the common interests of lesbians and gay men through professional counseling, information and referral, educational programs and social activities. Phoenix Rising is a United Way agency which is also funded by fees for service, contributions, grants and in-kind gifts.

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