

just news

Idaho holds first Gay Pride Parade

BY DELL RICHARDS

After seven months of organizing, Boise political activists did the impossible—pulled off the first gay parade in Idaho.

Despite initial fears in the gay community that marchers would wear paper bags on their heads to hide their faces and public predictions that people would be shot if they attempted to exercise their civil rights, an estimated 350 men and women marched on June 23 down the main streets of Boise proudly carrying signs and banners to mark the beginning of the fight for gay and lesbian rights in this conservative Rocky Mountain state.

"The march exceeded our wildest dreams," said Ann Dunkin, chair of Your Family, Friends and Neighbors (YFFN), the group that organized the day's events.

For months, activists such as Dunkin worried that the gay community was too closeted for a public display of pride to come off.

Boise has a long history of intolerance toward minorities. Saturday's parade put an end to that era even though approximately 100 counter-demonstrators—carrying signs such as "Down with Gays"—lined the streets in protest.

But the massive number of gays who were unafraid to show their faces in public—and the obvious support of Boise's liberal heterosexual community—stunned even the angriest protestor into awed silence.

Many non-gay political organizations—such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the

National Organization for Women, the Boise Coalition for Peace in Central America and the Rainbow Coalition—swelled the number of participants.

"I would guess about a third of the marchers were not gay," said Edie Kilpatrick, treasurer of YFFN.

Local church organizations—from a Friends (Quaker) group to the Disciples of Christ to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC)—also lent an air of respectability to the parade in this intensely religious community.

"I believe that if Jesus were here today, he would be right in the middle of the AIDS wards," said Carol Blakley, a retired mother of a gay man who is HIV-negative. Like many of the parade participants, Blakley has been fighting a lone battle for the acceptance of gays at her church since 1977. Blakley and her husband, Ron, carried one of the many banners with references to God and Christ.

Jodi Mekkers, pastor of the local MCC church, opened the gathering at the Capital step—and closed the rally that followed—with a prayer. "People across the country are cheering you on—and watching you," said Peri Jude Radecic, legislative director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who flew in for the event.

After a two-hour trek across town in the 95 degree heat, marchers were treated to songs by Houston activist Carolyn Mobley, the comic duo Romanovsky and Phillips, and Olivia recording artist Teresa Trull.

Lifting voices in song for the world to hear

Gay Games III will include a 300-voice festival chorus performing at the opening and closing ceremonies, plus a mid-week concert. Fourteen people from Portland will lend their voices to that heavenly choir. Some of the members are: Marge Coalman, Cheyenne Chapman, Karen Fong, Amy Valentine, Arika Anderson, Trent Gagnon, Philip Anderson, Nancy Vanderburgh, Heidi Boenke, Donna Dunais, Cindy Z. and Sherry Oeser. Karen Fong, Amy Valentine and Arika Anderson will compete in events as well as sing in the performances.

Marge Coalman says the chorus members have received their music and Portland folks will be gathering to rehearse in the upcoming weeks. The first full rehearsal will precede the first performance at the opening ceremonies. Songs at the performance will be "Proud" and "Come Celebrate." There will be ten songs in all, one of which is in French.

The Games promise to offer as much culturally as competitively. Artists of all media are being asked to bring along their works for display. Public transportation will be free in Vancouver during the Games as passes will be granted.

With registrations from many countries around the world, including newly liberated Eastern Europe, the Games will surely be an opportunity for intercultural exchange, and never-to-be forgotten memories. It is something we can all sing about!

—Sandra de Helen

TEAM PORTLAND SWIM TEAM



Six members of Team Portland Swim Team competed in the State Games of Oregon, July 7 and 8, held at the Club. This was the second of three meets held to ready the swimmers for the upcoming Gay Games. The team members represent a variety of abilities, ages and all are working hard to achieve their personal best. Come cheer them on at the Games.

—Marge Parker

TEAM PORTLAND STEERING COMMITTEE



Our apologies to Team Portland. The picture planned for last month's article is above. The photo for Team Portland pictured Amy and Karen who won their trophies in martial arts competition.

Team Portland's glue, otherwise known as the steering committee. Standing (from left): Dave Corral (tennis), Richard Brown (tennis), Geoff Pleat (power lifting), Jay Dobson (triathlon), Bev Mickelson (co-chair). Front: Jill Schudt (swimming), Tyler Cole (swimming), Dale Shaw (physique), and Lennie Sobocinski (trathlon).

Bev Mickelson would like to add that Bridgetown Realty and Cascade Therapy Associates are Gold Medal sponsors. The Silver Medal sponsor is TV Host. The Bronze Medal sponsors are Just Out and Hobo's.

Concert and marching bands to perform "Beyond The Rainbow"

Lesbian and Gay Bands of America (LGBA), the national organization comprised of 18 concert/marching bands from across the U.S., will present a major concert, "Beyond The Rainbow," on Wednesday, August 8 at 8 pm at the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver. In keeping with the international scope of the Games and Festival, music

representatives of many countries and cultures will be featured.

"The concert concept, 'Beyond The Rainbow,' represents the bringing together of all the colors from around the world: the colors of people, the colors of culture, the colors of thought, the colors of friendship, love and humanity. The goal of the entire week's events is each of us striving for our own personal gold that lies beyond the rainbow," stated artistic director, Nanisi Barrett.

The massed bands will also perform at the Games' Opening Ceremonies under the direction of Bob Brown (Denver) and the Closing Ceremonies under the direction of Jim Cochrane (New York). Ticket information is available by calling (619) 226-1101.

VIOLENT CRIME AND GAY-BASHING HOTLINES

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