

Queers saddle up for equestrian event

The Gay and Lesbian Equestrian Playday and Camp-Out will be held May 20 to 22 at Goose Lake Ranch in Bend, Ore. For the past three years, Steve Jones and C. Ray Gould have held the event on their 40-acre ranch. The first year, 20 people attended. Last year, more than 200 people attended from Oregon, California, Hawaii, Idaho and Washington. The weekend costs \$45 and includes campsite, horse space, events, meals and live entertainment. The Deschutes County Coalition for Human Dignity will be assisting with the meals, to raise money for the group. Horses will be available for rental for \$30 a half day. Registration deadline is May 1. For more information, call Jones or Gould at (503) 388-3680, or write 24166 Dodds Road, Bend, OR 97701.

OCA measures pass in four local municipalities

Measures sponsored by the Oregon Citizens Alliance passed in three cities and one county in the March 22 mail-in ballot election.

Marion County voters passed, by 61 percent, a measure that would deny civil rights protections for sexual minorities. In Albany, the measure passed by 59 percent, in Junction City, by 57 percent, and in Turner, by 79 percent.

This brings to 20 the number of local governments in Oregon that have passed measures that ban equal rights for sexual minorities. The results come just as the campaign against a statewide OCA-sponsored measure, slated for the November ballot, swings into full stride.

Julie Davis, executive director of Support Our Communities PAC, which is leading the campaign against the OCA measures, downplayed the impact of the latest results.

"I still feel confident that when it is given to the full light of the statewide campaign, we will be victorious," Davis said. She pointed out that where larger numbers of voters turn out for local elections on OCA-initiatives, a smaller percentage vote in favor of them.

Because of House Bill 3500, the results of these latest measures probably will not hold up in court. The bill makes it illegal to implement the results of local ordinances regarding sexual minorities.

All four of the local governments passed Ballot Measure 9 in 1992. In Marion County, voters narrowly passed the measure with 51 percent of the vote. The recent local measures passed by a larger percentage in all four places.

Similar measures are slated for May ballots in Oakridge, Veneta, Cottage Grove, Roseburg and Gresham.

Urban League names new director

Lawence J. Dark has been named the new president and executive officer of the Urban League of Portland. He replaces Darryl Tukufu, who left the Urban League in October 1993.

Dark has served as the executive assistant for Equal Opportunity Programs to the president of the University of South Carolina. He was also a research fellow at the university. He has also served as the executive director of the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence and as director of the Council on Human Rights in Virginia.

"[Dark's] professional experience...will enhance our advocacy efforts and help us achieve the league's mission of providing an equal opportunity to all Oregonians," said Gina Wood, chair of the Urban League board of directors.

Dark also serves on the advisory board for the American Red Cross Holocaust War Victims Tracing and Information Center. He is a certified trainer and instructor in African American and general HIV/AIDS education.

Tukufu left the league to accept a position at Lorain County Community College outside Cleveland, Ohio.

Urban League begins group for sexual minority youth

The Urban League of Portland is beginning a drop-in support group for sexual minority youth of color—the first such group in the Portland area.

The group, called Rainbow, was organized by Urban League counselor Shala Moaydei. While three other groups meet some needs of sexual minority youth, Moaydei wants Rainbow to meet the specific needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual youth of color.

Moaydei said she visited existing groups, such as Windfire and VOICES, before starting Rainbow. "I didn't see any youth of color [in those groups], and I knew they had to go somewhere. Hopefully, they will feel safe enough to come here," she said.

While all queer youth face difficulties, queer youth of color have the added challenge of dealing with racism, Moaydei said. They also might experience cultural isolation because of their sexuality.

One study reported that 32 percent of African American lesbians and 36 percent of African American gay men commit suicide. For European Americans, figures showed that 21 percent of lesbians and 27 percent of gay men commit suicide.

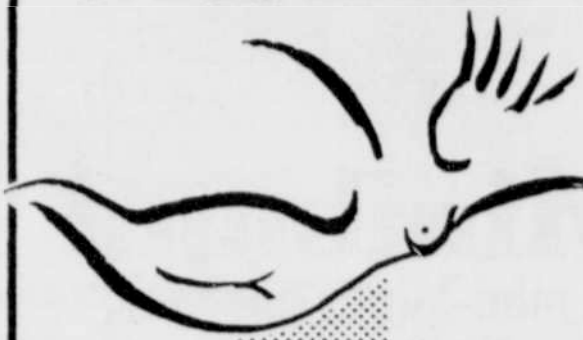
Rainbow will serve youth aged 12 to 19 of all ethnic backgrounds. Moaydei said she is doing outreach through the schools, including Jefferson and Grant high schools. In addition, an outreach speaker has been hired to encourage youth to make use of the program.

Multnomah County has awarded Rainbow a \$2,000 grant that will fund the program for 90 days. The money will also go toward education workshops for human resources professionals. Moaydei said she is hoping to receive more grant money from the state once the program is in place.

Rainbow meetings are held at the Urban League of Portland at 10 N Russell Ave., Tuesdays from 6 pm to 9 pm. For more information, call 280-2600.

Compiled by Pamela Lyons

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