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since 1983

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# steppin' out



Thousands jammed Pioneer Courthouse Square in 1992 to voice their outrage, laugh, shed tears and, most importantly, make a personal connection with each other and the political process. On Sunday, Oct. 9, at 2 pm the No on 13 Committee is hosting a rally for all of us to stand up again: for ourselves, for each other, for justice and freedom for all.

## editorial

# Who'd've thought it?

*Portland's sexual minority communities and the Portland Police Bureau are establishing an unprecedented partnership*

by Ariel Waterwoman

Every once in a while the trust one has in a process turns out to be justified. It's been a mere 25 years since the Stonewall riots. For some of us that's a lifetime, for others, a brief jaunt down memory lane. Did any of us envision a time when members of law enforcement would meet with lesbians, drag queens, bisexuals, gay men, transsexuals or transgendered people for the good of our respective communities?

Historically, members of the sexual minority communities have not looked to law enforcement for help. Far from it. The cops were usually the perpetrators of violence against queers, not our champions. In many places in the world, this is still the case. But for the last 30 to 40 years, as the United States has struggled with the full implementation of civil rights for all of her citizens, change is slowly happening.

As a flower child of the '60s, a woman having a mixed ancestry and coming from the lower classes, it has been no easy thing for me to extend trust to Portland's community policing programs. I watched from the sidelines for a long time, "testing the waters," checking the people out, looking for the catch. What I consistently found in these community policing coalitions were decent people wanting to do the right thing for their communities. Portland's Police Chief Charles Moose continues to shape the prototype of community policing in our neighborhoods. Community policing requires the vision and commitment of all of the members of a specific community.

With my negative history with law enforcement, it took well over a year for me to stop sweating profusely at every roundtable meeting. Time, and two honorable police chiefs,

has played a big role in developing my trust. The group is officially known as The Sexual Minorities Roundtable. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month, sometimes with the chief, sometimes not. Assistant Chief Dan Noelle is the official liaison between the Portland Police Bureau and the sexual minority communities. He attends every meeting.

We have reached a point where the roundtable members feel a need to more clearly define the work we do as a coalition for community action. As with many other oppressed communities in the Portland area, we are formalizing our efforts in community policing. We have created a partnership agreement for all the members of the lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite, gay men's and law enforcement communities to sign. Everyone is invited to come and sign on to this agreement. This is a big deal for our communities.

A signing ceremony is scheduled to take place on Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day, at 1 pm in conference room B on the 14th floor of the Justice Center. Mayor Vera Katz will be unable to attend, as she will be in Japan. Chief Moose will sign and will be joined by Assistant Chief Noelle and state Reps. Kate Brown, George Eighmey and Gail Shibley. Representatives from Right to Privacy PAC, the Lesbian Community Project, the Equity Foundation and the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission will be there. So will City Commissioners Charlie Hales, Earl Blumenauer and Mike Lindberg, Roni Lang, William Warren, myself, and many more members of the queer community, including you, if you'll take the time to share in this momentous day with us. Take a few minutes to become a part of history.

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