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since 1983

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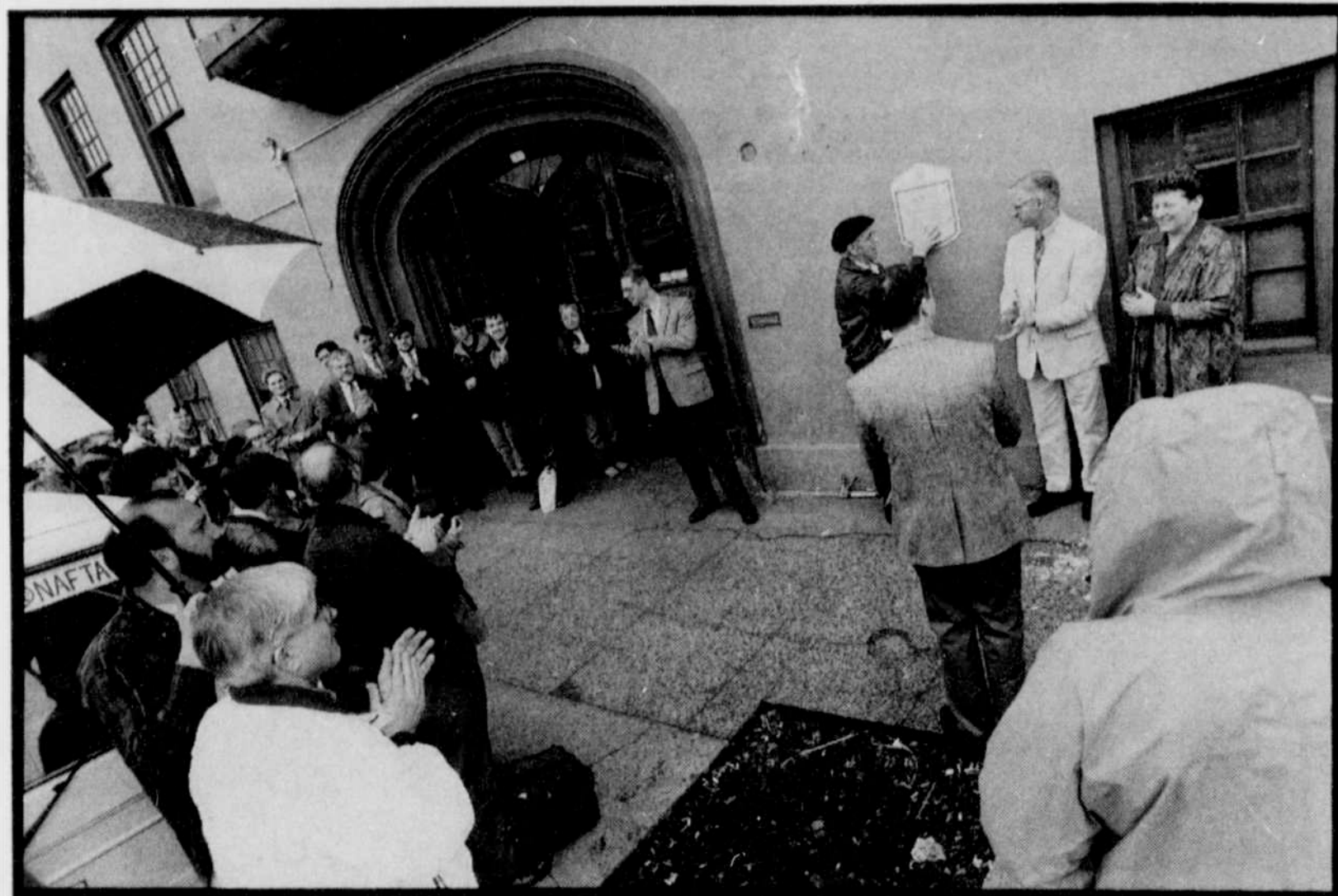


PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

At a ceremony held March 13, a plaque honoring Portland's lesbian and gay history was placed at LaLuna, 215 SE Ninth Ave. in Portland. See article on page 12.

editorial

A vote for diversity

Though it may seem like an unimportant election, we have the chance to make some significant changes

by Renée LaChance

When the ballot comes from Multnomah County, register your vote and mail it in—don't just throw it away or toss it on your desk with the other clutter to be forgotten until it is too late for your vote to be counted. We sometimes think these local mail-in elections are unimportant, but this one is very important to the sexual minority community.

We have the opportunity to elect a Multnomah County Sheriff who will blow the entrenched good-ol'-white-boy system apart and replace it with a system that honors diversity and better reflects the community it serves.

Currently, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office has few women, people of color, and sexual minorities in its law enforcement ranks. The acting sheriff, who is also running for election, is John Bunnell. Bunnell was groomed by Sheriff Bob Skipper for the job and perpetuates Skipper's outdated policies of law enforcement. Under the Skipper regime, highly qualified people of color have been rejected while relatives of the command staff have been hired instead.

Vera Pool wants to change that. She has the moxie, determination, and a workable vision to make the changes necessary. She plans to trim spending and redirect those saved dollars to corrections: more jail space, more programs to rehabilitate, and more programs to prevent wanna-bes from becoming criminals. She plans to create an agency work force that better represents the community, and she vows to work in partnership with other agencies to provide effective service within Multnomah County.

Dan Noelle, currently on leave from his position as assistant chief of the Portland Police Bureau, the only other qualified candidate, has interacted more with the sexual minority commu-

nity than Pool has. He has served on the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment and the Portland Police Sexual Minorities Roundtable. He co-drafted the partnership agreement between the Police Bureau and the sexual minorities communities. He has command experience and is well qualified. He'd be a good man for the job. Some would think he deserves our endorsement.

So why do we endorse Pool? Pool has been with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office for 24 years. She is well qualified to lead the Sheriff's Office into the next century. She knows the agency's weaknesses and its strengths and deserves the chance to right the wrongs perpetrated by the current administration on women and people of color. She has a strong grasp on corrections, which is, increasingly, the Sheriff Office's chief function.

Additionally, our community's support of Pool is another section in the bridge between marginalized communities. We have to back up our words to communities of color with action when we seek their support for causes that affect sexual minorities of all colors like ballot measures 9 and 13. We can't just say we support the struggles of all marginalized communities—we must show our support by voting in candidates representative of those communities, by being a visible presence at rallies against racism and discrimination, by honoring boycotts called for by migrant farm workers, and by contributing our dollars wherever they are needed.

A vote for Vera Pool is a vote for diversity within the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. And—contrary to the propaganda of the Oregon Citizens Alliance—diversity is more than just a code word for gay men and lesbians.

contents

VOL 12 NO. 19 MARCH 17, 1995

FEATURES

Beyond our borders

The struggle for sexual minority rights is a global one (p. 15)

Cinematic mecca

The Berlin Film Festival is a shining light for lesbian and gay cinema (pp. 17-19)

DEPARTMENTS

World news

Polish military uses psychiatric diagnoses to oust gay men (p.4)

National news

National P-FLAG plans a tolerance campaign (pp. 5-8)

Local news

Activists honored as queer history project is launched (pp. 11-13)

COLUMNS

Spirituality

Gay Lutheran pastor retained despite being defrocked (p. 9)

Independently speaking

We need to grow up! (p.31)

ARTS

Books

This year's Lammy nominees are announced (p. 26)

Cinema

The Sum of Us is a family picture (p.27)

Entertainment

A treat for the voyeur (p. 28)

Media

Lesbian-bashing on TV's Law & Order (p. 29)

Aural gratification

The March beat will move you (p. 30)