

just out
since 1983

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steppin' out



An art show featuring the work of 18 dyke artists enhances "Lesbian Visibility" in Portland. The show is at the Justice Center window gallery, Southwest Second at Madison Street, through June 30.

guest editorial

The spirit of pride

Each year Lesbian and Gay Pride celebrations have increased in size and complexity, this year is no exception

by Susan Leo

It is with great pride and joy that Pride Northwest Inc. brings the 20th anniversary Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Parade, Rally and Festival to our community. Mindful of the successes and mistakes of the past, and with a clear commitment to the future, the men and women of this year's Pride Northwest Board and Committee worked for more than eight months to produce an event that would be fun, accessible and representative of as much of the community as possible.

Twenty years ago, a mere handful of queers gathered together in the South Park Blocks—as if "mere" and "handful of queers" belong in a sentence together. We came to celebrate our lives and our community in the ways we could with the resources and opportunities available to us at the time. And almost every year since, we have claimed the third weekend in June as *ours*. First with fairs, then rallies, then marches and dances and picnics, Pride festivities and events have increased every year in number and in complexity.

This year's Lesbian and Gay Pride weekend was the culmination of months of work by a remarkable group of 20 men and women, with ties to virtually every element of our community and with a commitment to make Lesbian and Gay Pride bigger and even better. While we each knew at least one person on the committee, most others were complete strangers. But we went to meetings and, over time, we figured out not only how to talk to one another, but also how to trust. We knew from the beginning that as diverse as we were, we still weren't everybody—so we created an advisory board made up of representa-

tives from as many groups in the community as we could think of. We held meetings and we called people. We listened and we went to work.

The community wanted to get back to Waterfront Park and we worked hard to make that happen. We wanted everybody to be in the parade, so we made it free. We wanted to have as many groups and community businesses as possible at the festival, so we lowered the rates to record lows, and we worked with groups to make the booths even more affordable when that proved necessary. This year's rally has over 150 booths—many more than any Portland Pride festival has had! We tried to balance the politicians and the entertainment and provide mike time to people who hadn't been heard from last year. As Oregon's largest Lesbian and Gay Pride festival, we wanted to recognize the good work being done throughout the state, and next year we will take nominations for such community honors as Grand Marshals and the Spirit of Pride Awards.

This was, in many ways, a watershed year for Lesbian and Gay Pride: Faced with a debt from past years of more than \$6,000, we raised enough money through events, grants (thanks, Equity Foundation) and sponsorships from community businesses to clear the good fiscal name of our community and to give us a running start at Pride 1996. We want to thank everyone for all their support, and we invite you to become a part of Pride Northwest Inc.

Susan Leo is the chairwoman of Pride Northwest Inc.

contents

VOL. 12 NO. 16 JUNE 16, 1995

FEATURES

The true story of two girls in tuxes
(p. 19)

Pride events: a recap
(p. 21)

Amazon Dragons make waves
(pp. 22-23)

DEPARTMENTS

World news

Norwegian queers are booted from peace march
(p. 6)

National news

An insurance company's about-face nets lawsuits
(pp. 7-11)

Local news

Rural and urban HIV/AIDS providers vie for equal shares
(pp. 13-15)

COLUMNS

Youth

Kids of gay and lesbian parents can join a new club
(p. 16)

Profile

Eighth Mountain Press celebrates 10 years
(p. 17)

ARTS

Cinema

Oregon Gay and Lesbian Film Fest ends post-Pride doldrums
(p. 31)

Television

In the Life at last
(p. 32)

Video

Gay Lives to counter hate
(p. 33)

Theater

A profound new playwright; a delicious spoof
(pp. 34-35)

Books

Kate Bornstein, gender outlaw
(p. 36)

Media

Does Liz Smith have nothing better to do?
(p. 37)