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local news

Grievance addressed

Transsexual activists convince RTP to change the name of its Lucille Hart Dinner

by Inga Sorensen

The board of Right to Privacy has decided to change the name of its flagship fund-raiser, the Lucille Hart Dinner, following a Feb. 10 meeting with transsexual rights advocates.

"We're not sure what we're going to call it yet, maybe just the Right to Privacy Dinner," says Portland attorney and RTP board co-chair Lisa Maxfield. "The arguments presented to us [by transsexual activists] were very convincing and certainly influenced our decision."

Right to Privacy is Oregon's largest lesbian, gay and bisexual rights organization. Its political action committee sponsors the annual Lucille Hart Dinner, which is more than a decade old and attracts powerful political figures.

The dinner was named for Alberta Lucille Hart, a physician and author who lived in Oregon from 1890 to 1962. Born female, Hart lived an adult life as a man—dressing as a man, using a male pronoun, and marrying a woman. Some believe Hart was actually a lesbian who lived outwardly as a man as a way to better deal with society's homophobia. Transsexual activists, however, maintain that Hart was actually transsexual—someone whose essence was male, both internally and externally.

the matter were distributed to attendees.

Brown was among a group of seven transsexual activists—five from Seattle—who met with RTP's executive director, Barry Pack, and two board members for a historic three-hour meeting on Jan. 2.

RTP held a retreat a few days later, and the decision was made to allow transsexual activists to address the organization's entire board of directors in February.

"RTP probably thought we were going to come in there with a long list of gripes, but we didn't," says Brown, who estimates that the meeting lasted about a half-hour. "We simply wanted to talk about the dinner, and that's what we did."

She adds: "That's not to say that we won't want to discuss other issues in the future."

Topics for future discussion may include adding transsexuals to RTP's mission statement, which explicitly covers gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

Another issue in question concerns statewide anti-discrimination legislation. RTPAC has been lobbying legislators for more than a decade to pass an anti-discrimination law, and transsexual activists have urged RTPAC to push legislation that protects not only gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from discrimination, but transsexuals as well.

The activists have criticized RTP's decision last legislative session to push a bill that excluded language they believed could have covered members of the transsexual and transgendered communities.

For now, however, Brown says she'll savor her success.

"Every year when [RTP's dinner] was held, it was a very personal and painful experience for the transsexual community," she says. "At least now we won't have to go through that, which is extremely gratifying to me."



"We're not sure what we're going to call it yet, maybe just the Right to Privacy Dinner," says Portland attorney and RTP board co-chair Lisa Maxfield. "The arguments presented to us [by transsexual activists] were very convincing and certainly influenced our decision."

"We went into that meeting with one issue on our list—getting the name of the Lucille Hart Dinner changed. It's a very emotional matter for us," says local transsexual activist Candice Hellen Brown, who along with Ken Morris, presented their case before RTP's board.

Last spring, transsexual activists formed the Ad Hoc Committee of Transsexuals to Recognize Alan Hart, and began demanding that RTP PAC change the name of its dinner. In October, a joint action by members of the Lesbian Avengers and the Ad Hoc Committee was conducted at the fund-raiser, and hundreds of fliers highlighting

Cabbage Lane nears goal

Cabbage Lane, located near Wolf Creek, Ore., has been women's land for more than 20 years. The 80 rustic acres are held as "sacred wilderness space" by the Cabbage Lane Land Trust. Two more land payments are due before the land is paid off (\$2,500 in summer 1996 and \$2,500 in summer 1997.)

The trust raised \$1,600 during a December auction and is conducting a fund-raising campaign to meet the remainder of the 1996 obligation.

It is seeking 100 women to donate \$13 apiece. Interested parties should send a donation to CLLT, PO Box 2145, Roseburg, OR 97470. Donations are tax deductible if made to the Oregon Women's Land Trust (earmarked for Cabbage Lane). Contributors will receive a certificate of appreciation and a tree on the land will be named after them.

Gender studies is topic of annual symposium

The Lewis & Clark College Gender Studies Symposium is set for March 6-9.

John D'Emilio, a historian and director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Policy Institute, will give the keynote address, entitled "Reclaiming Tradition: Lesbian and Gay Families in a New America." D'Emilio will speak on March 8 at 7:30 pm at the Council Chamber.

All symposium events are free and open to the public; they will be held in the Templeton Student Center unless otherwise specified.

For a full schedule, call the Gender Studies Program, Lewis & Clark College, 768-7381 or 768-7613. The college is located at 0615 SW Palatine Hill Road in Portland.

Compiled by Inga Sorensen