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local news

The City Nightclub takes another legal hit

Multnomah County Circuit Judge George Joseph declared The City Nightclub, an alcohol-free club catering to sexual minority youth, a "specified crime property" during June 14 court proceedings.

Club owner Lanny Swerdlow says he fears Joseph's action could lead to his eviction from the building, which is located on Northwest 13th Avenue just off West Burnside.

"Let's just say that I'm not in the best of spirits right now," Swerdlow tells *Just Out*. "I'm putting up the best fight I can, but I'm up against a lot."

The City Nightclub is heralded by supporters as a lifeline for many queer youth, particularly those who come from difficult circumstances. Detractors, however, view The City as a haven for unrestrained drug activity and other illicit happenings.

The City of Portland has taken aggressive action to close the club down. This past December, Nancy E. Ayres, senior deputy city attorney, filed a civil suit against the building's owner, ADS Investment Limited Partnership, which is controlled by the Schnitzer family. (For a detailed look at the controversy, see "A Tale of Two Cities," in the June 7, 1996, *Just Out*.)

The suit maintains the club violates the city's Specified Crime Property Ordinance, more loosely known as the "drug house" ordinance, which prohibits the use of a building for the distribution of a controlled substance.

Joseph's declaration essentially makes that charge official. "I have two-and-a-half years left on my lease," says Swerdlow, who believes he may now get evicted because his lease stipulates there is to be no criminal activity on the premises.

"I'm not sure what will happen at this point," he says.

Other motions for summary judgment are slated


Welcome to The City Nightclub
PLEASE READ BEFORE ENTERING

The City Nightclub is a GAY CLUB.
We celebrate the diversity of our clientele.
We expect tolerance, understanding and RESPECT. If this bothers you, GO TO ANOTHER CLUB!

OUR RATIONAL RULES

1. No credit
2. No loitering outside the club
3. No alcohol or other drugs
4. NO OVERT HETEROSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

No Return
If you go past this point, there is a \$1.00 re-entry charge. If you are 21 or older and have valid I.D., the re-entry charge is waived.



to be heard in mid-July. A trial is scheduled for August.

Swerdlow, a longtime neighborhood and community activist, has been operating for-profit social venues geared toward queer youth since the 1970s. He estimates that thousands of sexual minority youth have passed through The City's doors during the past 13 years and have experienced there a sense of safety and community not found elsewhere.

"I would feel so badly for the kids if The City Nightclub closed down," says Swerdlow. "They would have no place to go."

When asked whether he would simply open up another club for queer youth if city officials are indeed successful in their bid, Swerdlow replies: "I don't know if I'll have the resources to do it [because] the legal costs may be so high."

Inga Sorensen

Epitope HIV test receives FDA approval

The federal Food and Drug Administration has given Epitope Inc., a Beaverton biotechnology company, approval for the final piece of its oral HIV test, known as Orasure.

The approval clears the way for SmithKline Beecham, a drug company that is Epitope's partner, to sell the test to health professionals nationwide.

Orasure can screen and test for HIV antibodies from a single oral specimen. The test is viewed as a safe alternative to drawing blood for tests because HIV is not transmitted through casual contact with saliva or other oral fluids. Orasure is the first approved product in the United States that can confirm the presence of HIV antibodies without blood tests.

Men's conference to be held in Portland

The 21st Men and Masculinity Conference is to be held July 25-28 at Lewis & Clark College in Southwest Portland. The theme is "Women and Men: Visions of Justice."

The gathering will feature several workshops and panel discussions. Keynote panelists include human rights activists Roberto Reyes-Colon and Kathleen Saadat, Multnomah County Chair Bev Stein, Portland Police Chief Charles Moose, and openly gay state Reps. George Eighmey and Gail Shibley, who is running for Portland City Council.

On July 26 at 7:30 pm a debate and dialogue entitled "What Now for Men: Converging and Diverging Paths" will feature Robert Bly and Michael Kimmel.

The National Organization for Men Against Sexism, the parent organization of the conference, describes itself as pro-feminist, gay affirmative and anti-racist, and strives to enhance men's lives.

Sten announces council bid

Erik Sten, who was unsuccessful in his May 21 bid for the Portland City Council seat of outgoing Commissioner Mike Lindberg, has announced his candidacy for the council seat recently vacated by Earl Blumenauer, who was elected to Congress.

"We've shown that in Portland, politics is a lot more about people than money," says Sten, who was a dark horse in the previous race and relied heavily on grass-roots/volunteer support. "It's clear from this campaign that people see better schools, affordable housing and safer neighborhoods as critical issues that affect our quality of life, our families and our children's future."

Walk for Healing held

Supporters of the struggle to protect Native American sacred lands and spiritual sites held a Walk for Healing on June 1 in Warm Springs, Ore.

The First Nations Survival Support Network helped organize the event, which was designed in part to protest recent logging activity in and around the Anpo Native American Cultural Youth Camp and Ceremonial Grounds, and Enola Hill forest.

Group members charge that the U.S. Forest Service has "continued to stand by an arbitrary definition of what is sacred and spiritual, and has shut Native Americans, environmentalists and the public out of all legal recourse."

Compiled by Inga Sorensen