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local news

MHRC weighs in on Nike controversy

The Metropolitan Human Rights Commission has adopted a resolution recommending that the Portland School Board "respectfully decline the donation from the Nike corporation" until the Beaverton-based company agrees to allow independent monitoring of labor conditions at its production plants and "demonstrates a commitment" toward eliminating child labor from its production system.

The resolution comes on the heels of a slew of charges against Nike, which has been criticized for exploiting both children and adult laborers in its non-U.S. factories.

Nike has offered the Portland school system donations of cash and goods, but MHRC says it "feels that it would be improper for the children of Portland to benefit at the expense of workers who are being denied basic human rights."

According to MHRC, Nike has "repeatedly but unconvincingly denied either the existence of these conditions or responsibility for them, and has refused to allow independent monitoring of the labor conditions of workers producing Nike products."

Lesbian and gay groups receive grants

The Regional Arts and Culture Council recently awarded grants totaling nearly \$160,000 to 53 community and arts organizations in the Portland metropolitan area.

Recipients of particular interest to the sexual minorities community are: Portland Gay Men's Chorus, \$1,000; Portland Lesbian Choir, \$1,500; and triangle productions!, \$2,550.

The Regional Arts and Culture Council is a nonprofit group that supports arts and culture throughout the tri-county area.

Men Touching Men workshop to be held in Seattle

Dance Center Seattle and Integrated Healing is sponsoring a workshop to be held Aug. 23-25, entitled "Men Touching Men," which organizers say "will help participants explore what blocks them from getting the touch they want and allow them to practice methods for making touch a more regular part of their lives."

Participants will meet other local men and experience various forms of touch. Bart Church, president of Integrated Healing, will co-facilitate along with Seattle's Tom Truss, a nationally known dancer and choreographer.

A discounted registration fee is available to those who register by Aug. 12. For more information, call (206) 329-8032.



Vera Katz

Katz declares Not in Our Town! Week

Prompted by the scourge of church burnings nationwide and a recent cross-burning in Gresham, Portland Mayor Vera Katz declared July 21-28 "Not in Our Town! Week."

Posters declaring "Not in Our Town" were placed in windows of homes, cars and businesses, and were designed to let people know that bigotry and hate crimes would not be tolerated.

The Not in Our Town! campaign is based on a successful community effort in Billings, Mont.

A few years back, residents there united to oppose white supremacists who had harassed a Jewish family by throwing a brick through the family's window, which displayed a menorah. In response, many town residents displayed menorahs in their windows to demonstrate solidarity against bigotry.

Ms. Leather & Lace contest set for Aug. 17

The 10th annual Ms. Leather & Lace Pageant is slated for Aug. 17 at The City Nightclub, 13 NW 13th Ave., in Portland. The event begins at 11 pm, and will feature guest performers and past titleholders, as well as the contestants competing for the two titles.

Contestants for Ms. Leather and Ms. Lace must be younger than 21, live in Oregon or Southern Washington, and identify as lesbian. They will make three separate appearances during the course of the contest—an introduction, a fantasy look and a talent presentation. Audience members, voting by secret ballot, will select the winners. Applications can be obtained at The City Nightclub. For further information, call 224-2489.

RTP launches Victory Crew

Right to Privacy, Oregon's largest gay, lesbian and bisexual rights organization, recently unveiled a new project designed to provide volunteer support to candidates endorsed by the group.

"I liken it to a volunteer fire brigade," explains RTP Executive Director Barry Pack. "For example, we want to be able to make available 20 or 25 volunteers to canvass a neighborhood for a candidate who may be in a tight race. We call it the RTP Victory Crew, and it will consist of volunteers who are essentially on-call to provide emergency support to candidates who need it the most."

Pack says the idea for the Victory Crew emerged after some organizational soul-searching prompted by Measure 9.

The measure, which was approved overwhelmingly by voters in 1994, limits annual contributions to political action committees to \$100 per person. Besides limiting contributions to PACs, the measure says PACs can give no more than \$100 to a candidate for the Legislature or \$500 to a candidate for a state office.

"We've never been a volunteer-driven organization. Instead we've been the group that writes the check," he says. "We've had to shift that because of campaign finance reform."

Pack says board members "engaged in long discussions" with each other, candidates and other politicians to ponder how RTP could be most effective in the post-Measure 9 era.


"We concluded that providing volunteers during crucial times was the best way to go," he says. "We want to stress that we are limiting what we are asking of folks who get involved with Victory Crew."

"Basically we're asking volunteers to commit to two projects," continues Pack. "Those two acts may be agreeing to canvass a neighborhood for a candidate on one weekend, and doing an evening of phone calling another time—that's all. We will ask for volunteers' support only if it is really, really critical. In the end it will help candidates in close elections."

Anyone interested in joining the RTP Victory Crew should call RTP at 228-5825.

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