

local news

Police seek lead in death

Portland police detectives continue to seek leads in a case involving Dean O. Tahtinen, 30, who was recently found dead in his Northeast Portland home.

An autopsy revealed Tahtinen died of strangulation. A relative found him dead on the living room floor of his apartment at the Satellite Apartments, 10620 NE Wygant St., on Jan. 6. Tahtinen lived alone. According to Det. Mike Hefley, Tahtinen, who was a customer service representative for Wells Fargo bank, was last seen around 6 pm on Jan. 4 at C.C. Slaughters Restaurant and Lounge, 1014 SW Stark St.

"The theory is he may have taken someone home with him," says Hefley, who refused to elaborate. "Let's just say that's the most probable theory at this point."

Police say there was evidence in Tahtinen's apartment leading investigators to believe someone had been with Tahtinen for a while before his death. There were also reportedly signs that Tahtinen's body had been moved after his death. Further details were not made available.

According to Hefley, Tahtinen frequented C.C. Slaughters, Silverado and "maybe the Eagle." He says police have dropped fliers at clubs, particularly those catering to the gay community, seeking information which may be helpful to investigators.

"People have to watch risky behaviors," says Hefley. "Don't go home with strangers. That applies to everybody."

William Warren, who works with a Portland Police Bureau Crisis Response Team designed to provide support to sexual minorities during times of crisis and trauma, says CRT members were summoned to the scene by police.

"[Police] determined the man's sexual orientation and notified the Crisis Response Team, which dealt with the situation accordingly," he says.

While Warren did not wish to discuss the specifics of this case, he says CRT members may provide a number of support services to sexual minorities and/or their family members, friends, and partners during the immediate hours following a crisis.

Warren also says he personally is not offended by the investigators' speculation that the victim "took somebody home."

"Investigators may have some really solid reasons for thinking that. Oftentimes they can't share with the public what evidence they have, at least not at first," he says. "The reality is, we often make easy targets, and this kind of thing happens."

Warren says he has not heard of anyone "working the community" of late, but nevertheless warns men to trust their instincts.

"You know, part of safer sex is simply trusting your guts. If something or someone just doesn't feel right, get out," he says. "If you do go home with somebody, make sure you alert a friend."

Anyone with information that may be of interest to investigators is asked to contact detectives Mike Hefley or Tom Nelson at 823-0400.

NEA official to speak at youth conference

Gerald Newberry, executive director of the National Education Association's Health Information Network, will be the keynote speaker Feb. 13 during the opening session of a conference entitled "Opening Doors: A Conference for Professionals Who Work with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth."

The session, which is open to the public, begins at 7 pm and will be held at the LaSells Stewart Center on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis.

Newberry will also make several presentations Feb. 14 during a daylong gathering for teachers, counselors, administrators and people who work with youth in schools and other community-based youth agencies. Those sessions are limited to registered participants.

The conference will address issues common to sexual minority youth and will assist professionals who work with youth to develop referral and resource networks. It is being presented by OSU's Counselor Education Program with cooperative sponsorship from After 8, a Corvallis-based organization that promotes education around sexual minority issues, and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Benton and Linn counties. For more information, call Dr. Brooke Collison at (541) 737-5969.

The People's Fund

After several years of dormancy, a fund designed to help low-income gay men and lesbians with emergency needs has been reactivated.

"We're talking about providing assistance to gays and lesbians who may have a critical need for things like groceries, or money to cover a prescription, or to buy a purse and shoes for a job interview," explains Cal Hackler, a former long-time trustee to The People's Fund, which was created two decades ago via the now-defunct Portland Forum, an early Portland gay and lesbian organization.

According to Hackler, the fund is now being administered by the Equity Foundation, which has contracted with two social service agencies with ties to the gay and lesbian community: Outside In, which provides services to homeless youth, many of whom are sexual minorities, and William Temple House. The agencies will assist in dispersing allotments from the fund.

Equity Foundation board member Thomas Aschenbrener says an estimated \$17,000 from the fund was recently turned over to Equity.

Equity Foundation, which was created in 1989 by a group of Oregon gay men and lesbians, works to build communities that embrace the dignity and worth of all people. It has distributed nearly \$400,000 in direct grants and program services throughout Oregon. For more information, call Equity Foundation at 220-0628.

Cofounder of Equity honored

Jim Vegher, a founding board member and past co-chair of Equity Foundation, was among the 15 people who earned special recognition during the 1996 Community Treasures Awards held at the Governor Hotel in mid-November.

Vegher was cited for the enormous energy, passion, time and resources he has devoted to Equity since the organization's inception seven years ago.

"For most of us, retirement means enjoying the fruits of life, not working as much," said Oregon's first lady Sharon Kitzhaber, in praise of Vegher. "For Jim Vegher, 'retirement' somehow means devoting nearly every waking moment to Equity Foundation. Jim Vegher could very well be taking life easy, but thankfully he has chosen not to. Instead, through Equity Foundation, he's devoted himself to building an understanding of gays and lesbians around the state."

The Community Treasures Awards program was created by Portland General Electric and Technical Assistance for Community Services to recognize the contributions of dedicated workers in the nonprofit sector.

Reported by Inga Sorensen

The Community's Home Loan Resource



Colleen Weed

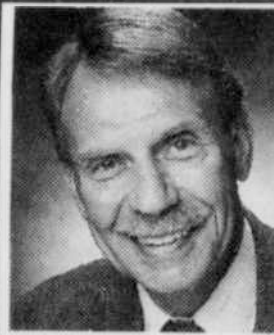
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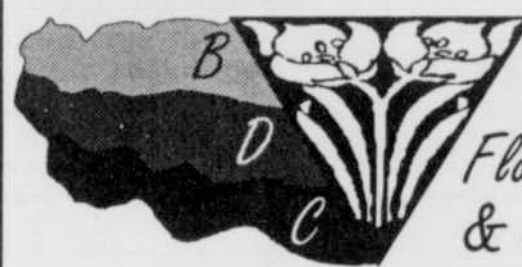


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