

*Wear a
Work
of Art*

Changes
DESIGNS TO WEAR
927 SW Yamhill
503.223.3737

LOCAL news

PITCHING THE SERIES

The Rose City Softball Association wants to line up Portland as a national playing field By Will O'Bryan

Snowballs and softballs have two things in common: They're both white and round.

Bring the Rose City Softball Association into the equation and snowballs and softballs develop another similarity: They're both metaphors for unstoppable momentum.

RCSA, the Portland and Southwest Washington chapter of the National American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance, played its first games in 1995 with five teams. They now boast two divisions—a mixed-sex open division and a women's division—with eight teams a piece. That's roughly 250 softball players.

With this growth comes an ambition. RCSA wants to bring the NAGAAA World Series to Portland in 2002.

"It would be a big coup for us," says open division commissioner Roy Melani, adding that

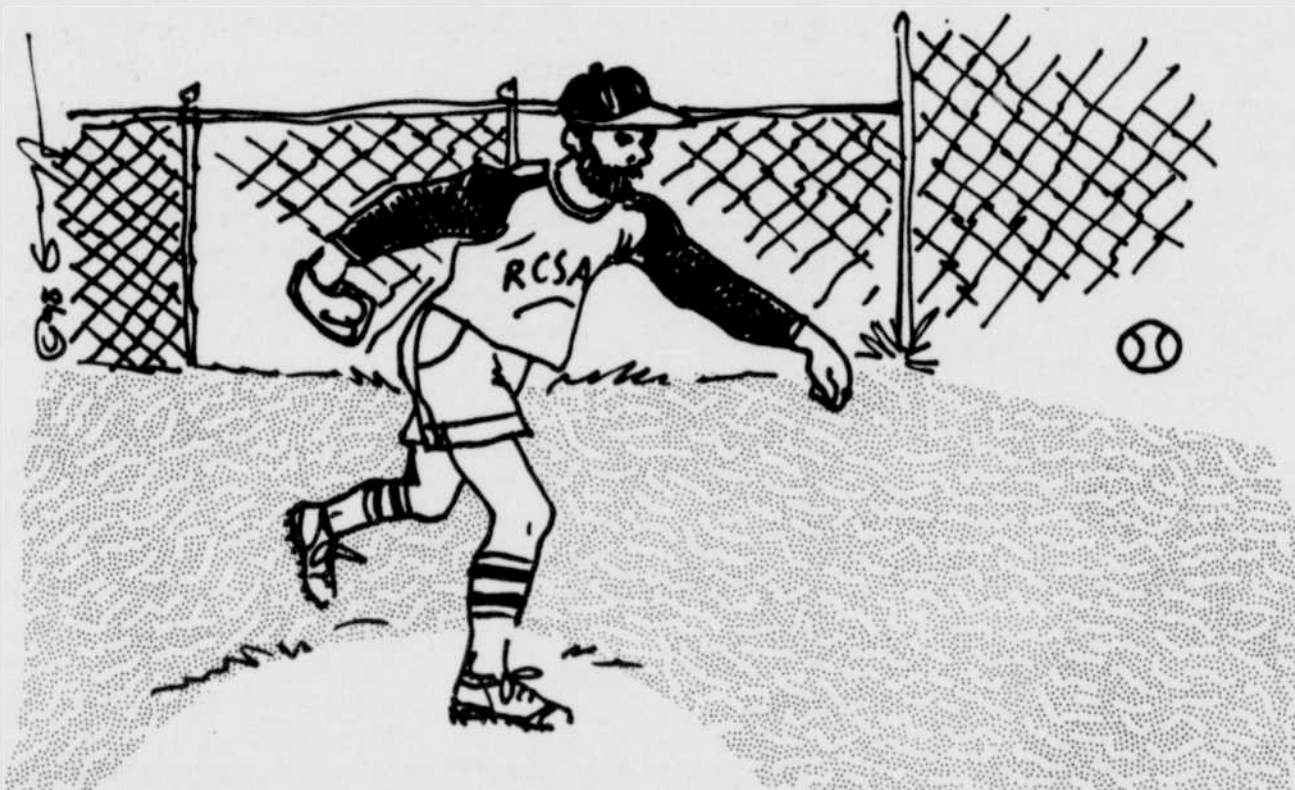
duration of the tournament. Another consideration is money.

"We'll need to raise about \$100,000 to pull it off," Melani estimates. The funds are needed for everything from hotel deposits to field fees.

If the NAGAAA gives Portland the nod, most money will be secured in the form of corporate sponsors. Budweiser and Miller Brewing both have track records as tournament sponsors, says Melani.

But enthusiasm will also need to be generated within the Portland community for the games to be a success. That success will be a two-way street in that any proceeds from the event would be pumped back into local charities. Traditionally, three charities are chosen, representing AIDS relief, a lesbian organization and a gay men's organization.

One event that may whet local appetites—and provide a measure of Portland's viability as



Portland will likely compete with Norfolk, Va., Toronto and Washington, D.C., for the distinction.

The idea of Portland as a World Series site is a new one where the NAGAAA is concerned, but Melani thinks the city has a fair chance of securing the tournament.

"Portland is a fun place to be and players like to go to new cities," Melani reasons.

Melani's counterpart, women's division commissioner Toni Carr, agrees that Portland has a reasonable chance of playing host to the tournament. Carr also cites how grabbing the games could help the city economically, bringing in at least 2,000 people, including players, managers and supporters.

Carr acknowledges that such a large national sexual minority event would benefit Portland's queer community too. "I think it would open it up more," says Carr. "People would feel more comfortable."

While 2002 may seem far away, planning for the potential event is already underway. Melani is among those putting together the Portland proposal to present at the August 1999 NAGAAA World Series in Kansas City, Mo. A decision will be made within two days of placing the bid.

"I know it's 2002, but—whew—it'll come fast," warns Carr, adding that the game "would show that Portland is serious" as a national gay and lesbian venue.

A decision will need to be made in the not so far off future in order for the RCSA to secure all seven Delta Park softball diamonds for the

a series site—is the Cascade Cup. A regional softball tournament that's called Seattle home since its inception in 1983, the Cup will remain in Seattle this year, but the '99 Cup is destined for Portland. Melani guesses the tournament will bring about 800 players and managers to Portland, with teams coming from as far away as Denver and Houston.

In the meantime, Melani and Carr promise that the RCSA's '98 season offers its own share of improvements.

For instance, the players will be using diamonds in Montavilla Park at Northeast 82nd Avenue and Glisan Street. The new site offers one marked improvement over the association's old Alberta Field venue: lighting. With lights, the RCSA is gearing up for evening games. Any given summertime Sunday should find RCSA softball players working up a sweat well into the evening on two fields simultaneously.

And, Carr adds, they look forward to more growth. "[The RCSA] can always fit more people.... We don't turn anyone down to play."

For those interested in joining the boys and girls of summer, it's important to know how the teams are divided. The open division is open to men and women. Currently, most open division teams are composed of men, but some are largely mixed. Both the open division and the women's division offer groupings to accommodate any skill level.

■ For more information about the ROSE CITY SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION, call the open division at 246-7678 or the women's division at 254-4150.

WENTWORTH

SUBARU CITY

Your Downtown Subaru Dealer.



FORESTER



OUTBACK.



107 S. Grand • East End of the Burnside Bridge • 232-2000