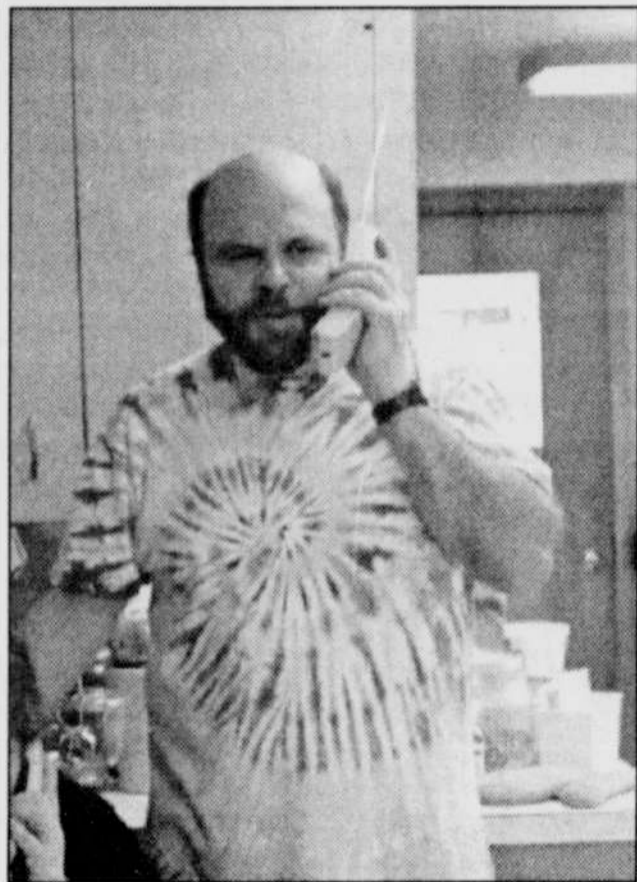


NEW AWARD HONORS QUEER ACTIVISTS

Nominations are being sought for a new award named in honor of two longtime queer activists who died in recent years.

The award is named in remembrance of Bob Ralphs and Millard Word, whose activism centered on many issues including queer politics and labor matters.



Activist Bob Ralphs, circa Measure 9

Ralphs was known for spearheading "bigot busters," in which he organized and dispatched dozens of queers to various shopping centers and stores to confront Oregon Citizens Alliance supporters as they gathered signatures for Measure 9, a volatile 1992 anti-gay rights initiative.

Word was instrumental in starting Quakers and Queers, a group formed to bridge the gap between those two groups.

To honor their lives and keep their memory alive, a cash award of \$500 will be given to a queer activist "whose activism is broad-based and whose work in the community reflects the values and the work of Bob and Millard." The award will be issued annually during Portland's pride celebration.

To receive more information and a nomination form, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Award, 1916 S.E. Alder St., Portland, OR 97214.

IT'S RAINING MEN BILLED AS SUCCESS

A standing-room-only crowd of an estimated 300 people, mostly gay men, turned out for the first production sponsored by "a bunch of gay guys."

The April 18 event, called *It's Raining Men*, was hosted by Rose City personalities Poison Waters and Stephen Michael Rondel. It featured a gay guy version of *The Dating Game*, as well as a roving microphone which captured audience insights into "the perils and promises of meeting and dating gay men in Portland."

Snappy video clips of local queer guys answering dating-related questions were also shown.

During the event, participants were asked to fill out surveys which in part asked them for their reactions to the gathering.

"We got responses like 'I never knew there were this many gay men in Portland,' and 'Get a bigger venue,'" explains Alan Rose, one of the organizers. "We think this was a big success and we'd like to be able to do it again."

According to Rose, the night was designed to generate a sense of community among gay

and bi men, as well as begin the trek toward lower HIV transmission rates.

It's Raining Men, which was held at Hawthorne Rhapsody on Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard, was sponsored by a handful of businesses and community organizations.

Rose says the event was run on a shoestring budget and relied heavily on volunteer support.

"We would like to do this again, but it's a lot of work. We're exploring other funding sources and could use volunteers," he says.

Those interested in volunteering are asked to call Rose at 223-5907, ext. 107.

PORTLAND WOMEN'S CRISIS LINE SEEKS BOARD MEMBERS

The Portland Women's Crisis Line is seeking new members for its volunteer board of directors.

Interested individuals would commit to one board meeting per month, plus work on two standing committees.

PWCL is the largest and oldest domestic and sexual violence program in Oregon. It is a feminist organization that works to provide social services to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their supportive families and friends. It is also a social change organization that strives to end all forms of oppression.

For an application packet, call 232-4176. Women of color are urged to apply.

BENEFITS TO KICK IN JUNE 1

Same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partners of Oregon's 45,000 employees will be eligible for health benefits starting June 1.

In a unanimous April 21 vote the Public Employees' Benefit Board extended benefits to cohabiting couples.

New York and Vermont have adopted similar policies, as have nearly 100 other government entities, including the City of Portland and Multnomah County.

On May 1, meanwhile, the city of Vancouver, Wash., began extending employee benefits to domestic partners of its employees. That policy also covers same- and opposite-sex couples.

OUT LESBIAN ELECTED PSU STUDENT VICE PRESIDENT

Chocka Guiden and Maryanne Cassera were elected student body president and vice president, respectively, during Portland State University elections held in April. Both are women of color, and Cassera is an out lesbian.

"I could recall many questions concerning our politics based on who Chocka and I were on the outside," says Cassera. "I challenge those individuals to look at our experience and what we have accomplished in student government and out in the community."

Guiden, the current student body vice president, and Cassera, the student lobby representative, say they have helped save resident undergraduate students \$300 a year via a statewide tuition freeze signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber. They were instrumental in creating the first Oregon Students of Color Coalition and helped pass a referendum supporting an on-site child care drop-off center.

Guiden and Cassera say they plan to continue their strong student activism by advocating for a quality, affordable and accessible education.

"This form of leadership at the university level demonstrates a commitment to diversity across the board," says Cassera.

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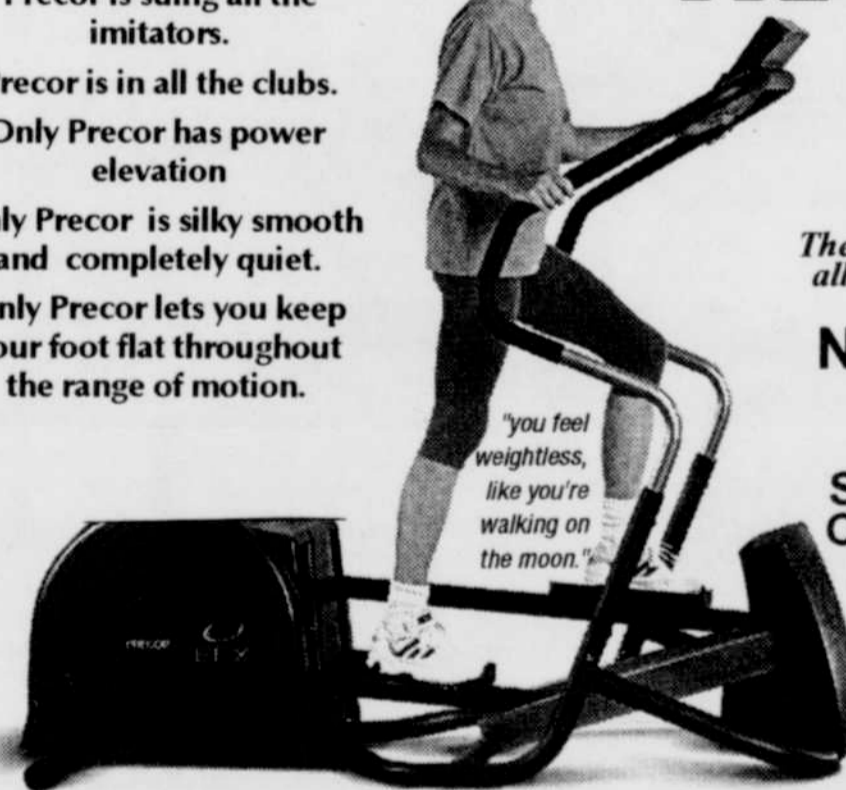
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