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LOCAL news

NOTABLE TRIO TO PRESENT  
AT PORTLAND'S HRC GALA

Missouri Democrat Dick Gephardt, the U.S. House minority leader; Oregon's U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden; and author and presidential advisor David Mixner are slated to speak at an upcoming gay political dinner in the Rose City. The three politicians are scheduled to present at the Human Rights Campaign's annual Portland fund-raising gala on Feb. 13 at the Portland Hilton, 921 S.W. Sixth Ave.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Human Rights Campaign is the largest national lesbian and gay political organization with members throughout the country.

The group's board of directors—which includes Terry Bean of the Portland area—met in early December to plan its 1999 legislative year. At the two-day meeting, the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and a number of health initiatives were established as top legislative priorities. Other issues addressed included passage of a resolution supporting trans issues.

In the wake of controversy that enveloped HRC's endorsement this year of Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, a New York Republican, the board began a review of its endorsement policies.

"We adhered to established and publicized criteria in making our endorsement of Senator D'Amato. We believe it would have been highly unethical to change that criteria in the middle of an election cycle. Now that the election cycle is over, we have an obligation to address the level of discontent that this endorsement caused some of our membership," says Jeff Sachse, HRC board co-chair. "While maintaining our firm commitment to bipartisanship, HRC will immediately begin a review at both the staff and board level of the endorsement process, with a specific focus on selection criteria."

At the same meeting, the board passed a resolution stating, in part: "The Human Rights Campaign strongly supports public and private initiatives to counter discrimination based on real or perceived gender identity. We acknowledge the extraordinary work of transgender organizations and leaders and view them as important friends and powerful allies. The Human Rights Campaign is committed to a mutually beneficial relationship with the transgender community. It is our hope that such a relationship will help inform and craft a shared vision of a world that honors and respects all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

HRC's Portland gala includes a reception, cocktails, silent auction and dinner. Tickets are \$150 per person and can be obtained by calling 1-800-494-8497.



Sen. Ron Wyden

IDEAS ABOUT  
FOR EQUALITY CAMPAIGN

Since Nov. 30, Basic Rights Oregon has been holding Equality Begins at Home meetings in Portland, Coos Bay, Ashland, Eugene, Salem, Bend and Corvallis.

The project is a counterpart to the controversial Millennium March, a national queer march planned for Washington, D.C. in 2000. The Equality Begins at Home campaign emphasizes coordinated actions in state capitals around the country. The effort is sponsored by the Federation of Statewide Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations. As a member of the federation, BRO received a \$5,000 grant from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to defray local organizing costs. In Oregon, organizers say the project will likely culminate in a major demonstration in Salem on March 21, 1999.

According to BRO, ideas for making the event a success are rolling in. They include asking elected officials to pass resolutions supporting a state law for queer equality; launching a voter registration drive; asking the governor to convene a statewide conference on equality; getting organizations to sign an agreement to become more diverse; holding a networking conference for organizations to assist in the building of leadership; and releasing a *State of the State* report on queer issues in Oregon.



BRO also reports that several youth activists in Oregon would like to generate meetings of queer youth and legislators to discuss education issues.

The Equality Begins at Home volunteer committee meets weekly at BRO's office, Suite 105, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. in Portland, on Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Those interested in getting involved should contact Nerissa Ediza at 222-6151 or e-mail her at bronerissa@aol.com.

PROGRAM HOPES TO ASSIST  
SEXUAL MINORITY FAMILIES

Love Makes A Family Inc. is launching a new project to assist sexual minority families.

The project, funded by the city of Portland, aims to identify sexual minority families and connect those families with existing community-based resources and professional services. It also seeks to bolster families' self-advocacy skills.

Love Makes a Family's purpose is to work for social change "and provide a public voice for all families, especially those subjected to social, economic and legal discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression."

For more information, call Kerri Dee at 228-3892.

Compiled by INGA SORENSEN

The buzz on gay-friendly businesses

Do you work for a queer-positive company? Know a friend who does?

Just out is pulling together a story about gay-friendly businesses in Oregon and Southwest Washington, but we need your help! If you have any tips, leads or suggestions, give News Editor Inga Sorensen a quick call at 236-1252, ext. 26.