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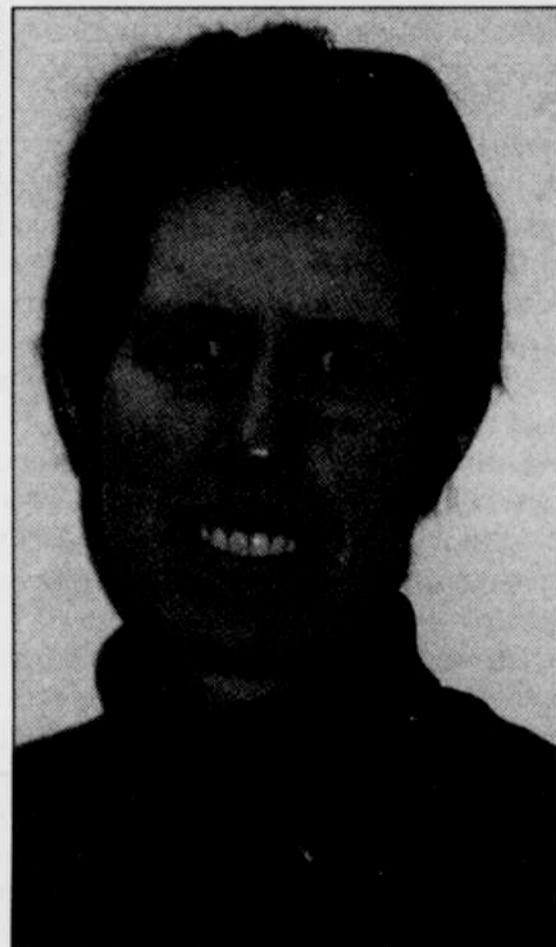
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**Make it a people's pride**

A Pride Northwest board member says the annual bash can't happen without your support

**P**ride '99—the last lesbian, gay, bi, trans pride celebration of the century in Portland—is over! It was big; it was fun. It rained, of course, but we were only minimally picketed. The theme was *Stonewall 30: Revolution/Evolution*. An estimated 30,000 of us came together to celebrate who we are—our history, our heritage, our pride in the community we have built. So, did anyone care? It didn't look like it from where I sat—on the board of Pride Northwest, which orchestrates the event.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS



*Our pride celebration has grown to a size that is impossible for 10 volunteer board members to handle. We need input from every organization and group. Without it, pride will become a commercial parade, a retail market, not much different from Rose Festival.*

I joined the board in 1995 at a low point in the history of our community. After the burnout of ballot measure wars, no one wanted to step up to organize pride. But the groundwork had been laid for an ongoing mixed queer organization, and after 20 years as a separatist dyke, I was cautiously optimistic about the possibility of cooperation between gay men and lesbians, so I signed on to make it happen.

Five years later, pride has grown from a one-day festival to a week of events and a two-day festival, from a budget of \$25,000 to more than \$50,000. Many local clubs and businesses are involved in fund-raisers and sponsorships, and national sponsors have been brought in as well.

We have evolved as a community and as an organization. In 1998, Pride Northwest initiated the Conversations Project in an effort to reach out to constituencies who feel alienated from the mainstream community and to begin building relationships that could evolve into ongoing activism with Pride Northwest. We will see the results of this long-term community building as our board and working committees begin to reflect the true diversity of the community over the next few years.

Our pride celebration, meanwhile, has grown to a size that is impossible for 10 volunteer board members to handle. We need input from every organization and group. We need the active participation of every person who attends the event. Without it, pride will become a commercial parade, a retail market, not much different from Rose Festival. But with many hands and voices planning together, we can create a celebration that showcases our creativity, diversity, leadership potential and commitment to building coalitions with other progressive movements, as well as giving our businesses and retailers, non-profits and service agencies a chance to network.

Pride has been around long enough that it has become a tradition. But it will not continue without conscientious year-round commitment from more than just 10 board members. If Pride Northwest is to be a vital community resource in the next century, we need to increase volunteer involvement by a factor of 10. For each volunteer you saw working a bucket, doing security, picking up trash or sitting at an information booth, we need 10 people to step forward to edit our newsletter, write grants, approach sponsors, organize volunteers, plan National Coming Out Day (October 11), update our mailing list and produce Pride 2000, just to name a few tasks that need attention right now. Please don't wait until next June.

Pride Northwest is not interested in doing this event for you. We want to do it with you. If you care about having a Pride 2000, make the effort to get involved. Our whole community will be healthier and happier if you do.

■ To get involved with PRIDE NORTHWEST, call (503) 295-9788 or send an e-mail to [pridenorthwest@usa.net](mailto:pridenorthwest@usa.net).

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Pride...the wonder of it all

PHOTO BY K.H. KIMBALL

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