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COMMENTARY

BY MARTY DAVIS

A vexing lack of volunteers

How about putting the 'community' into our community's largest event of the year?

Kudos to Portlander Mary Schutten and her rapidly growing social and fund-raising organization, the Pink Flamingos, whose latest venture, Beach Bingo, raised considerable dollars. The Feb. 25 event was also a great social venue, and its success demonstrates the vast untapped power of volunteer energy available within our community.

This latest Pink Flamingos production was awash with smiling new faces—many familiar ones as well—all of whom seemed to be enjoying themselves while working hard to build a strong, viable community.

There are, of course, many personal perks for those who sign up and participate. Long-term friendships are formed, and fun is definitely an important part of the agenda. Volunteering is an excellent way to meet new people and enhance and strengthen your social circles.

Business networking is also a natural occurrence among volunteers, and the contacts made can be invaluable. Individual organizational skills are identified, learned, developed and utilized while people are given the opportunity to increase their visibility and contributions as rising new leaders within our community. And you thought it was just bingo!

What I would like to see now is this same kind of take-ownership volunteerism applied to our Portland pride festivities in June.

Even with the dedicated leadership and long working hours of the Pride Northwest Inc. board of directors, pride simply needs much more help if it is to be the success that we all wish it to be.

As previously noted in the pages of *Just Out*, community support—in the form of good old-fashioned hunkering down and working—has been more than lacking the last few years.

What do you think is the reason for this? It surely isn't lack of interest in the weekend event—tens of thousands of us show up annually for the parade and waterfront activities.

Are people just too busy with their own jobs, families and friends? Are people just plain lazy and disinterested? Is everyone assuming *someone else* will come along and take care of everything?

Well, guess what, those someone elses haven't shown up the past few years—and its starting to look like they're not going to make it this year either.

So what is your reason for not coming to help? Why is everyone always so willing to leave the job for someone else to handle?

The simple truth is that we all can't continue to just show up for the party without helping with the planning and preparation. And who do you think cleans up after this party anyway—little elves and fairies?

Well, you know, maybe that's exactly who should be helping. It should be Radical Faeries and Oregon Bears, the Forest Group and Adventure Group, the Lesbian Community Project and Rose City Softball Association, Rosetown Ramblers and the Portland Lesbian Choir, the Portland Gay Men's Chorus and every other group and organization that you'll find listed or mentioned in the pages of *Just Out*.

At the next meeting
or potluck or social or hike
or whatever event your specific
group holds, you need to set aside
some time for pride. Volunteer as a group.
Volunteer as individuals. Donate a set amount
of person-hours in the name
of your organization.



Here is what needs to be done to make this happen: At the next meeting or potluck or social or hike or whatever event your specific group holds, you need to set aside some time for pride. Volunteer as a group. Volunteer as individuals. Donate a set amount of person-hours in the name of your organization. Help with setup or stage management, or cleanup, or traffic control and security. (By the way, volunteering for security is the only way you'll ever get that "Obey Me" shirt.)

The next step is to phone Pride Northwest or show up at the next pride volunteer meeting and step forward to announce that this is what you'll be doing as your part of putting on Pride 2000.

Get organized, make plans, order T-shirts, make signs—"Traffic control at this intersection provided by CAP"—what a great way to show off your spirit, to show off your pride.

Let's show the greater community, our city, while showing ourselves the queer community cares and supports its one weekend in the spotlight.

■ To volunteer for PRIDE NORTHWEST, call (503) 295-9788.

REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in just out... MARCH 1990 VOL. 7 NO. 5



• The Portland Lesbian Choir planned to present its second annual spring concert, *Women with Wings*, on Friday, April 6, 1990.

• Team Portland surpassed its goal of registering 100 gay and lesbian athletes for Gay Games III. The team's next goal was to raise enough money to outfit members with matching uniforms. Jill Schuldt was head of the uniform committee.

• Lesbian Community Project and Right to Privacy PAC presented an evening with Barbara Boring, who had successfully lobbied for the passage of a gay rights bill in Massachusetts a year earlier.

• The University of Oregon established a task force to address the concerns of gay and lesbian students and staff. President Myles Brand

said he had a strong commitment to affirmative action and to change the campus and its problems of heterosexism, racism and sexism.

• In a historic moment for the gay and lesbian community, the U.S. Senate on Feb. 8 voted 92-4 to pass the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act. The landslide vote marked the first time the pervasive problem of anti-gay violence had been addressed in the Senate.

• Triangle Productions held auditions for *After the Ram*, a play about AIDS and the people left behind.

• On March 6, the First Tuesday Coffeehouse presented its Second Anniversary Celebration, featuring Carol Steinel, M.C. and Trio Passage, Musical Poets and singer-songwriter Mary Rose.

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