

Pride and true

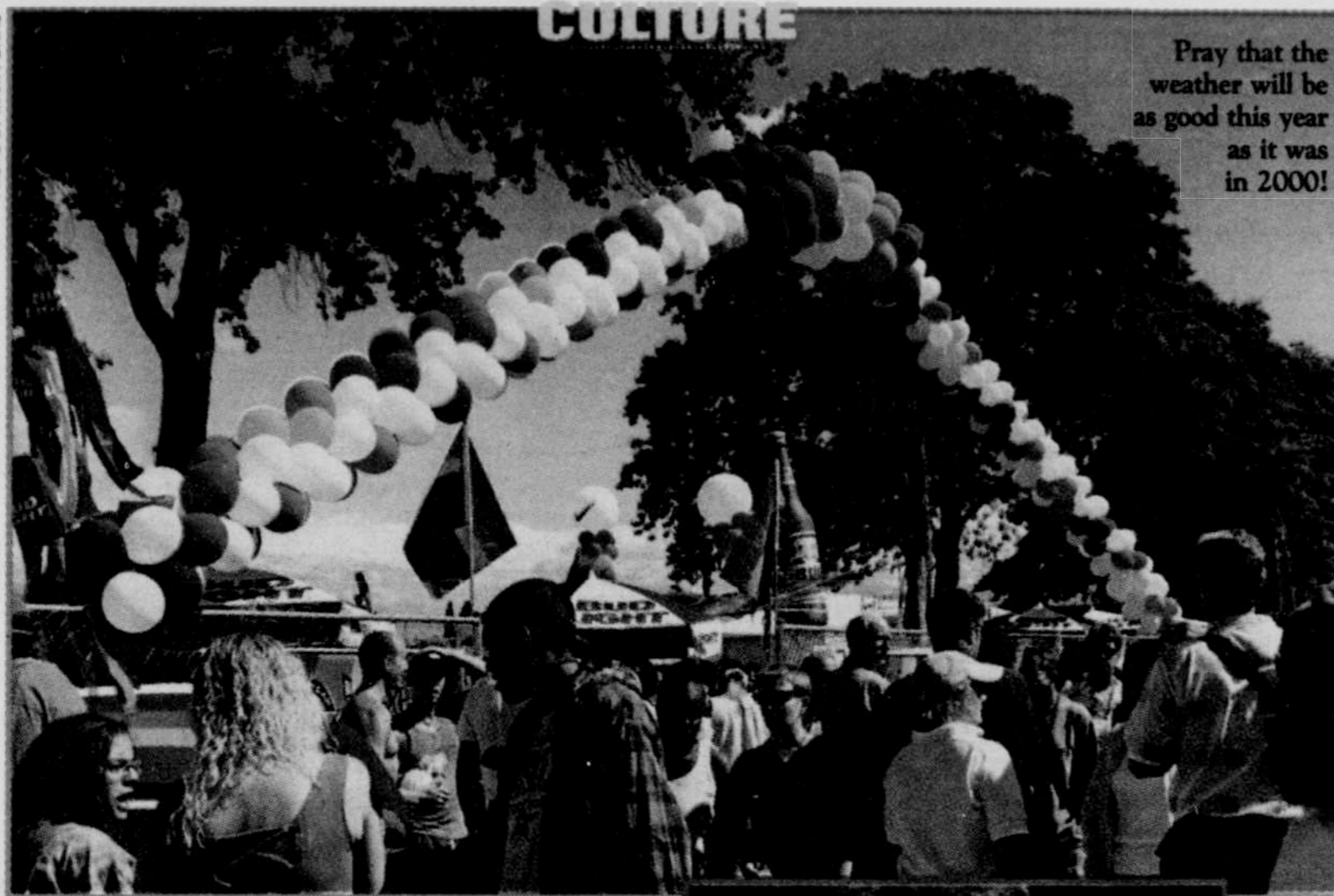
Misha drags festival to a new stage

BY PETER ZUCKERMAN

Last year, the future of Pride Northwest dangled from a thread of dental floss. Although the parade and festivities usually attract about 30,000 participants, in November 1999 just seven people answered the nonprofit organization's desperate calls for volunteers.

The committee considered eliminating Pride 2000 entirely. At the 11th hour, enough queer power appeared to mount the extravaganza.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS



Pray that the weather will be as good this year as it was in 2000!

equipped for the first time with concert sound systems, also will project from duplicate speakers located in places like the beer garden.

The Entertainment Committee has helped stretch the rainbow of diversity by including more African American and Asian groups, and one of the new MCs will be a punk, female-to-male trans named Crash.

Half of the performers are new, and most of them are local. The bands will be punctuated by speeches, poetry readings, a puppet theater and three theatrical productions including a queer version of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

The diverse performances include Leila Chieko Trio's progressive rock and melodic pop; La Femme Magnifique International Perla, "The World's Most Glamorous Female Impersonator"; a speech by Portland Mayor Vera Katz; and Boxxes Superstar Karaoke Survivors.

If you had to stand to watch the program last year, this time there should be space for you to take a seat. The Main Stage has doubled the seating, and the New Stage has expanded seating.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS



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Thankfully, Pride 2001 is a different story. Help materialized early and has been sustained through the long planning process.

Serving her fourth year with Pride Northwest, her second term on the board of directors and her second year as entertainment chair, the exotic drag queen Misha Rockefeller has morphed into a football player. She claims she has tackled the old organizational problems and created a new, effective game plan.

The plan began last August—a two-month head start on the year before. Like Uncle Sam

passing out census forms, Misha distributed feedback forms to review Pride 2000. The questionnaires gave the committee suggestions, which members implemented.

"At first we did a lot of gofering around, gathering information," Misha says. "Then we took a more professional, businesslike approach and started recruiting."

This year, more volunteers—26 already are trained to work on the stage crew—should provide smooth-running performances. The program is packed with new performers and speakers who will bounce on and off stage every five



Misha, Queen of All Things Entertaining

to 10 minutes. "We've had to turn people away this year there's been so much involvement," Misha remarks.

Pride 2001 will be amplified to new decibels. Last year, people said they needed hearing aids to detect the music. This year, grab your earplugs.

"We have permission to be louder—a lot louder. This is a tremendous asset," Misha asserts. The Main and New Stages, both



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Misha also has reached out to nightclubs to help contribute to the fiscal health of Pride 2001 by sponsoring some of the acts.

"This has been a year-round job—a true mission of love," she explains. "At first it was scary. But there's been a big turnaround with all the volunteers. We're taking pride to a new level." □

PRIDE NORTHWEST is powered completely by volunteers. To have a booth or be a sponsor, vendor, volunteer or contributor, see the Internet site www.pridenw.org.

PETER ZUCKERMAN is a student at Reed College and an intern at Just Out.

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