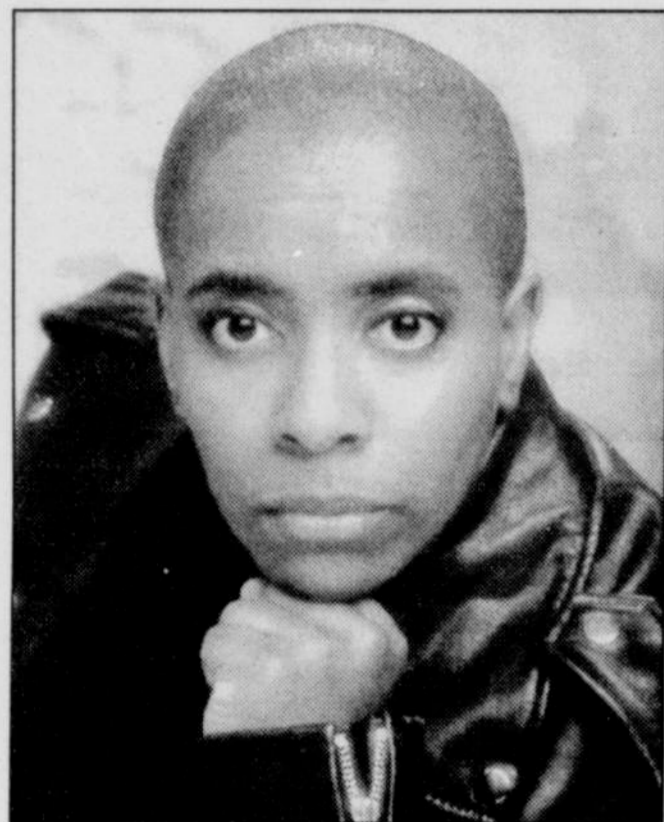


FAMILY PRIDE 2001

Continued from Page 31



● CYD ATHENS

Meet Cyd Athens, the reigning Ms. Oregon State Leather, who has a long history with Pride events, although she says her feelings about them have evolved through the years.

"I'm almost 44, and I came out when I was 13, the year after Stonewall," she recalls. "I was in Chicago at the time; when I came out it was just called the gay community."

Over time Athens watched as lesbians, bisexuals, then trans and beyond were added to the name of the increasingly inclusive event. For her, "It's a lot different now...it's become so standardized...the younger generation doesn't have a good appreciation of how big a deal it is."

In 1971 she attended her first—and still her favorite—Gay Pride celebration. "It was in Minneapolis, not a very big crowd, and I was a minor. There were no youth groups back then," she remembers, adding it wasn't always easy to identify other gay kids. "You did your secret signals...trying not to get beat up. This isn't something to take for granted."

In the '80s Athens was involved with Portland Power and Trust, a women's leather group,

and ORGASM (Oregon Guild Activists of S/M), both now defunct. She was also one of the original members of the Portland chapter of the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force.

Athens has another reason for celebrating Pride this year. "I'm partnered with a wonderful woman, Merle Redwing. We registered our domestic partnership in Multnomah County on Sept. 1, 2000, the very first day that registration was available in the county."

So just what does she do as a leather princess—or is it prince? "My primary thrust is to do some fund raising for Pride Northwest and for Hambleton Project as well as outreach to the women's leather community."

Athens will be marching in the Pride parade, so be sure to wave. She didn't reveal what she'll be wearing, but you can be sure leather will be involved.

She'll be marching with Blackout Leather Productions, a nonprofit organization that bestows titles and does educational events. "Last year during Leather Pride we did a workshop on getting legal documents together."

Athens notes that Leather Pride again will be held in early August, with an erotica show at Embers Avenue as well as the 2001 contest to select new titleholders. "It's really been a great year, and I hope to see more people come out and compete."

You'll have another chance to meet Athens from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m. June 23 during a Women's Play Party at the Ascension Dungeon. The event is smoke-free and accessible; the \$10 admission benefits the Hambleton Project.

To attend the party you must be 21 or older and have identification. To learn more, write to Athens at eclectic@mailandnews.com.

—Oriana Green

● PATRICK "BUTTERCUP" BARTLEY

It's easy to stereotype what gay men look like. At 6-foot-4 and 295 pounds, Patrick "Buttercup" Bartley breaks those stereotypes.

"People always tell me: 'You can't be gay. You're so big.'"

Well, he is—and he's as proud of his queerness as he is of his size. "It's nice to be able to help people realize and understand that us gay boys come in all shapes and sizes."

Bartley moved to Portland in 1993 from American Samoa, a Polynesian island about 5,000 miles south of Hawaii. He says the people there are surprisingly open and accepting of homosexuals.

Still, he didn't come out until Ellen DeGeneres inspired him in 1997. "I was tired of living a lie. Ellen came out and didn't care about the money, the publicity or what anyone thought. That inspired me and made me feel like I could be myself as well."

Now at 26, Bartley has become more comfortable and confident as a young gay man. "To me, gay pride is about being proud of who you are, not what you are."

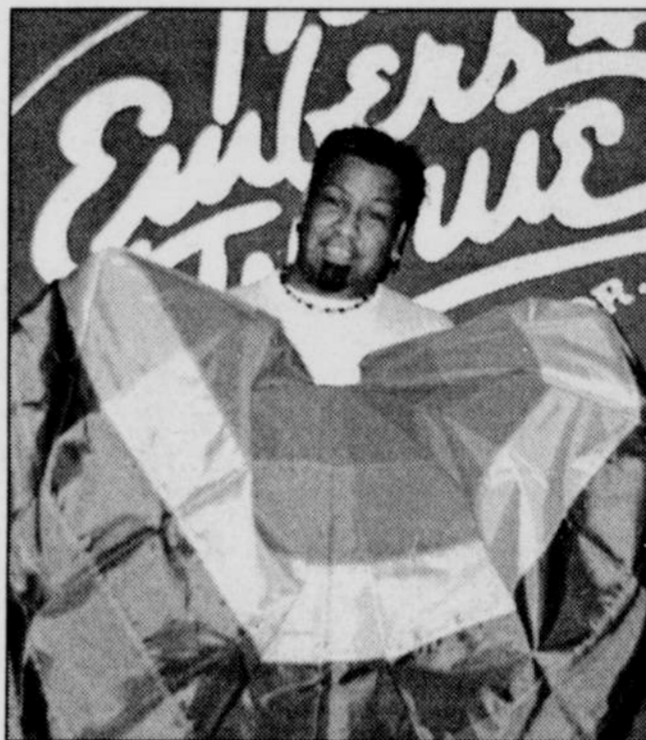


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Working as the head bouncer and weekend bartender at Embers Avenue, Bartley says he does have one problem with the gay community. "I think that we as gay people need to educate ourselves on acceptance. We are always yelling for acceptance from others, yet we can't even do it ourselves. We judge heterosexuals and especially each other, losing sight of the fact that we are all a big family."

Bartley says of Portland Pride festivities, "It's a time to celebrate those who have paved a path for us...a day to honor those who helped to get us to where we are today." To do his part, he will be volunteering for the third time at Peacock in the Park, an annual scholarship fund-raiser.

"The first year I worked on sets. We worked long hours and were getting a total of six hours' sleep a week. It was so tough, and I thought I'd never do it again. But when you see the kids get their scholarships, it makes it all worthwhile."

This year he will be helping out with security for the second time. "We have a few problems every year, but normally things run pretty smooth."

He says Peacock is one of his favorite events of the year. "It's a time to get together, be a family and donate money for some deserving kids to go to school."

—Michael Wayne Keck

● PAUL FINDLAY

"My people!" Paul Findlay exclaimed when he arrived at his first Gay Pride celebration in 1989 in San Jose, Calif. "Then I panicked."

The first person Findlay spied was a co-worker from his uptight Republican corporate job. "It took me a few moments to realize she was a lesbian," he remarks.

But moments later he'd been introduced to all of his lesbo-rific co-workers, who in turn introduced him to oodles of men. "I went home with my pockets overflowing with phone numbers," he says, smiling broadly at the memory.

Surrounding himself with oodles of gay men seems to be a theme for Findlay. If there's a secret formula to achieving these ends, maybe he's figured it out.

About 100 men surround Findlay when he sings bass with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus. In addition, he volunteers about 20 hours a week as the marketing and public relations director for the group.

"It's a true family—all kinds of people are there for all kinds of reasons," Findlay says. "Some people go there for community, some go as part of the coming-out process—and some people go there looking to find a husband."

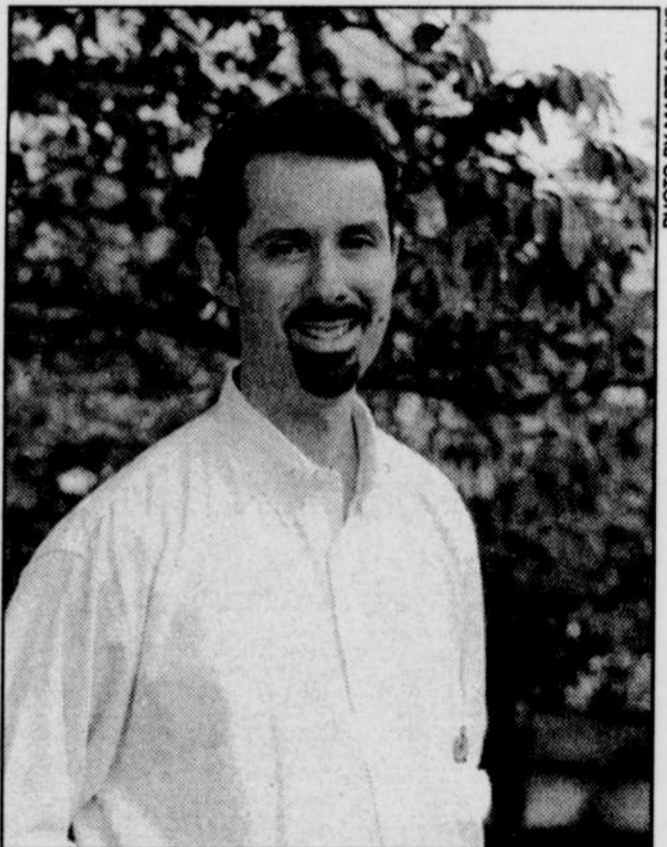


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

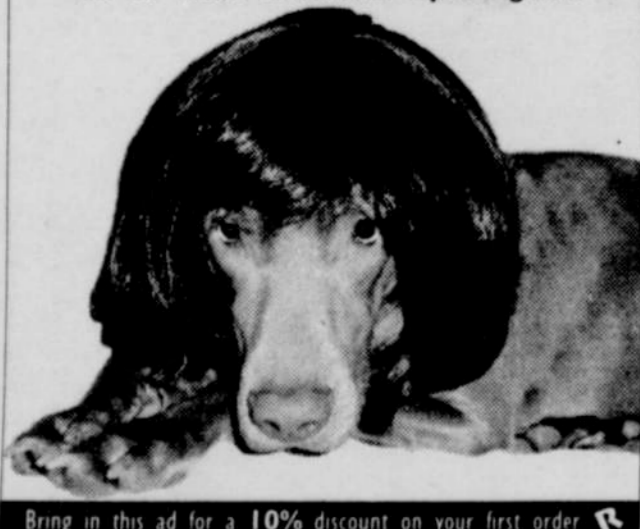
But Findlay points out that the chorus is more than just a social get-together. Fundamentalist Christian picketers sometimes try to thwart the group's concerts.

"We're ambassadors for the gay community," Findlay says. "The chorus is important to me because it helps move the perception of the gay community."

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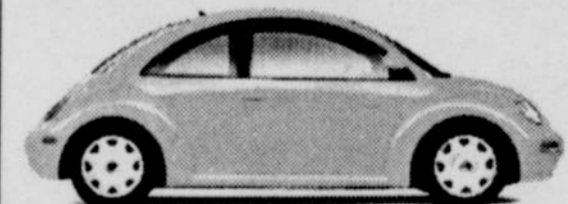
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