

CULTURE

# More than gowns and crowns



Emperor candidate Shelley also blows a mean horn  
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The Lovely Suzanne and Andrew T. Foxx will step down from their reign and crown their successors Oct. 27 during the Black & White Ball. Foxx spoke with *Just Out* recently and shared some highlights from what he calls "the best experience of my life."

Although he was crowned last October, Foxx says, "It wasn't until the Prince and Princess Ball in December that it hit me—I really won...it's when I first heard my name announced with my title: His Most Imperial Majesty, the Diversity of the Rose, the Cobalt Diamond Pride Emperor, Rose Emperor XXVII Andrew T. Foxx."

Combined with a 6-foot scepter and a mink-trimmed robe, it's easy to see how a guy could get used to such trappings. But lest you think ISRC is just about dressing up in fancy duds and brandishing glitzy props, ponder this fact: All of the empresses and emperors spend between \$15,000 and \$30,000 of their own money during their reign, so this is not a contest that is entered for a lark and a sash.

First comes the campaigning. "My campaign alone cost me five grand," Foxx reveals. "I gave out 800 T-shirts, 120 posters and 6,000 fliers in a three-week period. You have to campaign every night for three weeks, going to organization meet-

ings, bars and wherever you're invited to speak."

According to Foxx, the purpose of campaigning is to create interest and a better connection between the court and the gay community. "It's kind of like an infomercial," he says, pointing out that education is also a component, "since not everyone understands the court system."

All of the monarchs set a theme and goals for their reign. "Mine was to better connect personally with the community and to meet with other organizations, which I have," Foxx says, ticking off a list of groups he's forged connections with, including the Portland Leather Alliance, Oregon Bears and Northwest Gender Alliance.

During his tenure Foxx has raised money for Friends of People with AIDS Foundation, Esther's Pantry, Peacock in the Park, Our House, scholarship funds and more. One way he did that was by putting on a show last June at Embers Avenue.

"It was *Surviving Emperor's Island*, a game show with two teams, and in two hours we raised \$1,200!" Foxx boasts. "Everyone is so used to drag shows—and there's nothing wrong with that—but we also need other ideas, so I came up with a show called *Raw Talent*; a group of 'professional' karaoke singers did a karaoke show and raised \$600. It was very entertaining, and I hope to do it every year for the scholarship programs and for [Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays]."



The Lovely Suzanne and Andrew T. Foxx at their coronation

So what about the hefty outgoing tab of expenses? "The hardest thing about being emperor is balancing out-of-town travel with needs of the community, and I believe I accomplished both," Foxx says.

New York City, San Francisco and Vancouver, British Columbia. Portland is the only city to have had a recipient each of the five years.

The 2001 Portland recipient is Ray Snively, who has more than 25 years of community service to his credit. In 1974, he was appointed to the Advisory Council of Emperors, charged with formulating a plan to elect Portland's first emperor.

In 1981, Snively was given the lifetime title of Imperial Sovereign Rose Court treasurer. He has earned a reputation as the "Keeper of the Iron Purse Strings" for his razor-sharp accounting and unwillingness to spend money foolishly, helping make ISRC one of the most financially sound and respected courts anywhere.

In 1986, Snively was elected the Silver Arrow, Rose Emperor XIII. Alongside his stunning Rose Empress Lady Elaine Peacock, he served the community as the Legend of the Rose. He continues to pay tribute to her by serving on the Audria M. Edwards Scholarship Review Committee.



Ray Snively

## The highest honor

BY KIMBERLEE VAN PATTEN

Another feature of Coronation Week activities is the fifth annual Jose Honor Awards Banquet.

It was founded by Empress Nicole the Great to recognize outstanding achievement within the international court system of Canada, the United States and Mexico. "It is most important that we become the guardians of Empress Jose's legacy and that her proper place in the history of our community and its civil rights movement is never forgotten," she said.

This is the highest and most prestigious award in the court system. Recipients receive a bust of Jose that Nicole had created by renowned sculptor George B. Shaw.

Previous events have been held in San Diego,

He has visited 18 cities representing Portland, each of which usually requires a special, elaborate costume, with most of the expenses coming out of his pocket. Foxx has tapped one unusual source of support: His straight co-workers at Bonneville Power Administration bought a full-page ad in the coronation program.

"Diversity of the Rose" is his theme, and he feels he has fulfilled that well. "I've built a large circle of friendship," he notes with pride.

"It was the best experience of my life. It taught me more than I bargained for, and I'm grateful for that. I wouldn't change one bit of it," Foxx claims adamantly. "I don't believe you're truly an emperor until you step down a year later and apply what you learned to benefit your organization and your community."

When new monarchs are named, one will be a surprise and one won't. Shelley is running unopposed for emperor, and Poison Waters and Chloe Stone are vying for empress. The campaign process is arduous, as evidenced by the schedule of appearances posted on both candidates' Internet sites: multiple stops every day for three weeks—that's a lot of time in pumps!

Shelley is a longtime participant in court activities throughout the country and a multiple titleholder. For ISRC she has coordinated countless production numbers, acted as the court's own "prop shop" and been co-host of the annual "Adventures in Hangovers." She's also active with the Rose City Gay Freedom Band and Esther's Pantry.

Also veterans of the court system and multiple titleholders, Stone and Waters are soliciting votes from throughout the metro area until Oct. 20. To cast a ballot come to Darcelle XV between noon and 8 p.m. Oct. 21. Voting is limited to people who are older than 21 and live in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark counties.

Stone (aka Cameron Poole) first got into drag in order to foster a more outgoing alter ego. "The character of Chloe Stone was born out of a strong desire to accomplish things that a shy and unassuming young man never thought possible," she reveals.

So why empress? Stone notes "a desire to involve the youth who will be the voices and faces of the future."

During her first week of campaigning, Stone says she met many nice people "who have been complimentary and open to the idea of a man in a dress explaining why he wants to be the next empress of the city of Portland!"

She also claims to have only squeezed in nine hours of sleep during the week. Yikes! For her part, Waters (aka Kevin Cook) is keeping just as busy. She says one of the reasons she'd make a groovy empress is her ability to be "at home at a board meeting or a beer bust."

She also notes a strong desire to continue to serve the community. "I believe my commitment and responsibility to serve the community that has so generously served me will continue to grow long after my reign."

Waters also has the needs of children on her mind. She spent the last week of August at Camp Starlight, which provides kids whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS the opportunity to enjoy a caring, safe, spiritual and fun experience.

"It was the best thing I've ever done for myself or others," she believes. She already has begun raising funds for the camp, and it surely will figure in her future efforts, too. ☐

Find the complete CORONATION WEEK schedule at [www.rosecourt.org](http://www.rosecourt.org). Check on the candidates at [www.chloestone.net](http://www.chloestone.net) and [www.poisonwaters.com](http://www.poisonwaters.com).

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