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NORTHWEST news



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

The Transformers protest outside the Butchies concert Oct. 16 at the B Complex

TRANS ACTIVISTS PROTEST CONCERT

About a dozen protesters held signs and distributed fliers outside the Butchies concert Oct. 16 at the B Complex to raise awareness about the rock band's participation in the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. The event, held every August, is restricted to women who were born women.

Protester Lisa Zeepp, who identified as a genderqueer femme, called the policy transphobic. "I support safe space for all women not based on anatomy," she said.

Katie Kaput, a transsexual dyke, said the policy is no different from one that would exclude lesbians. "We don't think that people who consider themselves trans allies should be supporting them in helping that policy continue."

Ace Popsoda, a trans boy who protested outside the Butchies concert April 24 at the Crystal Ballroom, said the band has not responded despite repeated requests to reconsider. "There have been countless attempts to try to reach the Butchies...and nothing has really worked."

The protesters, collectively known as the Transformers, hope to raise awareness, convince the band to reconsider its support of the policy and, ultimately, to make the festival inclusive. Popsoda urged the trans community to come together regardless of gender identity.

"People in the trans community who aren't trans women ignore issues that don't affect them," he said. "That really angers me a lot."

The Butchies have issued statements saying they support the trans community but recognize the continued need for separatist events. The band pointed out that the festival does not conduct gender checks and that a large contingent of staff members identify as trans, albeit female-to-male only.

"We don't think that our support of the trans communities and womyn born womyn communities are in direct contradiction to each other; our support of one does not diminish the support of the other," the Butchies said. "They are both equal in our hearts."

For more information e-mail transformers@freeze.com or visit the Internet site www.strap-on.org/action.html.

GOOD GOVERNMENT GROUP COLLECTS VOTER SIGNATURES

The Good Government Initiative likely will qualify for the May 2002 ballot.

Chief petitioner Robert Ball, a gay police reserve captain and real estate investor, told the *Portland Tribune* he has collected slightly more than the 27,095 voter signatures required. The initiative seeks to amend and restate the local charter to make the city operate within a system of checks and balances.

"Our elected commissioners supervise city bureaus, and with their votes as council members, they adopt ordinances," Ball said. "As long as both the lawmaking and the administrative branches are the responsibility of the same elected officials, there exists a natural conflict."

Under the initiative, administrative duties and responsibilities would be vested in the mayor, who no longer would be a member of the City Council. The amendment also would increase the number of council members to nine; two would be elected at large, and seven would be elected by districts.

"Portland is the largest city in the United States that continues to operate under the commission form of government," Ball said. "As our city grows and becomes more diverse, it is important that we, as citizens, are involved in council decisions. When all council members have only legislative duties and seven district council members have their offices in their districts, Portland can become not just 'The City That Works' but 'The City That Works Together.'"

MCC NORTHWEST DISTRICT HOLDS FINAL CONFERENCE

Members of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland; Gentle Shepherd MCC in Vancouver, Wash.; Sweet Spirit MCC in Salem; and SisterSpirit traveled to Salt Lake City from Oct. 5 to 7 for the final Northwest District Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Three clergy and about 10 laity attended.

During the next two years the denomination will transition into a structure administered by regional elders, who will replace elected district committees. One last committee was elected during the conference to complete the work of the district.

MCC Portland member Chuck Harvey stepped down after a three-year stint as district coordinator. He has held other positions on this body and was coordinator of the district conference for several years.