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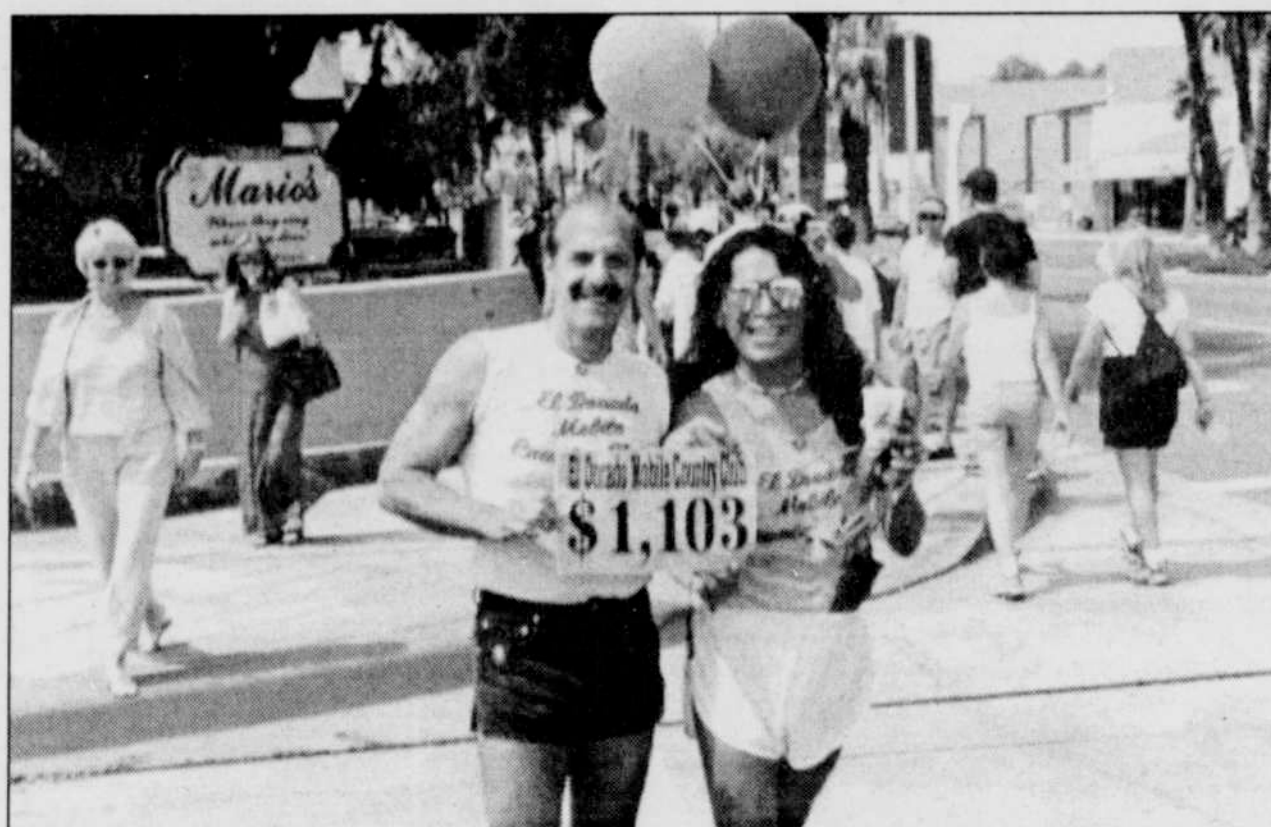
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NORTHWESTnews



Lanny Swerdlow (left) and his partner of nine years, Victor Michel, participate in the Desert AIDS Walk last April

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**FORMER CLUB OWNER
SELLS MEMORABILIA**

Former Portlander Lanny Swerdlow returned to the Rose City in December to sell artifacts from several nightclubs he operated during the past two decades: Mildred's Palace, the City, Metropolis and the Rage.

The items included a dance floor, sound equipment, furniture, video games and paintings. About half of it was sold; the rest was given away or hauled to the dump.

Swerdlow was a high-profile figure during his time in Portland. For more than 10 years he produced *Nightscene*, which he says was the longest-running gay and lesbian show in the history of television, as well as cable access programs on atheism and marijuana legalization.

He believes his involvement in those counterculture activities led to child pornography allegations and an FBI raid on the Rage and his house May 1, 1998. He suspects people provided authorities with false information in exchange for immunity.

"A lot of people saw my clubs as 'recruiting' for the gay and lesbian community," he says. "Young people would come to my club, and they would 'become' homosexual."

Authorities seized video duplicating equipment as well as computers. No charges ever were filed, but Swerdlow has been unable to sue the government for damages.

"The affidavits were sealed, so we could never see them," he says. "We had no idea what they were looking for."

Swerdlow is appealing a Jan. 15 court decision denying him the right to view the affidavits. He admits he has no confidence whatsoever that the matter will be resolved.

"The government has passed all kinds of laws to protect itself from its own citizens," he says. "It's a very difficult process. My lawyer has told me there's a very good possibility that I will never, ever get to see these affidavits that were used essentially to destroy my life. When you call somebody a child pornographer or you call somebody a wife beater, the damage is done."

Swerdlow moved to Palm Springs, Calif., about two years ago and is training to become a medical assistant. Although it's a significant career shift, he says life is good in the desert.

"It's the largest gay resort in the United States," he says. "The city is estimated to be anywhere from one-third to one-half gay."

Swerdlow still makes it back to Portland a couple of times a year. Although he misses his

friends, club patrons and fellow activists, no love was lost between him and local authorities.

"The city government was knee-deep in the doo-doo that led to this whole thing," he says. "They just had a hard-on for me for 20 years."

**CHURCH IN SEARCH
OF A NEW PASTOR**

Metropolitan Community Church of Portland's new year's resolution is to begin the search for a new pastor.

The Rev. Roy Cole left in October after a tenure of seven years to further his education. A pastoral search committee, chaired by Chuck Harvey, former Northwest District coordinator, has been selected to guide the membership through what might be a lengthy process.

Although surveys and forums are being offered to the congregation, an interim pastor also will be sought to serve until a new senior pastor is in place. A subcommittee of the church board will find this person.

Meanwhile, a worship team composed of lay members organizes the weekly services, recruits preachers and speakers to officiate and decides what liturgy will be used.

Northwest District coordinator the Rev. Debbie Martin and Lay Elder Mel Johnson, visiting from California, officiated at services Jan. 13 and later facilitated a meeting to answer parishioners' questions about the search process. MCC Portland, a "chartered church," enjoys considerable autonomy in its pastoral search.

The surveys are important to the process. One tracks membership demographics, while a second asks what congregants want in a future pastor.

The pastoral search committee has been distributing these surveys between church services and at several meetings scheduled to solicit input from the members. An evening forum and spaghetti dinner Jan. 27 gave the congregation its last chance for input before the committee begins sending out the requests that will hopefully draw a new pastor to MCC Portland.

For more information call 503-236-5501 or e-mail PSCMCCP1@aol.com.

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Network Behavioral Healthcare Inc., which oversees the Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center, will merge with two other agencies to create one of the nation's largest community health centers for people with men-