

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

• **Infrastructure:** Equity installed new computers and software systems to enhance customer service.

• **Donor advisers:** Contributors are supporting innovative efforts such as *The Laramie Project*, which recently was performed in Portland and will be taken on the road next month to The Dalles, Pendleton, Bend and Newport.

"I raised the visibility of the organization...and the next opportunity is to really engage major donors and to seek planned gifts," Nelson said. "It's a great opportunity for Equity to bring in someone who already has those skills at a high level."

The foundation already is interviewing candidates to serve as an interim executive director. After that person is appointed, the board of directors intends on conducting a national search for a permanent replacement.

"Last year, even though it was a horrid stock market and the economy was tanking, we gave out more money and we raised more money than we've ever raised before—significantly more money," Nelson said. "That says to me that Equity is a very stable and growing organization."

Looking back on how much Oregon has changed since he moved here, Nelson reflected on his work as an ordained minister with United Church of Christ. After the discriminatory Ballot Measure 8 passed in 1988, he helped put together a curriculum and traveled across the state to convince churches to become pro-gay.

"Today, more than 50 percent of our churches are open and affirming," he said. "Nowhere else in the nation can top that—nowhere else."

Nelson regularly spoke with groups in rural areas such as Klamath Falls and White Salmon, Wash. "Every place I went, the defining moment was when someone locally shared their story as an openly gay or lesbian person."

His most memorable encounter occurred in Pocatello, Idaho, where he initially encountered a great deal of resistance from Bible bangers. That is, until the local chaplain came out of the closet.

"Everybody was saying: 'Gee, when I had breast cancer he was by my bedside. Gee, when my mother died he was the one who kind of nurtured me through that.' And suddenly instead of 'them out there,' it was 'Gee, our chaplain here is a gay man, and maybe we should rethink this,'" Nelson said. "It was phenomenal to watch."

PROJECT WILL REMOVE HEALTH CARE BARRIERS

The Hambleton Project, a 5-year-old non-profit organization that provides education and support to lesbians with cancer and other life-threatening conditions, has received \$5,000 from Seattle's Pride Foundation to teach Oregon doctors about "Removing the Barriers: Providing Culturally Competent Care to Lesbians."

The goal of the curriculum, which is funded by the Mautner Project and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is to increase health care practitioners' understanding and knowledge about lesbians and



PHOTO BY MARTIN DAVIS

Equity Foundation founding board member Karen Keeney wishes Matthew Nelson a fond farewell Feb. 18 during the Investments in Dignity Awards

women who partner with women and to reduce barriers faced by these patients as they access services. The grant will help improve providers' skills and create systemic change so that lesbians can feel safe and comfortable in a hospital or other health care setting.

Two trainers from the Mautner Project in Washington, D.C., will guide the initial workshops this spring. Hambleton representatives as well as health care agencies, clinics and colleges will receive an intensive "training of trainers" curriculum April 14 and 15 in Portland.

Half-day workshops then will be presented to health care providers April 16 in Bend and April 17 in Eugene. Hambleton will replicate these workshops July 15 and Sept. 18 in the Portland metropolitan area.

For more information call 503-335-6591, e-mail hambproj@easystreet.com or visit the Internet site www.lgbt.org/hp.

LOBBY FOR BASIC RIGHTS

Queers and allies will have the opportunity to spend a day in Salem next month telling representatives why they should vote for basic rights. The Citizen Action Lobby Day will be held from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. March 26 at the Oregon State Capitol.

Basic Rights Oregon will give participants hands-on lobby training, then dispatch them to speak with legislators about their right to a fair and safe Oregon. This session the state could become the 14th in the nation to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, public accommodation and employment.

To register contact Jessica DuBois at 503-222-6151 or jessica@basicrights.org.

ORGANIZATIONS TO HOLD OFFICE-WARMING PARTY

Basic Rights Oregon and the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League jointly will play host to a "progressive" open house from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Feb. 27 at the Board of Trade Building, 310 S.W. Fourth Ave.

BRO is in Suite 610, Oregon NARAL in Suite 430. Light refreshments will be provided, and all are invited.

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Counter Media

EVERY BOOK OF GAY EROTICA ALWAYS IN STOCK!

- (NEW) *The Brotherhood*. Big hairy bruisers + young hairless lads = latest Julius artbook. \$27.
- (NEW) *Et in Arcadia Ego*. 100 year-old photos by von Gloeden, Pluschow, and Galdi. \$40.
- (NEW) *Retro Stud*. "Tell me, Timmy, do you like to watch gladiator movies?" Poster book. \$17.

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