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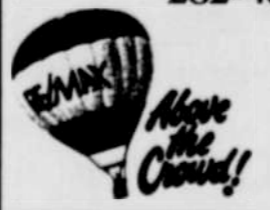
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NORTHWEST newsbriefs



U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (right, with Multnomah County Chair Diane Linn at Portland Pride 2002) has pledged not to discriminate in employment practices based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

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BLUMENAUER, WYDEN SIGN NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Human Rights Campaign announced May 1 that it has joined forces with the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition to secure signatures on statements from members of Congress asserting that they will not discriminate in employment practices based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

For several years HRC has asked members of Congress to sign statements prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, but this is the first time gender identity and expression have been included in a single statement. Only two members of Oregon's congressional delegation have signed the trans-inclusive pledge, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, both Democrats.

"This statement is an important step forward for HRC as we work for equality for our entire community," political director Winnie Stachelberg said. "It is also an opportunity for members of Congress to follow the lead of some of the top Fortune 500 corporations in America—including Eastman Kodak Co., IBM, Intel Corp., Nike Inc. and Xerox Corp.—who have already implemented policies prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in their workplaces."

FORUM TO GATHER IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY CENTER

A new grassroots effort to establish a center for Portland's sexual minorities community will be the subject of a public Speak Out Forum at 6:30 p.m. May 29 in the U.S. Bank Room of Multnomah County's Central Library, 801 S.W. 10th Ave. The gathering, the first in a series that will continue through the summer, will provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to discuss the need for such a facility and to brainstorm what it might look like, including where it could be located.

The information-gathering forums are organized by an offshoot of Outside In called the Queer Committee. Originally focused on the

needs of sexual minority youth, the group now works in tandem with a larger community center effort recently convened by Portland Mayor Vera Katz's gay chief of staff, Sam Adams.

Together, their mission is to "create a comprehensive and inclusive process to research and identify the community's needs and strengths while exploring the feasibility of creating a community center in Portland to address them."

Organizers from both camps stress their commitment to reach out to all members of the sexual minorities community and its allies. The forum complements an extensive survey that will be introduced at Portland Pride 2003. A formal feasibility study will follow, the results of which will be published in September.

For more information call 503-535-3815 or e-mail portlandqueercenter@yahoo.com.

DYKE MARCH NEEDS YOU

The Dyke March—an annual grassroots gathering of about 1,000 lesbians, bi women, trans dykes and their allies in downtown Portland—is seeking financial support for this year's festivities. Usually organized by the temporarily scattered Lesbian Avengers, the event will gather by 6:30 p.m. and step off at 7 p.m. June 14 in the North Park Blocks between Northwest Park and Eighth avenues at West Burnside Street.

The march receives no corporate or business sponsorship and is made possible only by fund raising and donations from community members. Rental and insurance for each accessibility vehicle costs about \$75, the permit fee for the march is \$70, the insurance fee is \$254, and copies for fliers and sign materials total about \$30. After raising some of the needed funds during a recent benefit at the Red & Black Cafe, the organizers now are lacking about \$250—the cost of the insurance.

The next benefit will be at the increasingly popular weekly event Skervy—Queer to the Bone!, which will hold a Dress Night from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. May 22 at the Cobalt Lounge, 32 N.W. Third Ave. Attendees should come sporting a lovely frock and bring supplies for making signs and costumes for the march. Admission is a \$6 donation with \$1 dresses available at the door.

To volunteer or make a donation contact Sarah Barnard at carobhomo@yahoo.com.

PHOTO BY CHERIE CLAWSON