

Portland Pride 2003 features more than 150 booths with just about everything from food to clothing to do-gooders. With such an abundance of rainbow riches, a discriminating visitor will have no trouble finding points of interest, but *Just Out* noticed a few we want to be certain you find.

First on the list is Gladiator Pedestal Jousting, sponsored by gay telephone dating service Interactive Male. This inflatable version of the famed *American Gladiators* jousting platforms looks like loads of good time. Two participants (gladiators!) climb on top of the pedestals wearing protective headgear. They then swing at each other with oversized, foam-filled jousting poles; the victor is the first one to knock the opponent down onto a huge air-inflated mat.

As Interactive Male area marketing manager Neil Janssen says, "It's a great way to take out your aggressions on each other—in a playful way." (Course, we already have other ways of doing that, but whatever.)

Each match is a whopping three minutes of fun and costs just \$2 a person. Although Interactive Male is primarily geared toward men, anyone 14 and older is welcome to play.

While you may challenge your friends, Interactive Male will have professional models on hand to fight gladiators who arrive foe-less. The company will also be taking souvenir instant photographs of each match. (Perhaps we can get these professional nude models to fight in their work clothes.)

Be sure to check out the rest of Interactive Male's booth as well. Portland drag favorite Celeste Towers will once again be greeting visitors, and everyone who stops by will get free time on Interactive Male as well as a chance to win one of many prizes (possibly IM's very popular cum towels). In addition, when they aren't jousting, these beautiful models will be applying free temporary tattoos to any part of your body.

Interactive Male is the largest gay-owned interactive telephone dating service in the country and says it is the only one that gives back to the community. All proceeds from the jousting will go to Pride Northwest, and any from the booth will be donated to Peacock in the Park. Janssen says he hopes to raise more than \$2,000 for the groups.

Returning for its 16th Portland Pride is Richard & Mike's Button Company. Richard is 67-year-old Richard Kitterman, who lives in Noti (about 20 miles west of Eugene) with his 28-year-old partner, Mike. He has been selling at Pride since 1988.

Likes to watch out for

Suggestions for Pride vendor shopping this year

BY FLOYD SKLAVER

Interactive Male will provide live models to test your gladiator skills at Portland Pride 2003



In 1996, Mike joined his life (and business), and they now make the trip together.

The pair sell an assortment of novelty items including buttons, photo mugs, T-shirts, posters, cards and key chains. The buttons come in two varieties: 3 1/2-inch color photo buttons that, at \$5 each, are their most popular item, and 1 1/4-inch buttons with political slogans and funny phrases for just about any queer.

They try to introduce fresh maxims each year as well bring an ample supply of the old standards. My personal favorites: "Let go of my ears, I know what I'm doing," "Nice pants, they'd look good on my bedroom floor," "That's Ms. Dyke to you," "Boys will do boys," "Bi bi love," "Women don't have hot flashes, they have power surges" and "Sit on a happy face." At just \$1 each, this is the perfect opportunity to stock up for every occasion.

Kitterman says lesbians are his most loyal customers. "I have gay families who have all 16 years of their family growing up on my

buttons," he happily boasts. "I have one two-mom family that I take pictures of every year. I put them on a banner in front of my booth, [and] all my regulars...check to see how the two boys have grown and how the two moms are doing."

Kitterman is certain that future years will see him and Mike continuing to attend Portland Pride.

"It's wonderful fun," particularly being able to see returning customers, he enthuses. "Every year about halfway through...I start realizing how much I love them and start tearing up to the point I can hardly breathe." Let's keep them coming back for another 16 years.

Last but certainly not least, canine-loving community members will want to shop at Nedra Made It!, staffed by queer-

friendly Nedra Howsden and her boyfriend, Rick. Last year they adopted Augie ("a really cute, smart mutt") and then discovered it was difficult carrying everything they needed at the park. "I love taking him for walks," Howsden explains, "but I hate carrying around his poop, leash and everything else."

Rick suggested she design a bag that was "hip yet durable," and Howsden, a consummate seamstress, seized the challenge. Augie Bags are now at many area stores, including Healthy Pets Northwest, Club K-9, Furever Pets and Noah's Ark.

The product solves the problem of what to do with all that dog stuff. While fashionable on the outside, what makes the bags special is inside, where each one has a small pocket under the flap to hold your filled poop bag, a mesh pocket for keys and baggies, an inside treat pocket and a general pocket for water bottles, toys, balls, leashes, Frisbees, etc. There's even a side pocket for your cell phone or flashlight.

You can take the Augie Bag to the park, to the beach or even to Pride because it comes in a variety of stylish colors including Poodle Pink, Beagle Blue and Chow Chow Orange. Machine washable, it is available in three sizes (kinda like dogs).

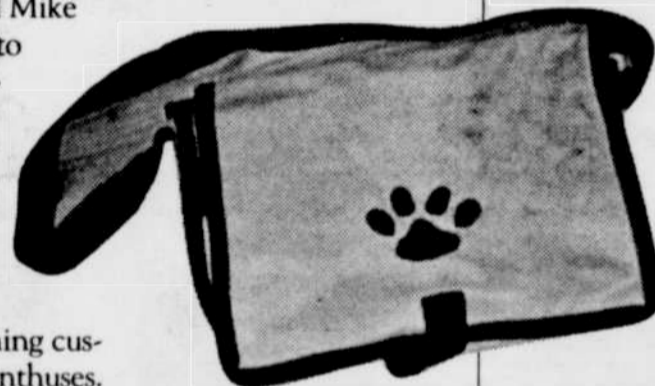
This is the first year at the festival for Howsden; one of the stores that carry her bags alerted her to the potential market. "I've heard it's a lot of fun and a great place for folks to bring their dogs," she says.

Will Augie make an appearance at Pride? "Definitely," Howsden declares. He's "a friendly dog, so he would love it if you came by and gave him some love." [Q]

FLOYD SKLAVER is a Portland free-lance writer with a Pekingese named Sherman.

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—Neil Janssen



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