

NORTHWESTnews

wrote an article. It named me, the agency I worked for and had specifics of everything. It was in *The Grants Pass Daily Courier*, where I used to live. I was out to the world."

And the results have been nothing but positive. "Since that time it's been amazing. Not one single negative thing has happened to me since I came out.... It's just one thing after another that's been positive."

Not one to sit on her hands, Calvo has become active in politics. She is among many queers supporting Howard Dean, front-runner in the race to become the Democratic presidential nominee.

Calvo is not troubled by the fact that the candidate does not mention trans people in his stump speeches or brochures. She is concerned today's voters might be scared of the word "transgender" and feels winning is more important than vocabulary.

"I don't think he really needs to throw that trump card down," Calvo says. "When I first started looking at Howard Dean as the all-inclusive candidate, I was looking for something in the brochures saying he was in favor of equal rights including transgender...but I thought that what he's saying goes for everyone."

Calvo points out that trans people have benefited hugely from the gay rights movement. "It's a slingshot effect. If it weren't for the gay community, none of these [trans] people would have a place to venture out to that was safe."

And Calvo is not one to quibble over vocabulary. Though many people struggle with pronouns when referring to trans people, she has never felt offended by anyone's word choice. "But if I'm out in public, and I've taken the time to look pretty, I sure as hell don't want to be called 'sir.' It's rude. But it doesn't happen."

According to Calvo, people get hung up on pronouns because society is so geared toward thinking of gender in binary terms. "With the pronouns and that kind of thing,

they're trying to organize how much time you spend one way or another. Sometimes you see things from one point of view, sometimes another. It's a blending of the two. I don't have to metamorphosize to be happy anymore."

—Laura Calvo

For now, Calvo is content in her male body. Though she feels she probably wouldn't miss being a man, she has experienced such joy since coming out, she's hesitant to make any big changes like therapy or hormones.

"Down the road maybe. Possibly. This is still a work in progress. I'm catching up for a lifetime right now. That's a tough one, and I don't have an answer to it. Life is good—I live in a nice house, with a wonderful family, around people who love me." □

MICHAEL BURDICK is a recent graduate of Reed College. He can be reached at mike@nibblicious.com.

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COME SAIL AWAY

The 2004 Lambda Awards Celebration will be held from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Jan. 10 in the Grand Ballroom at Medford's Red Lion Hotel, 200 N. Riverside Ave.

Individuals and organizations will be honored in four categories—humanities, arts, public service and Hall of Fame—to recognize their dedication to improving the quality of life in southern Oregon for all citizens. The keynote speaker will be Roey Thorpe, Basic Rights Oregon executive director.

Entertainment will include the Rogue Valley Gay Men's Chorus and Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon's Teen Theatre Program, which is directed by Cil Stengel, a member of the all-woman improv troupe the Hamazons. The Bad Street Gurlz, possibly the nation's only trans girl band, will be making its debut. These ladies hail from all over the West—from Seattle to Portland to Reno, Nev.

This year's theme is "Sail Away," and cruise ship/nautical attire is encouraged. The event also will feature dancing and a dessert buffet.

Tickets are \$20 at the door. The special room rate is \$65 a night plus tax.

The celebrations were launched by the Abdill-Ellis Lambda Community Center but now are sponsored by the Southern Oregon GLBT Political Caucus. For more information call 541-488-6990 or visit www.abdellis.org or www.geocities.com/thecaucus.

Volunteers are needed for decorating,



The keynote speaker at the 2004 Lambda Awards Celebration will be Roey Thorpe, executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, the organization that helped convince Laura Calvo to testify before the Legislature about her experience with job discrimination

planning, awards, security and other duties. To sign up, send an e-mail to thecaucus@yahoo.com.

—Jim Radosta □

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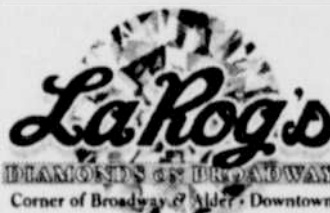
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