

NORTHWESTnews



"The Faeries have been there for me in lots of really difficult times in my life.... More of them offered to help me when my lover was dying and after he died than I could ever accept."

—Jeff Richards

me in lots of really difficult times in my life. I know I can count on the Faeries. More of them offered to help me when my lover was dying and after he died than I could ever accept. Their help was very tangible and important."

• **Rebellious humor.** "The Faeries are about questioning anyone or anything that says you can't be free," Danzante Caldera says. "Our Gay Pride float this year was a large, erect penis surrounded by drumming, half-naked Faeries. If you have a button—a prejudice against queerness and aliveness—we'll push that button. There is a loving playfulness in the Faeries that is not afraid to challenge authority—while still honoring people where they are."

• **Integrating spirituality and eroticism.** "I believe the Faeries have held onto the jargon about integrating sexuality and spirituality, but too often of late we've fallen back into the trap of using talk about wanting a 'heart connection' as a means for getting our rocks off," Harvey says. "It's OK to want to just get your rocks off, and it's great to want an emotionally and physically intimate connection, but let's not confuse the two."

Bill Line, who created the Northwest Faerie database in the early 1990s, adds: "When the Faeries started, most of us were in our 20s, and we

homeless, had to go into a mental institution—I've seen the Faeries time and again be there for that person, not rescue them from consequences they needed, but really let them know they are loved and supported no matter what," says Snow Bear/Chris Schilling, who has been a Faerie for 10 years. "And this support is not just talk; I've seen Faeries take food to people, provide them shelter, bathe them, even provide care round the clock. The Faeries are a very patient group; if it takes you years to get your shit together, they'll keep loving you—and gently...calling you on your shit if need be. We treat one another like family."

Jeff Richards, a Faerie since 1981, adds: "The Faeries have been there for

were going through our gay adolescence. We were into rebellion, experimentation and discovering how spirit and eros could be merged. This was a double-edged sword for many of us, because our exuberant sexuality left us jaded and/or dead. But some of us have discovered you can be exuberant, spontaneous and responsible for maintaining a balance in the other parts of your life. The key is to remain present and maintain balance in your life."

• **Consensus decision-making.** "The Faeries are at the cutting edge of collective endeavor," Jamshed/Ken Storer says. "This is very challenging in a self-service, consumerist culture. Giving and receiving in freedom is not allowed in a win-lose game. Generosity is the inherent nature of all human beings. Men don't choose to become oppressors, they are beaten into it. If men can strip away all their abusive, violent, unfeeling conditioning, they will discover they are naturally and inherently brilliant, nurturing, gentle and full of emotion. Men have cooperated together to hunt and protect since the beginning. Cooperation is their nature."

So how could we sum up such a multifaceted jewel as the Faeries?

"We empower authentic self-discovery and self-expression," Caldera says. "We offer an honest, outrageous, kind-hearted alternative to the assimilationist, Will & Grace reality that says, 'We're just like you.' We are not just like you, and we don't want to be. Being just like you is killing everybody. We don't need your permission or your approval to be who we are." ☐

For more information about PORTLAND RADICAL FAERIES call 503-235-0826.

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—Jamshed/Ken Storer

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