

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

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The event is free and open to all interested people 23 and younger. However, adult trans youth advocates and allies may attend with prior approval and registration.

The event is sponsored by SMYRC's Trans Youth Group, a social, support and empowerment group for trans, genderqueer and questioning youth. It meets from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays at SMYRC.

For more information e-mail Christa-Margaret Nelson at transyouthgroup@smycr.org or visit www.smyrc.org/transyouthgroup.



Nicki Eybel and her furry friend invite you to check out the queer-friendly Rainbow Preschool during an open house Feb. 21

RAINBOW PRESCHOOL HOLDS OPEN HOUSE

The queer-friendly Rainbow Preschool is having an open house for children and families from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 21 at 1244 N.E. 39th Ave. It is located in but not affiliated with Bethlehem Lutheran Church, which is a welcoming congregation.

The school for 3- to 5-year olds opened in October and has two teachers with master's degrees in early childhood education. Lesbian co-founder Nicki Eybel believes young children are active learners, and her goal is to create an open-ended environment that allows them to create community and make sense of the world.

For more information call 503-284-1739.

GROUPS SUPPORT GRIEVING WOMEN

The Hambleton Project, which serves lesbians with cancer and other life-threatening diseases, is sponsoring three free support groups led by professional therapists.

A bereavement group for lesbians and bisexual women who have lost a loved one will start in April. This educational/support group will meet in the Hollywood District on Thursday evenings for eight consecutive weeks. It will be facilitated by Beth Ruml, who has worked in hospice for more than 12 years and has extensive experience in grief work. The group will help provide insight and hope for the future and allow participants to learn about the process of grief and feel the support of others on a similar journey.

Two groups sponsored by Hambleton offer support to lesbians and bisexual women who are living with cancer. Both also welcome partners and other caregivers. Many lesbians believe they benefit from talking with other lesbians about their experience with cancer. Southeast Portland meetings, held every other Sunday, are led by professional therapists Kim

Jacobowitz and Mary Beth Kurilo. Salem meetings, held every other Tuesday evening, are facilitated by Victoria Hellman and Kay Peterson.

Hambleton has been working for six years to provide services to lesbians with cancer and other life-threatening conditions. In addition to the support groups, it helps with home and hospital visits, transportation, cooking, cleaning and yardwork.

Hambleton also places a major emphasis on educating health care providers about how to provide culturally sensitive care to the lesbian community. "Removing the Barriers" workshops directed at providers begin in April.

For more information or to volunteer, call 503-335-6591, e-mail hambproj@easystreet.com or visit www.hambletonproject.org.

L.A. OFFICIALS ORDERED TO REGULATE BATHHOUSES

Shortly after a similar idea was floated in Multnomah County, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Feb. 3 to require public health officials to strengthen STD prevention efforts among men who have sex with men at bathhouses and sex clubs, The Associated Press reports. The motion, sponsored by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, gives workers 90 days to recommend improvements for programs and guidelines for how the county and cities can coordinate licensing and permitting for the clubs.

The motion cited a 2002 study that found 11 percent of men at two Los Angeles-area bathhouses tested HIV-positive, compared with 5 percent of men who had been tested at a public clinic or community-based testing center. The high rate of HIV among queers in bathhouses "suggests that our HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and treatment efforts must be strengthened to address the environment in which high-risk sexual behavior occurs," the motion stated.

"Serious infectious diseases continue to be transmitted at these venues while we sit here today, while we wait for this report to be compiled," said Karen Mall, AIDS Healthcare Foundation prevention and testing director. "I urge this body to act quickly to develop a sound public health ordinance in order to ensure clients have consistent, accessible prevention and HIV and STD screening services in these venues."

Just Out reported in January that Cascade AIDS Project wanted the Multnomah County Health Department to consider regulating commercial sex establishments in response to a spike in syphilis, gonorrhea and HIV among queer men.

"I don't know if gay men are going to be able to change these norms without some pressure from the health department," said Philip Knowlton, CAP men's prevention and wellness coordinator. "I'm not saying close down the clubs or send in the sex police, but I am saying we all have to get serious about stopping barebacking in public spaces and promoting safer sex."

The suggestion resulted in a flurry of angry letters to the editor, and CAP eventually settled on encouraging sex clubs to adopt voluntary standards for restricting barebacking. Knowlton has since tendered his resignation, but executive director Thomas Bruner says the decision is unrelated to the bathhouse brouhaha. ☐

Compiled by JIM RADOSTA

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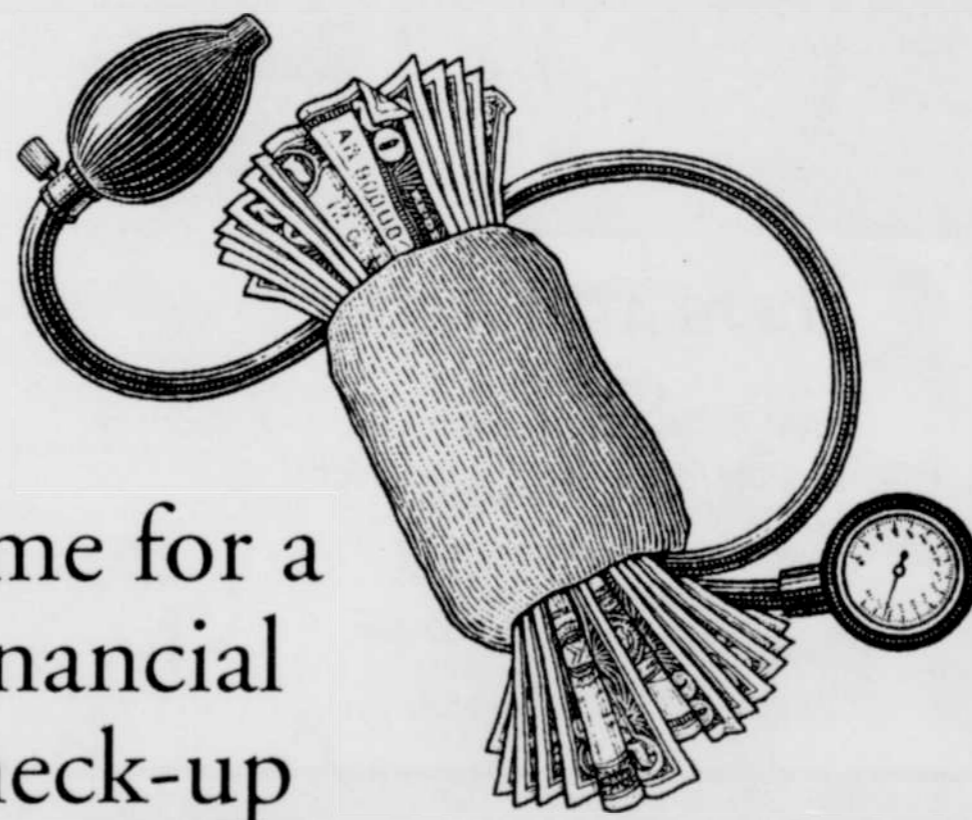


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