

NORTHWEST news

'Everyone behind you has zero chance of getting in. Those in front have a 1 percent chance.'

Juncker continues: "This guy in front of us kept saying, 'It's not important if we get in, it's just important that we're here.' And we're like, 'Fuck that, we're getting in.'"

So wait they did, along with hundreds of others. Despite blustery winds and occasional rain, the mood was festive. "It was amazing," Belge says. "People were coming down the line with gifts and food and cookies. One woman brought bubbles."

She continues: "This straight couple came up and said, 'Our gay friends gave us so many things when we got married, and we just wanted to give back.' So she went to Bed Bath & Beyond and bought picture frames and was handing them out. It was our first wedding gift."

Finally, at 3:30 p.m., after eight hours of waiting, the mayor's liaison came out again. Belge and Juncker held their breath as he pointed to the woman in the white sweater. "Everyone from her forward is going to get married today," he announced to jubilant cheers. "We started jumping up and down and screaming and hugging each other," Juncker says. "We were just ecstatic."

Whether these marriages will remain legal and



Tay Juncker (left) and Kathy Belge rejoice after getting married Feb. 15 at San Francisco City Hall

what will happen to the state's recently passed domestic partner law, which goes into effect next year, is anyone's guess. But, in the meantime, "I felt like we were part of this political event and movement," Belge says. "I've been an activist for many years, and this is huge." ■

FLOYD SKLAVER is a Portland free-lance writer.

FLOWERS FROM THE HEARTLAND

Grassroots campaign demonstrates the power of the Internet

by Floyd Sklaver

Portlanders Beth Crane and Deb Zang had been waiting in line at San Francisco City Hall for seven hours when they were approached by two men.

"Here these are for you," they said, handing the stunned couple an arrangement of white roses and pink carnations. "We're not getting married today, but you are. We want you to have these."

Crane and Zang, who have been together for eight years, were overwhelmed by the gesture and didn't know they were beneficiaries of a grassroots movement begun two days earlier in Minneapolis. There, gay co-workers Greg Scanlan and Timothy Holtz were perusing photographs of happily married couples and wistfully saying how they wished they could be a part of it. Suddenly, Scanlan remarked, "If you can't be there, send flowers."

Scanlan and Holtz began surfing the Web until they located a gay-friendly florist who was happy to help. They each asked the florist to deliver a bouquet to anyone at City Hall with a note that said simply, "With love, from Minneapolis, Minnesota."

Not satisfied, that night Scanlan and Holtz wrote an e-mail to about 60 friends explaining what they had done and asking them to do the same. That e-mail was forwarded to others, then picked up by bloggers and online communities everywhere.

San Francisco florists soon were inundated with requests from around the world, and the Flowers from the Heartland campaign had begun.

"I started crying when I opened the card," said the still giddy Crane, who had been in line since 4 a.m. "It said, 'Congratulations, much love from Lansing, Michigan.' That's where I grew up."

At noon, Crane continues: "Florists en masse started showing up with those long flower boxes in one arm and the other arm filled with beautiful bouquets, each different. They were like: 'Take a bouquet. People are sending flowers from everywhere.'"

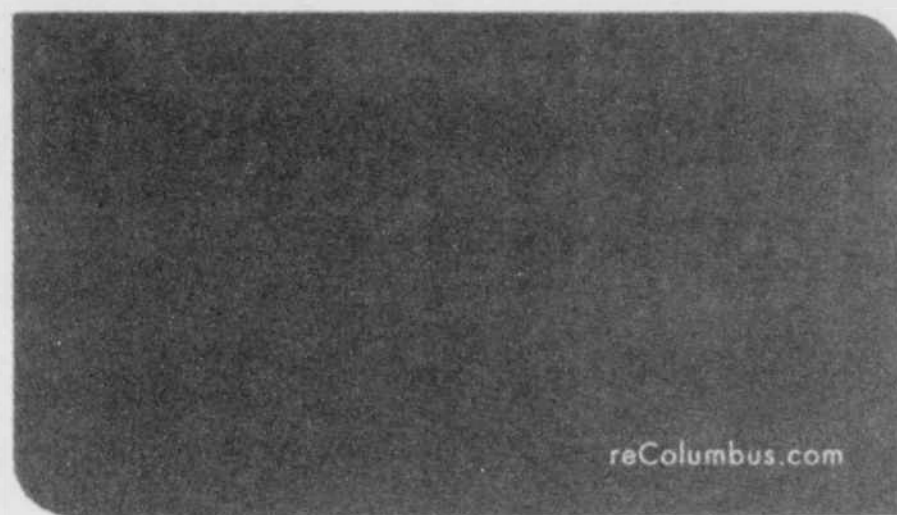
The campaign was so successful that many San Francisco florists were turning customers away. That's when Darren Barefoot, a straight man in Vancouver, British Columbia, enlisted the help of friends. He started a Web site, Flowers for Al and Don, where anyone could donate even just a few dollars via PayPal. Barefoot's friends in San Francisco take the money and buy flowers from wholesale markets. They then distribute them among waiting couples. In less than a week, the site has collected more than \$10,000 from 600 donors.

Meanwhile Chase and Zang still cherish their bouquet and the memories. "I don't know whether it was from men or women, a straight couple or gay," says Chase, "but that's what made it so magical. It felt like a gift from the universe." ■

Contributions to FLOWERS FOR AL AND DON can be made at www.darrenbarefoot.com/flowers.



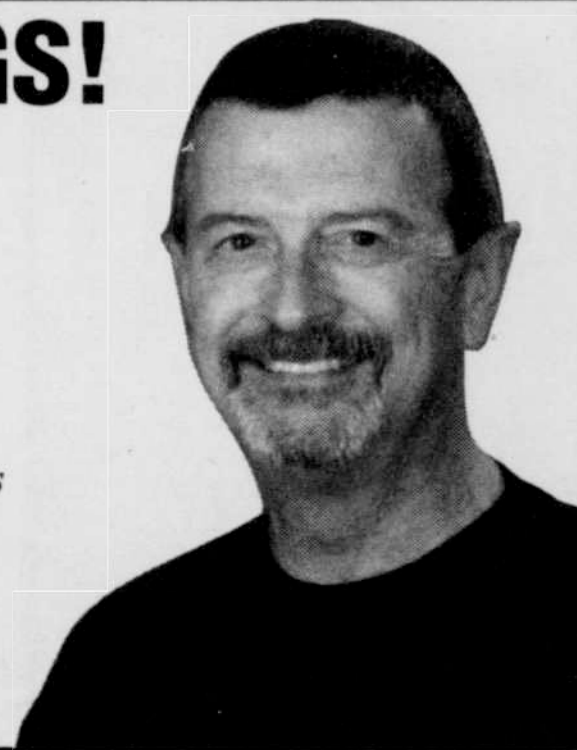
While waiting in line to get married, Beth Crane (left) and Deb Zang received a bouquet from an anonymous donor in Lansing, Mich.



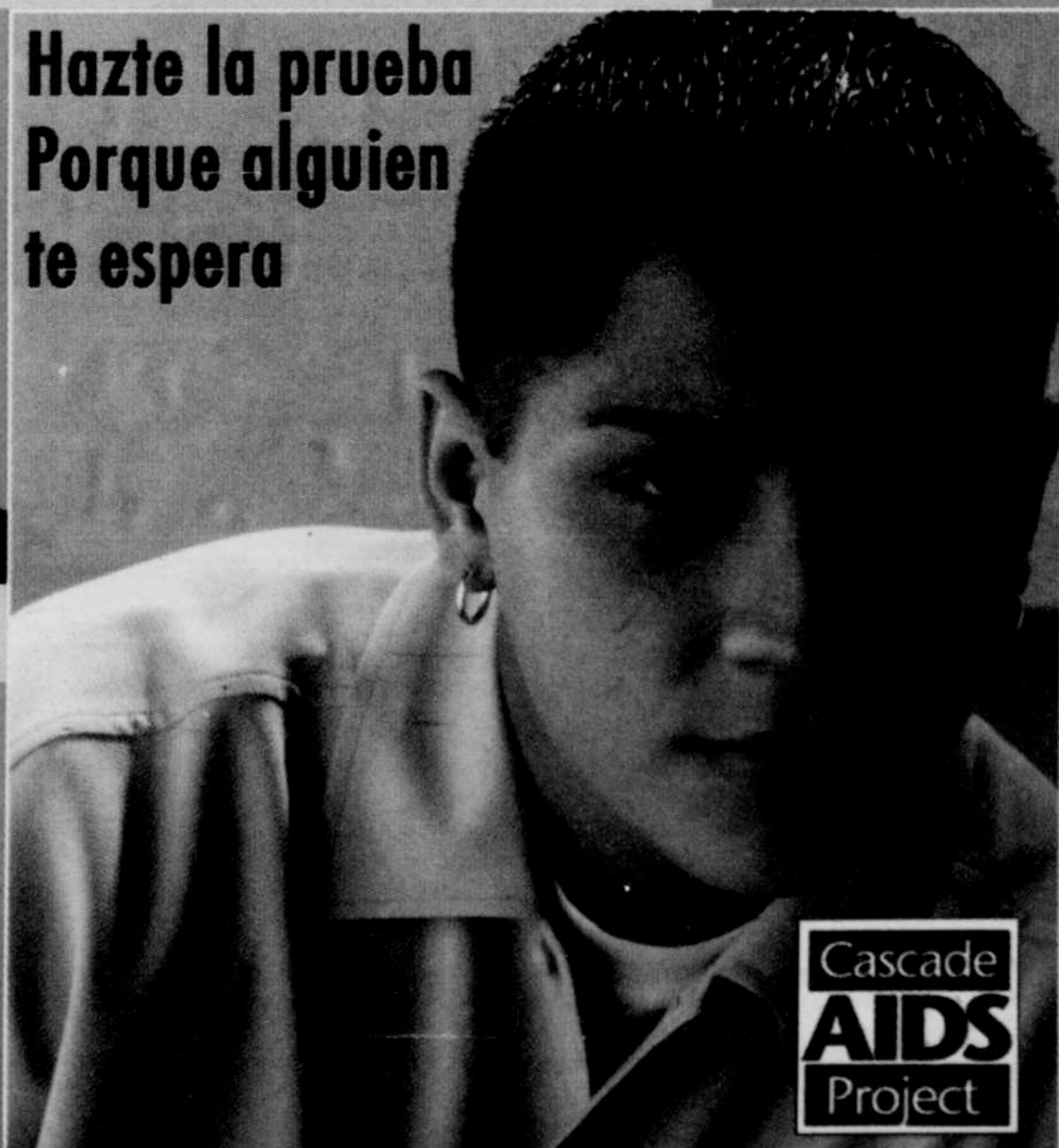
PALM SPRINGS!

Call on one of Palm Springs' most trusted Realtors

JOHN BUTLER
of Jay Margrey & Associates
760-323-5000 x 145
johnbutler36@verizon.net



Hazte la prueba
Porque alguien
te espera



Cascade
AIDS
Project

Llama al 1.800.499.6940 o al 503.720.6862