

# NORTHWEST newsbriefs

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basis, often completely alone. The gathering is aimed at parents, kinship providers, educators, caseworkers, mental health practitioners and anyone who wants to make a difference in a young child's life.

One workshop will focus on legal issues for gay, lesbian, bi and trans parents, including adoption, assisted reproduction and surrogacy. Other queer-specific sessions will focus on talking to kids about sex and sexuality, adoption and identity for teens, coming out as a gay parent and defining parenting roles.

The conference will be held at the Howard Johnson Hotel, 3105 Pine St. The fee is \$165 a person, \$280 for parenting partners and \$150 for Attachment Disorder Institute members.

For more information call 800-556-7829.

## DEBATE PITS ADAMS VS. FISH

Openly gay City Council candidate Sam Adams will debate opponent Nick Fish during City Club of Portland's weekly Friday Forum from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. March 26 at Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 S.W. Salmon St. Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

Pundits have bemoaned how the two leading contenders for City Council seem to wear the same pair of rose-colored glasses when looking at Portland's future. From concern for business,

the economy and jobs to education and child care, from affordable housing and safer communities to more effective government, Fish and Adams often take similar positions. Political scientist and Reed College professor Peter Steinberger will moderate a debate to determine what sets these two apart and how they will distinguish themselves for voters.

Luncheon tickets are \$16 for members, \$18 for nonmembers. General seating is free for members, \$5 for nonmembers.

To make luncheon reservations call 503-228-7231 or visit [www.pdxcityclub.org](http://www.pdxcityclub.org) by 2 p.m. March 24.



Portland City Council candidate Sam Adams meets Debbie Caselton, Sensory Perceptions development director, after speaking at a Portland Area Business Association luncheon March 10

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

## LUNCHEON RAISES MONEY FOR BASIC RIGHTS OREGON

Basic Rights Oregon will hold its 11th annual Oregonians Against Discrimination Luncheon 11:30 a.m. April 14 at the Hilton Hotel, 921 S.W. Sixth St. The event raises money for the Basic Rights Education Fund, which focuses on queer issues involving workplaces, schools, youth, hate crimes and families.

The keynote speaker will be Matt Hennessee, Portland Development Commission chairman and Quiktrak president and CEO. Tickets cost \$50.

For reservations call 503-222-6151.

## STUDY: BIOLOGY CAUSES HOMOSEXUALITY IN SHEEP

Researchers have confirmed that a male sheep's preference for same-sex partners has biological underpinnings, the Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine announced March 5. A study published in the February issue of the journal *Endocrinology* demonstrates that not only are certain groups of cells different between genders in a part of the sheep brain controlling sexual behavior, but brain anatomy and hormone production may determine whether adult rams prefer other rams over ewes.

"This particular study, along with others, strongly suggests that sexual preference is biologically determined in animals, and possibly in humans," said the study's lead author, Charles E. Roselli. "The hope is that the study of these brain differences will provide clues to the processes involved in the development of heterosexual as well as homosexual behavior."

The results lend credence to previous studies in humans that described anatomical differences between the brains of heterosexual men and homosexual men, as well as sexually unique versions of the same cluster of brain cells in males and females. "Same-sex attraction is widespread across many different species," Roselli said.

Kay Larkin, who performed laboratory analysis for the study, said scientists now have a marker that points to whether a ram may prefer other rams over ewes. "There's a difference in the brain that is correlated with sexual partner preference rather than gender of the animal you're looking at."

About 8 percent of domestic rams display preferences for other males as sexual partners. Scientists don't believe it's related to dominance or flock hierarchy; rather, their typical motor pattern for intercourse is merely directed at rams instead of ewes.

"They're one of the few species that have been systematically studied, so we're able to do very careful and controlled experiments on sheep," Roselli said. "We used rams that had consistently shown exclusive sexual preference for other rams when they were given a choice between rams and ewes."

The study is the first to demonstrate an association between natural variations in sexual partner preferences and brain structure in non-human animals. Scientists will work to further characterize the rams' behavior and study when during development these differences arise. They would also like to know whether sexual preferences can be altered by manipulating the prenatal hormone environment, for instance by using drugs to prevent the actions of androgen in the fetal sheep brain. J

Compiled by JIM RADOSTA

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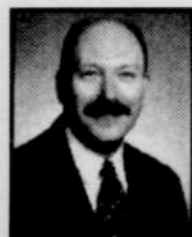
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