

**NORTHWESTnews**

One weekend just couldn't hold it all. Get ready for nine days of art, appreciation and revelry June 19 to 27 when Portland celebrates Black Pride 2004.

Queer African Americans make up a vibrant part of Portland's sexual minorities community.

Celebrating multifaceted cultural diversity is what Black Pride is all about, according to Maleka Ingram, 31.

"Underrepresented groups are not given the respect and opportunities they need to stay psychologically and spiritually healthy in this world," she says. "So if it doesn't exist, we have to build it."

Black Pride has been built by Brother to Brother Portland, an advocacy organization for gay and bisexual African American men, and the Portland Black Pride Committee, which Ingram co-chairs. "This year's [Black Pride] board is the most diverse and active group of individuals I have ever had the opportunity to organize with," says Brother to Brother's Stephan Herrera, who has helped put on Portland Black Pride for three years running.

Because of the wealth of resources on the committee—from artsy types to party hosts—Herrera says there was a unique opportunity to do something bigger than in years past. "We wanted to reach as many African American LGBTQ people as possible and cater to their different tastes and likes."

Outreach efforts include passport booklets, fliers and good old word of mouth. Ingram says organizers have targeted a large region throughout the Northwest, including Washington and

# OUT, BLACK AND PROUD

Portland celebrates Black Pride 2004

by Meg Daly

the Willamette Valley. She and her friend and fellow committee member Nita Reed contributed their years of contacts and experience throwing parties for African American lesbians in Portland.

Ingram says the activities are designed to reflect the diversity of the black queer community. At every event, the committee intends to promote safe-sex practices and healthy behaviors. In addition to bringing the black queer community together, organizers also hope to strengthen collaborations with other queers of color.

It's not about separatism, stresses Ingram. She notes that many queer African Americans in Portland have partners of a different race. "What's helpful," she says, "is for white allies to understand what we're trying to do."

Herrera adds, "All the events we are having are open to the whole community."

Committee members expect this to be the city's biggest Black Pride celebration yet. The festivities kick off June 19 and 20 with Portland Pride 2004. During the parade, marchers will carry portraits of prominent black queer histori-



PHOTO BY MARTIN DAVIS

DJ Kriz spins tunes at Black Pride 2003

cal figures and read excerpts of their speeches and writing.

But Pride weekend is only the beginning.

Proud celebrants can catch up on their sleep for a few nights before heading out June 23 for the first-ever Black LGBTQ Art Exhibition, an event with art, jazz and libations to honor the artistic contributions of queer and straight African Americans.

"We hope to maintain this momentum," says committee member Reggie Petry, Alberta Arts Pavilion director. "The big thing for next year will be to build our sponsorship and get artists from around the country."

On June 24, Portland Black Pride presents two films on the queer African American experience: *Butch Mystique* by Deborah Wilson and *Black Is, Black Ain't* by Marlon Riggs.

By June 25, it will be time to get the groove on again for Blatino Club Night. This black and Latino party is co-sponsored by Si Puedes, a support group for queer Latinos.

But Blatino Club Night is only a precursor to this year's big extravaganza: Blackout 2004. Everyone is welcome to dance the night away June 26

with a live DJ, full bar, raffle prizes, food and more.

Wind down the week June 27 with a picnic and barbecue. People are encouraged to bring a potluck dish or beverage and spend the afternoon enjoying the tunes of DJ Kriz.

"This year is different because it's an organized community effort," Herrera says.

Petry adds: "We want to make known...our political, social, economic views. We want to be able to encourage...greater collaboration on issues that affect queer African Americans—issues such as health care, domestic violence, the economy."

Petry also notes that Black Pride is a way of celebrating the part of the African American community that is queer. "It's part of who we are," he says. □

Features Editor MEG DALY can be reached at [megdaly@justout.com](mailto:megdaly@justout.com).

## CALENDAR

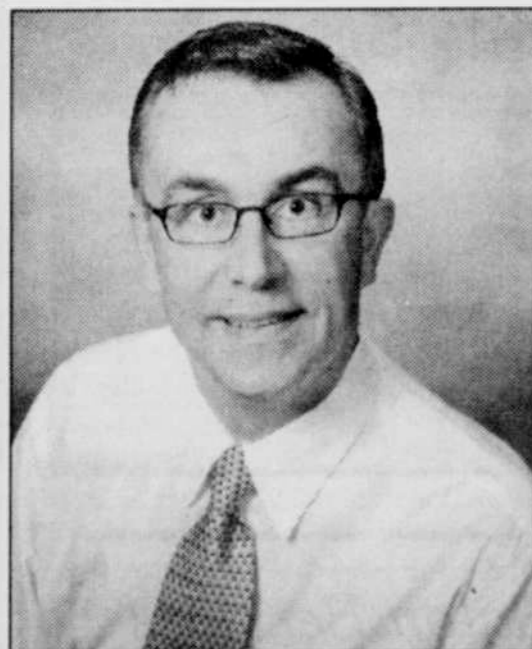
- **Black LGBTQ Art Exhibition:** 6 to 9 p.m. June 23 at Alberta Arts Pavilion, 2315 N.E. Alberta St.

- **African American LGBTQ Movie Night and Panel Discussion:** 6:30 to 10 p.m. June 24 at Portland State University's Smith Memorial Student Union Browsing Lounge, 1825 S.W. Broadway.

- **Blatino Club Night:** 9 p.m. until late June 25 at C.C. Slaughters, 219 N.W. Davis St. Suggested donation \$3-\$5.

- **Blackout 2004:** 9 p.m. until late June 26 at Portland Metro Club, 618 S.E. Alder St. Cover \$7.

- **Picnic and barbecue:** 2 p.m. June 27 at Columbia Park, North Lombard and Woolsey streets.



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