

The past year has been a whirlwind of activity for Andy Linehan, who has added a promotion, presidential term and marriage to his already impressive résumé.

Though he has a lot to celebrate, Linehan has not always been comfortable in the spotlight. He witnessed few examples of happy gay life growing up, making it more difficult to confront his sexual orientation. He came out at age 35, ending an eight-year marriage.

"The first thing I had to deal with was getting used to thinking of myself as gay," he says. "Then I had to get comfortable being out in the community."

Being closeted about his sexuality at work was never an option for Linehan, who says he was fortunate to be surrounded by a supportive team in a gay-friendly organization. CH2M Hill is "a comfortable place to be gay employee," he says of the multinational engineering and construction firm where he is vice president and Portland area manager. "Because I am so enmeshed in policy issues, I can't imagine not being out at work. It would be both a personal and political denial of who I am."

But Linehan knows that being gay in a profession known for its conservative nature could present challenges.

"In the engineering profession, some companies might be worried the gay employees would turn off some clients," he explains. "CH2M Hill is really trying to change that by creating an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable."

Linehan spends much of his time at CH2M Hill motivating employees, handling management issues and acting as a liaison between the company and the community. Recently, as pres-

CIVIL ENGINEERING

City Club ex-president finds a comfort zone in a traditionally conservative profession by Jodi Helmer



Andy Linehan just completed his one-year term as president of City Club of Portland, a nonprofit civic affairs organization created in 1916

ident of City Club of Portland, he parlayed his experience into mobilizing people around civic issues.

"City Club has a lot of clout because of the

quality of its analysis and because there is no political ax to grind," says Linehan of the organization, which brings together folks from all backgrounds who share a passion and a commitment to making their communities better places. "City Club leaves behind the polarized rhetoric of the political arena. It is a place for people who love policy issues but aren't political animals."

Linehan became involved with City Club through a panel on the myths and realities of homosexuality in Oregon and quickly found his niche.

"City Club is a very gay-friendly organization," he says. "We try to be open and welcoming to everyone and to provide people with an environment where they can feel comfortable being who they are and sharing involvement in metro Portland issues."

Linehan, who completed his one-year term as president June 4, is pleased with his accomplishments as president. "I am most proud of the fact that City Club has turned a corner and is entering a great new era," he says.

On top of his professional and community work, Linehan has still found time to nurture his personal relationships. Four months ago he married Carl Snook, his partner of 14 years, in a ceremony at Keller Auditorium.

"It felt like a validation and a deepening of

our relationship," Linehan says. "It was an amazingly joyful experience."

"Getting married was not on the top of my list of political goals for gay people, but when George Bush announced he would support a ban on same-sex marriage, I was angrier than I had been in a long time," adds Linehan, who met Snook at the YMCA, where the pair were campaigning for candidates. "It started out as a political act but turned into a very personal act."

Despite the frenzy of the past year, Linehan shows no signs of slowing down. In addition to taking on more responsibilities at work and planning a formal celebration to honor his marriage, he is still active with City Club.

Linehan and Snook will invite guests into their Laurelhurst home July 17 for a Citizen Salon, a dinner event sponsored by City Club that provides an opportunity for people to listen to guest speakers and share their thoughts on important policy issues. The sold-out event will feature Multnomah City Commissioner Serena Cruz.

"Serena has a firm understanding of right and wrong and is passionate about what [same-sex marriage] means," Linehan says. "She is seen by a lot of people as a leader, whether they agree with her or not."

Linehan, too, is seen as a community leader and wants to stay involved. "I have toyed with being more active in gay-related organizations, but I've been devoting my energies to work and the City Club over the last few years," he says. "I think I am going to start exploring that more." □

For more information about CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND visit www.pdxcityclub.org.

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