

Brothers, sing on!

Portland Gay Men's Chorus marks a quarter-century of survival

What a week of festive celebrations the gay, lesbian, bi and trans community has just had! Portland Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays bring together a room chock full of proud parents and families sharing love and pride for gay sons and daughters and toasting the sentiments of wedding memories. Equity Foundation takes over the Governor Hotel ballroom for its annual Investments in Dignity Awards and shows our community and the city the power and scope of giving and sharing. Basic Rights Oregon throws a festive anniversary party for celebrants of last year's historic same-sex weddings, and the Portland Gay Men's Chorus celebrates its 25th anniversary with a concert simply unsurpassed in memories, music and moments.

Poor planning almost kept me from PGMC's *Brothers, Sing On!*, and I shudder at the thought of what I might have missed. The evening was well planned and executed from beginning to end. The handsome tuxedo-clad chorus was brought to the stage in order of the year each member joined, starting with 2005 and working back to 1980. As the countdown reached the founding year, the audience took to their feet in proud and rousing celebration at the presence of original and founding members Steve Fulmer and Gary Coleman.

The concert was a memorable visual journey as well as a musical celebration. News file footage from 1980 showed the power of Mount St. Helens and her devastation, while old photos flashed back to the fresh and youthful faces of gay men teetering on the brink of an equally devastating AIDS epidemic.

To date, AIDS has claimed the lives of more than 100 members of the Portland Gay Men's Chorus.

The comparisons between "now and then" were evident in many ways throughout the evening. Paragraphs could be written on hairstyles alone. Hairstyles and facial hair, that is. Clearly at one period, a Tom Selleck look-alike thing was going on. In an ironic moment, a cell phone was heard chiming away in the audience during footage of the chorus founding—a time prior to the invention of the now-omnipresent and ever-noisy device. I deeply appreciated the sentiment and strength of the leadership of Fulmer and Coleman as pictured in old photos and news files.

At the same time, it's evident that while the chorus is rich in history and tradition, the future of the organization is also looking strong and secure. As Fulmer and Coleman anchor the beginnings of the chorus, the future lies in the hands, and voices, of new and young members like Class of 2005 tenor Andrew Dyer. I was lucky enough to sit behind the

family of this young man, and it was an extra bonus of the evening to share their pride and joy in their son's musical accomplishment. There's nothing like watching a proud mom as her son steps up for his solo number. His solo in the Portland Gay Men's Chorus.

As a side note to the overview of the concert, it was interesting to observe the presence of beleaguered Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Sid Galton. Galton, a lifetime chorus member who is facing disciplinary proceedings for violating state judiciary conduct codes, was recently the subject of a *Willamette Week* cover story. Barraging the openly gay judge with reports of being vindictive, retaliatory and a "narcissistic hothead," the article labeled him "Sid Vicious." Galton was a jaunty participant in the concert's opening choreographed number, Cole Porter's "Anything Goes." Anything goes, huh? Apparently not, Sid.

As we mark the first anniversary of Multnomah County same-sex marriages and remain in limbo as to the legal status of these unions, we look south and join our comrades in California as they celebrate judicial rulings paving the way for legal same-sex marriage in their state. Meanwhile, a year of marriage has left Massachusetts no worse for wear. The state, the first to recognize legal same-sex marriage, has not been descended upon by plague nor pestilence, nor locusts, nor famine.

Back here at home, Oregon—a state whose judicial and legislative leaders slowly, slowly sift and sort—has been hit with the old biblical favorite, drought. Worse yet, we now also have to suffer through an accompanying pestilence of cheerful, dim-witted television personalities chirpily heralding, "It's another beautiful summer-like day." I'd rather have the famine.

Closing on a note of utter insignificance, I'll add my voice to the chorus of those heralding the improvement of the second season of *The L Word*. The dialogue is much improved, and now and then the situations encountered border on real life.

Who couldn't identify with Bette—who's being very naughty, and having very bad days in turn—when, after her you-could-see-it-coming-for-miles car wreck, she made the situation worse by physically attacking the obnoxious male driver of the car she took out. This was a fine fantasy anger management moment. Remember, ladies, do not try this at home. In real life, such behavior would be followed with an arrest for assault. Gotta say, though, the sex scenes are kinda boring. You seen one skinny naked girl 'n' you've pretty much seen them all. Come on, *L Word*, bring on the real women. **JM**

REFLECTIONS



Just Out congratulates Taylor West, Ann Hubbard and a host of others on their first wedding anniversaries. May you all share many more.

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