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NORTHWEST newsbriefs

THE 'COUVE, ALIVE WITH PRIDE

Saturday in the Park was a raging success July 9 in Vancouver, Wash.

Revelers showed their pride at Esther Short Park by enjoying live music and entertainment, meandering through various vendor and information booths and imbibing in the beer garden.

"It went great! It was our biggest year ever," said event organizer Brett Bartling.

Bartling estimated between 1,200 and 1,500 attendees, many from out of state. After Saturday in the Park, he counted visitors from 11 states at a local bar.

Besides more participants at the 11th annual event, more vendors had a presence, too. Saturday in the Park bestowed recognition awards to Hewlett-Packard and the Pride Foundation for their continued sponsorship.

Linda Traeger, executive director of Equity Foundation, staffed a booth at Saturday in the Park and was impressed.

"It was a very nice event," said Traeger, who has attended Pride '05 events in Portland, Corvallis, Ashland and Vancouver and plans to attend Capitol Pride on July 23 in Salem. "It was more family-oriented than Portland Pride."

Traeger noted a quality sound system and great musicians at the venue. She also enjoyed mixing with the heterosexuals who wandered over from a nearby produce market.

"There was a lot of mixing of straight people with our community," she said. "It's a reminder of what the rest of the world is like."

Equity Foundation sponsored a \$100 donation raffle to the charity of the winner's choice. Raffle winner and local drag queen Kitty Carryall chose to donate the \$100 to Martha's Pantry, an organization helping people with AIDS.

—Jaymee R. Cuti

PLAYING IT SAFE: HATE CRIME FIGURES STEADY FOR 2005

The Portland Police Bureau had a visible presence at last month's Portland Pride Festival, not just with uniformed officers on the street or staffing at a recruitment booth, but by approaching attendees to convey the message that they care about crimes against sexual minorities.

"We want the sexual minority community to know they can come to us," said Detective Mary Wheat, who investigates violent assaults and hate crimes.

The bureau tracks crimes against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people as well as other minorities in a Bias Crime Report, which is passed on to the state and sometimes the FBI.

According to figures released in June, 11

incidents were categorized as hate crimes against sexual minorities this year, three of which occurred in June. These numbers are comparable to last year's figures, which reported two hate crimes against sexual minorities in June 2004 and 11 from January through June 2004.

"We're on track with where we were last year," said Wheat, who has been an officer in Portland for more than 12 years.

The bureau plans to have a hate crimes information booth at Pride 2006 to increase visibility and help prove that officers will take reports against queer people seriously.

"There is a preconceived idea that the officer that shows up at your door is going to have a prejudice against you, but I have not found that to be the case," said Wheat. "I'm openly gay, and I've been treated really well."

A lesbian couple are working with Wheat to catch the man who assaulted them outside a South-east Portland



Pride participants convene in Vancouver for Saturday in the Park.

establishment after a friend's party. He approached the women, called them dykes, yelled profanities and beat them up, resulting in a broken nose, gashes, bruises and an unresolved fear.

"Now she gets really hesitant to hug or kiss me in public because she thinks someone is going to see it and beat the crap out of her again," said the woman about her girlfriend, whose names are withheld because the investigation is ongoing. She described the officer who arrived to take their report as "pretty understanding."

Even heterosexuals can be the victims of sexual minority hate crimes. Two straight men were approached July 10 by a group of "Abercrombie & Fitch-looking-frat-boy types" outside a bar in Chinatown and beaten after being called "fags," according to reports. One man suffered a broken ankle, and the other required stitches to his eyelid. The attackers fled the scene before police arrived. Wheat said the attack is being investigated as a hate crime.

The bureau holds a Sexual Minorities Roundtable from noon to 2 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at 1111 S.W. Second Ave.

The bureau offers safety tips in literature and cards, including avoiding neighborhood "danger zones," considering taking a self-defense class, leaving queer facilities with friends to avoid being a "lone target" and being wary of men in mixed bars who claim to be gay but