

A frighteningly good time

"Spooktacular" signals that Portland is ready and waiting for a community center

While there are definite advantages to being a cynic, it can also really bite you in the butt sometimes.

Such was proven true Oct. 16 when I begrudgingly pulled myself out of a bedridden avian flu stupor (I'm a cynic and a hypochondriac) just so I could say I showed up for the first-ever Q Center community event. Muttering positive statements to myself such as, "How come I have to go—no one's gonna come to this stupid thing," I scrounged up recently slept-in clothing and, accompanied by bed-head hair highly suited for an event called "Spooktacular," I set off for what I assumed would be a 15-minute jaunt to and from an empty warehouse.

Boy, was I wrong. Imagine my surprise and delight when I arrived in my disheveled state to find throngs of people happily enjoying a day of spooktacular fun and festivity. I have never seen so many lesbian moms and gay dads in one place before.

There were gobs of happy children with chocolate-pudding-smeared faces adorned as pumpkins and dragons and assorted magical characters. Sneakin' Out played its joyous brand of music at a delightful sound level that didn't shake the walls and jar the nerves. Little children wobbled on top-heavy bodies as they danced with the enviable freedom that so many of us seem to lose far too early in life. Poison Waters served well as a self-censoring hostess, and a slew of "celebrity judges" awarded prizes for artful pumpkin carvings and paintings.

This was truly a "community" event with the families in attendance joined by members of the Portland Area Business Association, Love Makes a Family, Pride Northwest and the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court. Side by side were elders from Senior Housing and Retirement Enterprises and toddlers downing gooey gummy worms. Representing City Hall were three generations of Potters: Mayor Tom, daughter Katie and granddaughter Madi Potter-Moen. (McKenzie, it seems, had a previous commitment elsewhere.) Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey was seen enjoying the energy and excitement, and James Rae of KGW-TV was taking it all in, too.

Susan Remmers and the Q Center board get high marks for organizing this event and covering so many details with skill and expertise. They invited Hewlett-Packard to take free digital photos as souvenirs, and the edible treats were definitely geared toward the little ones. No sushi, yeah! Apple slices and chocolate cookies were the food of the day.

What did the attendance at this event signal? That Portland is ready


and waiting for a community center and many, many more family events like this one. Families have been, for far too long, an underserved segment of the region's gay, lesbian, bi and trans community. Parents need a place to come together and meet other families. They're about to get what they need.

I will admit that, prior to this event, my enthusiasm for a community center had not yet taken off; I simply wasn't getting a clear vision of who the users would be. My perception had stalled on a self-limiting view directed toward youth center functions. My thoughts were that this segment was already as well-served as it probably ever could be. I was locked into the notion that a community center might simply duplicate the efforts of the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center. Now I have a better understanding of how programs of music, arts, sports and innumerable activities geared toward the entire community will be the basis of our new Q Center. I'm on board now.

But remember, we are still dollars and volunteer hours away from completion. For more information please e-mail info@pdxqcenter.org. And if you need clarification of the function and purpose of the center, please plan on attending an event soon.

Hey, guess what? You can now check out www.justout.com for a sneak preview of our new site. The official unveiling won't be until next month, but, just like car manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies, we need to run our final quality check tests on you, the actual consumer. So, if you click on "letters to the editor" and your garage door opens, be patient. We anticipate a bit of troubleshooting during the next couple of weeks. We'll have different rollouts of Phase I and Phase II during the coming weeks and month, and additions and adjustments will be made to the contents.

The archives will take time to build up, and, yes, I'm sure that we will eventually have a Poison Waters tribute page. In the meantime, periodically check the photo gallery for sightings of you and your pals, and remember, I now have a great outlet for really bad photos I've taken of so many of you. At last, a home for all those Sam-Adams-with-his-eyes-closed photos.

And if you're a current or potential advertiser, please note that we're now beaming you into worldwide exposure. And if you want to be among the first to purchase banner ad space, please contact Larry Lewis at 503-236-1253. Introductory rates are attractive and available—starting right now. Check us out; send us your feedback. 

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REFLECTIONS 10 years ago in just out... volume 12 number 24, october 20, 1995

- Lauren A. Usher and Theresa A. (Terri) Loubey wish to announce that they were married Sept. 16, 1995. The couple were joined by 120 of their friends, family and colleagues for a candlelight service on the Portland Spirit. In recognition of their marriage, they have changed their last names to Gevurtz.

- The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum appointed Keith Boykin as its first executive director in September. Boykin, a former special assistant to President Clinton, takes the reins of the forum as it works to establish itself as a national organization, according to a story in *The Washington Blade*.

- The National Freedom to Marry Coalition kicked off its activities with a press teleconference Oct. 2. Its aim is "to win and keep the freedom to marry for same-sex couples."

- "Black by Birth, Gay by God, Proud by Choice," read placards carried by a group of a hundred gay men Oct. 16 during the



- Million Man March in Washington, D.C. The rally was called by the controversial Rev. Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam.

- The Sexual Minority Roundtable Crisis Response Team was officially launched Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day. The team works in partnership with Portland police officers who respond to calls for assistance involving sexual minorities.

- Former Oregon Gov. Barbara Roberts continues to actively work for gay and lesbian civil rights. Last month she joined the board of directors of the Human Rights Campaign, a national gay and lesbian rights organization based in Washington, D.C.

- Code Blue, Portland's premier rotating women's night-club, presents a Lesbian Halloween Bash at Montgomery Park. Gay men are welcome. \$1,000 in prizes for best costumes.

- The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me, a solo performance by Rob Buckmaster, opens at the Main Street Playhouse.

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