

Gay Roller Skating RIP

Sadly, the venerable 11-year tradition of Gay Skate Night at Oaks Park is coming to its end.

This program of Portland's queer square dancers, the Rosetown Ramblers, will not be continued past this month. The last skate will take place from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Nov. 21. Admission is \$5. The Ramblers encourage those who come to bring canned food items for Esther's Pantry, Portland's food bank for people with AIDS. According to the Ramblers, the event has not been bringing in enough people to cover costs for the roller rink. For more information on queer square dancing, the country cousin of roller skating, visit www.rosetownramblers.com.

David MacClure Conrad, president of the Rosetown Ramblers, says the growth of both the sexual minorities community and the resulting number of queer events and activities that are now offered in Portland and vicinity on any given evening is the cause of the decline in attendance.

In addition, Conrad sees a lack of responsibility of sponsoring groups; October's group, the Portland Area Business Association, did not show up for its sponsored night. "It shocked us into realizing that we are fighting a losing battle with this fun, worthwhile, yet perhaps outdated event in our community," he notes.

New Free Weekly Rapid HIV Testing and STD Screening

Starting Nov. 8, CityGuys, Cascade AIDS Project's outreach program for Men's Prevention & Wellness, began offering free, rapid HIV testing and STD screening every Tuesday from 5:30 to 8 p.m. These nights, in collaboration with Outside In, will be the only weekly, free HIV and STD testing in Portland specifically geared toward men who have sex with men. The testing will take place in Suite 400 at 620 S.W. Fifth Ave.

2004 data indicate 72 percent of all new HIV cases in Oregon were in men who have sex with men. Syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection once thought to be nearly eradicated, has also resurfaced, with 88 percent of all cases in the Portland metro area occurring in men who have sex with men.

"Locally, gay and bisexual men are disproportion-

ately affected by STDs and HIV," says Michael Anderson-Nathe, program manager for Men's Prevention & Wellness. "Gay and bi men have specific needs surrounding sexual health and sexuality. We offer them a comfortable place to talk to other gay men about their issues, get tested and receive treatment when necessary."

CityGuys are CAP outreach workers and caring volunteers who connect with the gay community to dispense safer-sex supplies like condoms as well as health education information. CityGuys seek to encourage sexually active men to practice safer sex and get tested every three months for STDs and HIV.

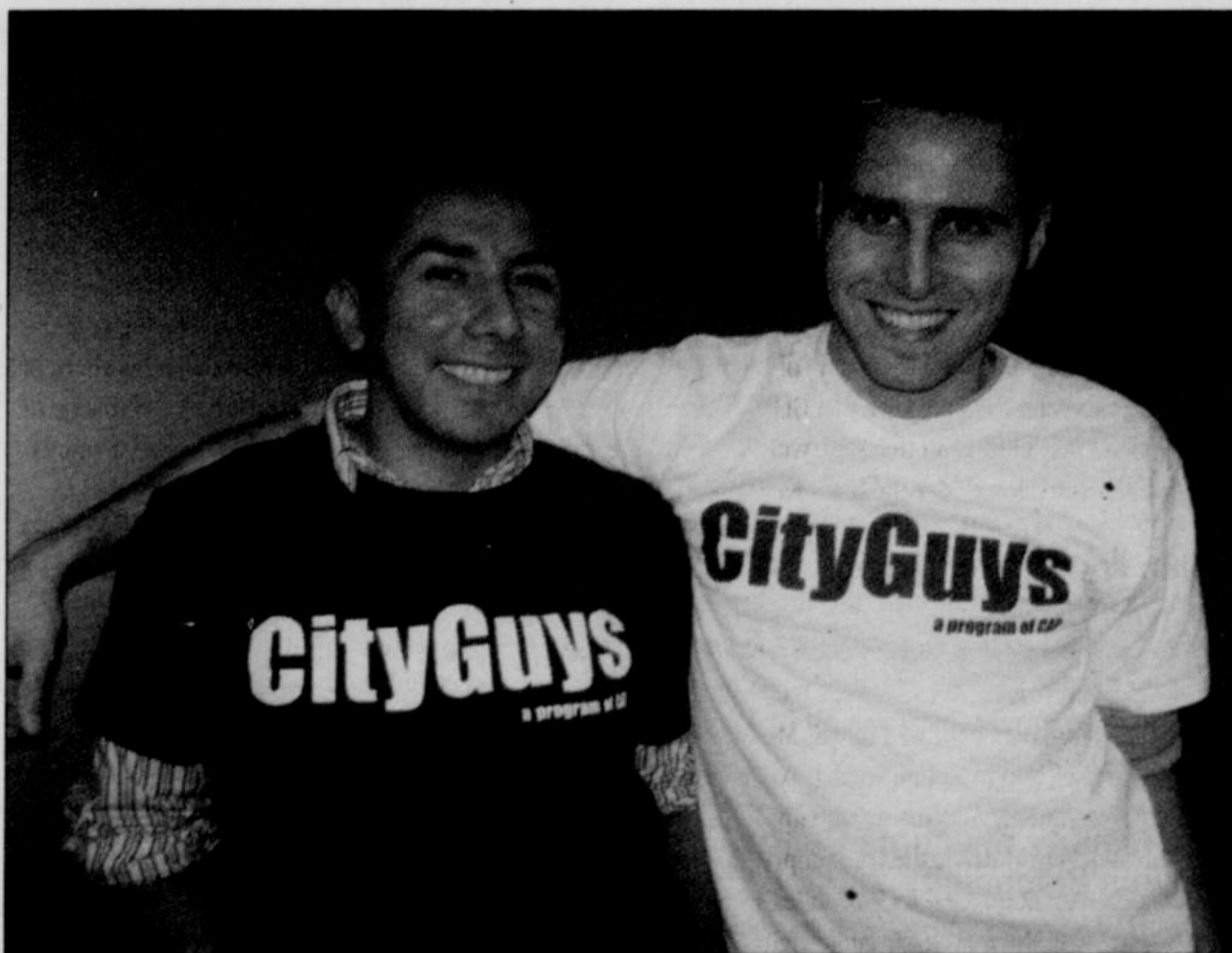
For more information call the info line at 503-223-6339, ext. 501, or call CAP at 503-223-5907 and ask for CityGuys.

Washington Supreme Court Gives Lesbian Parental Rights

The National Center for Lesbian Rights praised a Washington Supreme Court decision Nov. 3 that held that a woman who agrees to have a child with her same-sex partner has all the rights and responsibilities of a legal parent and is entitled to seek custody of the child on an equal footing with her former partner. With its landmark decision, it has now become the second state supreme court, after California earlier this year, to hold that same-sex couples who have and raise children together are both legally responsible as parents.

Sue Ellen Carvin and her former partner Page Britain were in a committed relationship for 12 years. They had a child together in 1995 and raised her together for six years, until the couple separated in 2001. Throughout that time, Carvin was the child's primary caretaker. After the couple separated, Britain cut off all contact between Carvin and the child. When repeated efforts to work out a voluntary settlement failed, Carvin brought a lawsuit seeking custody or visitation. The Washington Court of Appeals held that Carvin was entitled to seek parental rights such as custody or visitation based on her established parental relationship with the child. This holding was affirmed by the Washington Supreme Court.

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Cesar Pecori (left) and Michael LaClair do weekly testing at Cascade AIDS Project through the CityGuys outreach program.

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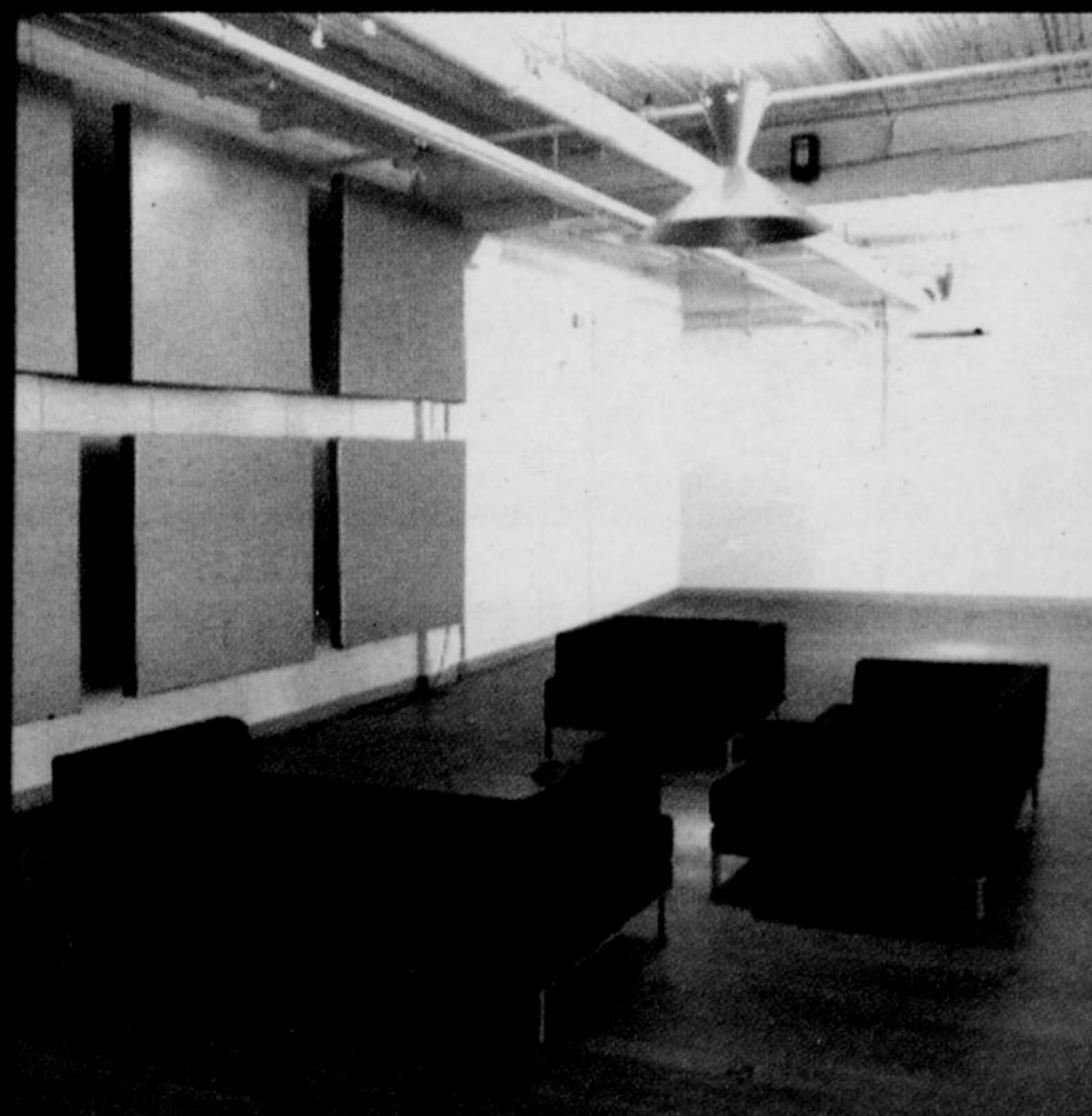
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