

by Marty Davis

Road Map to Equality

As a movement, do we know where we're going?

Welcome to 2006, to the start of yet another new year. As individuals, we often set aside this time for moments of reflection, analysis and emotional inventory—accompanied, of course, by goal-setting and resolutions. We question, we ponder: “How exactly is it that I’m here, in this place, doing this? Where would I rather be, and how do I get there?” A new year brings the unfolding and reading of the maps of our lives. How about you? Are you where you thought you’d be by now? Are you slightly off track? Are you, perhaps, flat-out lost?

As a community, this is also the time for us to look about and take stock. As a movement, as an entity, where are we in the struggle for complete civil rights? Again, are we where we should be? Do we know where we’d like to be? Do we have a map, a plan to follow, to help get to that place?

Locally and statewide, we have organizations that work hard at meeting the unique needs of those they strive to serve. These groups work to keep us steady and on track. Our community is fortunate to have Basic Rights Oregon, Q Center, Equity Foundation, the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, Cascade AIDS Project, Senior Housing and Retirement Enterprises, Pride Northwest, the Portland Area Business Association, Brother to Brother, Love Makes a Family, the Lesbian Community Project, the Human Rights Campaign, the Portland Gay Men’s Chorus and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. This listing reflects groups with political or social activism skills. Other groups focusing on recreation, sports and the like also compose the fabric of our community. Some groups are stronger than others; some seem to struggle perpetually with achieving membership goals. A few might have simply been outgrown by a movement leaving adolescence and inching toward adulthood. How many times can we write that LCP continues to struggle with membership and continuity? Has the evolution of our progress brought an end to this once-needed service organization? Are lesbians now being better served by the likes of Cruise Control PDX and Girls on Gay and business owners like Aysha Ghazoul of Zaytoon and Tiffany Miller of Dingo’s?

A healthy community—like a healthy individual—matures, grows, creates, understands and accepts change. Change often means letting go.

2006 will see change in the programs, services and directions that our community leaders present to us. Those who work as leaders and those who serve as activists and volunteers will be faced with new challenges. As we are fortunate to have organizations, we are equally served by the individuals who provide structure and leadership. Folks with visible contributions of time, energy, leadership, money and activist support include Roey Thorpe, Susan Remmers, Nicole Browning, Sam Adams, David Martinez, Terry Bean, Bill Dickey, Ashleigh Flynn, Patricia Keeney, Jonathan Weedman, Bonnie Tinker, Linda Traeger, Gwenn Baldwin, David Wilson, Tim Healea, Kevin Cook, Darryl! Mooch, CM Hall, Bob Mensel, R.E. Szego, Christa Orth, Juan Martinez and many others who selflessly donate their time and

energy toward helping us all achieve desired goals.

In 2006, marriage equality activism in our state, like the Portland Trail Blazers, will focus on “rebuilding.” Now we seriously look at where we are, the “oops” of how we got here and the question of where we head next. The Trail Blazers are focusing on building a winning team of tomorrow with youthful players of today. Are we? Do we have the next wave of leaders in place and in training?

As an election year, 2006 brings the opportunity to clear out the deadwood in Salem. While we’ll work hard to elect progressive leaders, we also have to identify, groom and elect gay, lesbian, bi and trans officeholders at all levels of state and local government. We are lacking in elected representation. Who do we put in place politically to help with the leading of the next charge?

Perhaps 2006 will be the year that we work within our community to foster and promote better understanding of each other. For instance, I am frequently taken to task for not better showcasing the roles of bisexuals in our community. I’m always left to respond with questions of my own. Who do I profile? What group or organization do we feature? Who steps up to carry the mantle of bisexual identity? Who is there to provide visibility for bisexual leadership or activism? To those who identify as bisexual, I ask: “What is your expectation of your place within the sexual minorities community? What is your role? What is your contribution?”


Who and where is the voice and leadership of the trans community? For many years you were represented by strong voices, voices filled with strident anger and urgency and frustration. Now these voices have seemingly gone quiet. Who speaks next for the trans community? How do we help you strengthen yourselves in 2006?

In some ways it seems that trans acceptance and understanding in the greater community has reached the point where it now exceeds the knowledge and understanding of bisexual identification. Positive growth?

If 2006 appears to start with a stepped-down external agenda, I remain most confident that our time can be well spent on serving our internal community needs. To be strong outwardly, we must remain strong and viable inwardly.

Taking the subject of strength and health in a different direction, I’m pleased to announce that *Just Out* has taken over sponsorship of Gay Skate Night at Oaks Park. The popular third-Monday skates will continue—effective this month.

Why skate, you ask? Well, it’s fun, it’s great exercise, and it gets you off the couch. The *Seinfeld* reruns will still be there when you get home. Skating provides a complete aerobic workout and involves all of the body’s muscles, especially the heart. (For additional activities in which to involve your heart, please visit www.justoutpersonals.com.) Skating will put a smile on your face and a song in your soul. In this case, the song will be a snappy tune from the ‘60s, ‘70s or ‘80s. Yeah, Abba!

Please join us from 7 to 9 p.m. Jan. 16 at 1 S.E. Spokane St. Admission is only \$5, and that includes roller skates or roller blades. See you there! 

reflections

15 Years Ago in *Just Out*...
volume 8 number 3, december 1, 1991

- Celebrate Motherlode’s 10th anniversary, album release concert and pie social. The concert recognizes the release of its third album, *Heartline*. A memorabilia party and pie social will follow the concert. You can bake, buy or bring a pie.
- The National Board of Tourism in the Netherlands took out a full-page, glossy ad on the back cover of *Our World*, a Florida-based gay and lesbian travel magazine. This is likely a first for the gay press.
- MTV banned Madonna’s new “Justify My Love” video, which reportedly includes bisexuality, cross-dressing and mild sadomasochism. Madonna responded, “Why is it that people are willing to go to a movie and watch someone get blown to bits for no reason and nobody wants to see two girls kissing or two men snuggling?”
- A district court judge in Austin overturned Texas’ “Homosexual Conduct” law Dec. 10, saying it denied gays and lesbians constitutional protections of privacy, due process and equal protection under the law. Seven other states specifically criminalize gay sex, and another 17 outlaw oral, anal and certain other sex acts by anyone.



A half-hour on the Burnside Bridge during rush hour Dec. 3, National AIDS Awareness Day. The demonstration was staged to draw attention to the fact that 1,000 Oregonians have been diagnosed with AIDS, while AIDS prevention, education and treatment services remain grossly underfunded.

• Dignity Portland, the organization for gay and lesbian Roman Catholics and their friends, invites all gay and lesbian community organizations to send two representatives to their annual community dinner. This is Dignity’s gift to the community and is always a popular event.



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FEATURE

20 THE COWBOY WAY

Just in time for Brokeback Mountain, gay rodeo enthusiasts wrangle new members in the Pacific Northwest

NEWS

8-15 NORTHWEST

Conference on same-sex domestic violence convened; CAP partners with statewide AIDS organizations; Newsom protested at fund-raiser; barbecue keeps on burnin’; Shields takes new job; John Garlington leaves Cascade AIDS Project; Q Center seeks coordinator; what’s up at SHARE

16-17 NATIONAL

Young soldier to leave Army after anti-gay attacks; federal discrimination lawsuit filed on behalf of former Penn State basketball star Jennifer Harris; Indianapolis council approves gay rights law; Pentagon spied on U.S. gay groups; queer legal group opposes Alito nomination; bullied teen gets \$440K settlement

18-19 WORLD

U.K. gays tie the knot; Czech lower house passes partnership bill; Latvia bans same-sex marriage; Polish parade ban was illegal; Chinese police shut down gay festival; four guilty in London killing; N.Z. marriage ban rejected; Jamaican AIDS activist murdered; Nigerian sodomy suspects freed



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Dyke favorites return to the recording studio

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Survivors fondly revisit *Gay Sex in the 70s*; queer rappers *Pick Up the Mic*; the producers of *The Producers* wisely opt to “Keep It Gay”

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Mystery, sex, magic and murder

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Biographies follow lives of Hollywood gays

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