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northwest

Kimpton Hotels Become PFLAG National Sponsor

Kimpton Hotels and Restaurant Group announced in March that it has become a national sponsor of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Kimpton, which operates stylish boutique hotels in the urban core of major cities and resort areas, has been a supporter of local PFLAG chapters for years.

"Kimpton wants to get involved with PFLAG nationally for the same reason PFLAG receives the loudest applause at Pride parades," says David Paisley of Community Marketing. "PFLAG is great! These moms and dads understand that diverse families are strong families, the same way that Kimpton understands that diverse companies are strong companies."

Kimpton Hotels was recently honored by the Metro Washington, D.C., chapter of PFLAG with its "Excellence Through Diversity" award. The award is given annually to corporations that demonstrate a commitment to equality by supporting its queer employees with policies and support of the sexual minorities community. "We sponsor dozens of GLBT organizations across the country, from the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association and National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to at least one HIV charity in every Kimpton city," says Paisley.

Kimpton was also the first organization in the hospitality industry to receive a perfect 100 score on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index. "This year we established a gay and lesbian section of our customer loyalty program, InTouch. Gays and lesbians receive special messages, promotions and incentives, all with a gay spin," said Paisley. "I think we are the first hospitality company to attempt to identify our gay and lesbian customers, and then try to serve them even better!"

Portland is a Kimpton city, offering charm and comfort in its Fifth Avenue Suites Hotel and Hotel Vintage Plaza locations.

Porky's Pub to Become Gay Bar

Porky's Pub, which is known to be a quirky and fun queer-friendly joint with good, cheap drinks, is about to get a whole lot queerer.

"I understand the need for a dedicated queer bar in North Portland," says Pat Lanagan, owner of Fat Cobra Video. According to Lanagan, who says he wants to create an environment where men can be men and women can be women, Porky's Pub will be "unapologetically gay."

When Porky's came up for sale, Lanagan says it was exactly what he was looking for. From his experience in business and real estate, Lanagan knows that North and Northeast Portland has a significant queer population.

"I want to have a positive impact on Portland's scene," says Lanagan, "and I'm willing to take some risks to do that." Besides making Porky's a gay bar, he is "committed to offering a completely nonsmoking bar." People can expect "less smoke but more flesh," according to Lanagan, and "considerably stronger Jell-O shots."

Lanagan is happy to report that he has secured an incredibly sexy staff. James Ferris from the Eagle will be managing the pub and will be tending bar with other "A-list" bartenders. He also says that Booty, which brings in a sexy crowd on Thursday nights, will continue unchanged. Lanagan says DJ Puppet is "an integral part of the bar." He adds, "Puppet definitely packs them in."

Eugene Business Update

Mother Kali's, which opened in Eugene in 1975, is Oregon's oldest feminist bookstore. But even reliable, independent bookstores can learn new tricks.

Last month, Mother Kali's moved to its new location and looks forward to another 30 years of supporting the community. In turn, this move would never have happened if not for community support. "We closed the other store in September and were able to remodel and open the new space because of the strong community effort," says the bookstore's general manager, Karen Luna.

Mother Kali's move makes sense. No longer a textbook retailer, its campus district location became less beneficial. "Students started buying and trading textbooks online," says Luna, "and we got a sense of what was coming."

The move to the Meridian Shops at 1849 Willamette St. makes the store more accessible to the larger community of progressive, queer, women's spirit and feminist communities. Luna says people will have access to the store's "welcoming, beautiful, sweet new community space" featuring a fireplace, couches and an aviary. In its new incarnation, Mother Kali's is committed to bringing different aspects of the queer community together.

Dedication to community has allowed Mother Kali's to stay open when both San Francisco and Los Angeles were unable to keep their women's bookstores open in the face of the omnipresent superstores. Mother Kali's is now open seven days a week. Check out its Web site at www.motherkalis.com for information on upcoming classes and speakers.

In other, less inspiring community news, Neighbors, Eugene's popular gay bar, went out of business in February. Neighbors was not only a gathering place for Eugene's queer community, it was well-known to the entire community as a hate-free zone. While other bars in town are regarded as gay-friendly, Neighbors, which hosted the local drag troupe Shebang for six years, will be sorely missed.

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