

by Marty Davis

Another Year Races By

2006 started with disappointment, ended with hope

Good Lord, where did this year go?

One minute I was ordering my calendar insert for 2006 and then, seemingly two minutes later, I have missed the deadline for ordering the same for 2007. By time speed standards, 2006 was a NASCAR year.

2006, the year of the blur. I remember the primary election in May and the letdown due to Diane Linn's lack of victory. The sting was softened by the manner in which she handled her defeat. The highlight of Portland Pride was the sight of the Multnomah County chair and Ted Wheeler walking together in our parade. Ted, you have a classy pair of shoes to fill. And even though, as chair-elect, we've not seen much of you since the election, I am confident that once you officially take office, you will honor and respect the statements of support and loyalty that you pledged to our community during your campaign.

I remember my disappointment this year over the behavior of the county commissioners, the self-described "mean girls." As a voter, as a constituent, as a personal admirer of these women, I felt betrayed and let down. I've had many long talks, often with myself, often with others, about the reasonableness of holding elected officials to a higher standard. The conclusion: Courtesy and professionalism are not a higher standard; they are rather the minimum expectation. And I, we, have every right to hold our elected officials to this standard, if not higher.

The good news in politics is that the general election brought powerful new allies, advocates and elected women to our state government. Now, in place of disappointments of the past, I look forward to the promises of the future. With the election of Virginia Linder and Tina Kotek, I have every confidence that my expectations will be met, and exceeded. Strong, smart women who understand and value their place as role models bring great good to our community.

2006 was the year of Sam Adams. As noted by many, our openly gay Portland city commissioner was everywhere. Oddly, there are those who find fault with this. His detractors object to his visibility. They see a man barnstorming for attention. I see a man who loves his work and his city. Yes, he has ambition. When did that become a fault, a flaw? When did another's hard work and dedication threaten us? Phil Stanford, would you rather we have a commissioner who simply phones it in?

2006 was the year Basic Rights Oregon went for six months without an executive director. Hmmm. Its electronic nemesis, BRO Watch, fell silent. That site always seemed to be more focused on the perceived shortcomings of Roey Thorpe than the organization as a whole. With her departure, the snarky complaints have stopped. I always suspected the site to be the work of a former BRO staffer or very close insider. Perhaps one day I'll find out.

Highlights of 2006? Any list would have to include the tremendous success and growth of Q Center. Portland is well on the way to having an outstanding gay, lesbian, bi and trans community center. A positive article on the center's

achievements was published in a recent issue of *The Portland Tribune*. For a link to the story, visit "Blog Out" at www.justout.com.

The first-ever *Just Out* Toy Drive was a stunning success. Why? Because you, the community, made it happen. In little more than a month, with little or no planning, with little more than a few e-mails and blog entries, your toy donations totaled in the thousands of dollars. The basic foundation that was laid in place in 2006 can be built upon greatly in 2007. After the first of the year I'll ask for those interested to help form an advisory board. From there we'll set direction and plan for 2007. I see great potential to expand the toy drive into other areas, such as rural outreach. By coordinating with Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; the Community of Welcoming Congregations; and others, I see the opportunity to use our energy and good will to present a positive image to people whose only previous exposure to us is when we appear on their ballots. It's well acknowledged that the next several years in gay activism in Oregon will have to be spent on education and relationship developing. I see toys as an excellent tool for growing that trust and respect.

I know there will be those who disagree with this premise. But realistically, the "we deserve it, we demand it" approach has bitten us in the butt. If we have to work to earn our place at the table, then let's do just that. It's always good to have a Plan B. My Plan B includes toys. It's a fun plan.

My dog is blind, so I leave the television on for her all the time. It masks the outside noises, the urban horrors, such as people on the sidewalk and neighbors daring to open their car doors. The sound of TV keeps her feeling safe and, most importantly, quiet. There is a downside to this, though. For the past few days, weeks, every time I come home, it's to the sounds of a certain Tony Bennett song.

"Are you havin' any fun? What ya gettin' out o' livin'? What good is what you've got? If you're not havin' any fun?"

The lyrics continue in an even more personal direction. The song is having a tremendous impact on me, even though if my life depended on it, I could not tell you the product or business in this commercial. I absolutely cannot get this song out of my head; it's playing on a continuous loop. The worst part? I don't like my answers to the questions. I don't like them at all. Why am I telling you this? Because, for more than eight years now, you're the people I talk to. And my wish for you, for the holidays, for the new year, is that you either are able to answer "yes" to the questions, or you're able to get yourself to the place where you can. And may your journey be safe.

Have an excellent holiday, whatever it is that you celebrate, ignore or bemoan. *Just Out* will be back in print Jan. 5. In the meantime, visit us at our blog, found at www.justout.com. 10

reflections

15 Years Ago in *Just Out*... volume 9 number 2, december 1991

- The mainstream newsmagazine *Panorama* devoted the cover, five pages and 15 photos to lesbians last month. Among the revelations: Italian lesbians are not impressed with "the American model of lesbianism" because it is overly influenced by Puritanism.

- The Navy has apologized for wrongly accusing sailor Clayton M. Hartwig of committing suicidal sabotage in the 1989 U.S.S. *Iowa* explosion that killed 47 crewmen.

- Effective Jan. 1, 1992, the Centers for Disease Control will expand the definition of AIDS to include HIV-positive people with T cell counts at or below 200. This broadening of the definition for the first time since 1987 is designed to help more people with AIDS gain access to health care and social services.

- The Rev. Jerry Falwell, televangelist and founder of the now-defunct Moral Majority, reports in a fund-raising letter that an angry mob of 2,000 Los Angeles "homosexuals" recently planned to kill him. Falwell claims he was forced to hide behind a partition when members of Queer Nation and Fighting Fairies stormed the restaurant where he was eating. He said a waiter stood by his side and prayed for his safety.

- Gays and lesbians in Roseburg are asking for your support in their effort to

keep their gay community center open. The facility, which is described as the "only rural gay and lesbian community center in America and Canada," is slated to close Jan. 1 due to a lack of funding.

- The Portland Gay Men's Chorus marched Nov. 29 in the Meier and Frank Christmas Parade. It was the first time a gay group has been invited.

- The Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force has reversed its decision to destroy \$3,000 worth of its new anti-hate crime posters because a note in the corner acknowledges that the Playboy Foundation paid for them. Task members had earlier voted to destroy the posters, contending that *Playboy* magazine exploits women and is therefore anti-lesbian.

- A visit to the home of Sandy Director, longtime Portland gay rights activist, is the feature tonight on *NightScene TV*.



FEATURE

22 YEAR IN REVIEW

Turn the page and face the change

NEWS

8-17 NORTHWEST

Long live vintage pianos; put your house on stage; Greg's brings gifts to St. Johns; Wal-Mart bends to Christian "values"; Rose City Mortgage reaches charity milestone; Dan Ryan joins Oregon Ballet Theatre; find your type; brunch against domestic violence; promotion for civil rights defender; the toys went home; community member wins prestigious award; trans woman awaits reinstatement from U.S. Border Patrol; queer community reacts to possible smoking policy change

18-19 NATIONAL

Conservative Judaism rules for same-sex unions; gay ordination; "ex-gay" therapy leader steps down; serial killer confesses to gay slayings; Cheneys show family values

20-21 WORLD

Campaign urges U.N. to push decriminalization of gay sex; Moscow organizers sue to hold 2007 gay parade; Euro MPs blast Latvian human rights chairman; Guatemalan transvestites murdered; Israel recognizes gay marriages from elsewhere; Chinese AIDS activist arrested; released; HIV surges in Sydney

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