

northwest

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Diversity Summit 2007 is from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 10 at the Oregon Convention Center, 777 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For details visit www.portlandgeneral.com/diversitysummit.

Scholarship Benefits Law Students

A Class Act, the 13th annual benefit for the Bill and Ann Shepherd Legal Scholarship Fund of Equity Foundation, is fast approaching. The scholarship provides financial assistance to third- and fourth-year law students who donate their legal expertise to fighting discrimination, chiefly against sexual minorities. The three most recent Shepherd scholars hail from each of Oregon's law schools: Bryan Allan from Northwestern School of Law at Lewis & Clark College, Patricia Migliuri from Willamette University College of Law and Miranda Plummer from University of Oregon School of Law.

After their daughter, Susie, came out to them in 1972, Bill and Ann Shepherd began working tirelessly for gay and lesbian civil rights. In 1976, Bill founded the Portland Town Council Legal Resource Group, the forerunner of the Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association, and Ann was appointed to a two-year term on Oregon Gov. Robert Straub's Task Force on Sexual Preference. While speaking before church and civic groups throughout the Northwest, urging parents to love and accept their gay and lesbian children, the couple helped found the Portland chapter of Parents of Gays, which later affiliated with the national organization Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays in 1977.

This year's benefit features dueling divas Diane

Syrle and Alexis Hamilton, cherished friends of Ann Shepherd. Doors open at 7 p.m. for the 8 p.m. curtain April 27 at The Old Church, 1422 S.W. 11th Ave. A reception afterward offers bites of Portland's finest desserts. Tickets are \$35 at the door or \$30 in advance from Balloons on Broadway, 617 S.W. Washington St. For more information call 503-286-1752.

New VIEWS for Gay Seniors

Volunteers Involved for the Emotional Well-Being of Seniors (VIEWS) is a free, Portland-based support group that has been helping older adults for nearly two decades. Today, VIEWS is reaching out to gay seniors.

A staggering statistic shows two-thirds of gay seniors live in isolation, while only one-third of heterosexuals are living in the same situation. This juxtaposition is a major cause for concern. Getting support services to gay seniors is a high priority for the VIEWS program.

VIEWS coordinator Quince Affolter recognizes the struggle that the queer community has had to endure. Today's gay seniors matured in an era when their lifestyles were stigmatized, keeping them in the closet. Affolter hopes to tear down those barriers, bringing gay seniors into the community to mingle with their peers. "[The queer] community is welcome to all our groups," says Affolter.

VIEWS provides services for seniors older than 60 who are dealing with the loss of a loved one, emotional distress and other life difficulties. According to VIEWS staff, they understand the tremendous difficulties seniors face with dwindling emotional, physical and financial resources. The

organization's peer counselors offer support and encouragement to group members participating in the program. Seven support groups operate around the Portland area, and one-on-one sessions are available for seniors with special needs.

Every VIEWS volunteer is older than 55 and attends 50 hours of support counseling training before becoming certified with the program. After certification, counselors are eligible to run group sessions and work with members in need of support. Counselors coordinate group sessions consisting of six to eight members. These small groups help combat intimidation, allowing seniors to relax and open up.

VIEWS has 16 volunteers serving 60 clients around the Portland area. New training sessions begin in May, and gay seniors are encouraged to volunteer. For more information call 503-661-5455, ext. 230 or 233.

Night of Noise Celebrates Day of Silence

The Portland Metro Gay Straight Alliance is sponsoring the 11th annual Night of Noise from 5:30 to 9 p.m. April 18 at City Hall, 1221 S.W. Fourth Ave.

The event celebrates the culmination of the Day of Silence, an annual event held to commemorate and protest anti-gay bullying, harassment and discrimination in schools. According to Stephen Dunlevy, who helps lead the Portland Metro GSA, high school and college students refrain from speaking, wear signs and hand out fliers to highlight the silence that exists in schools regarding queer youth issues.

The Day of Silence is one of the largest student-



NANCY WARNER

Amy Andre discusses the effects of homophobia and heterosexism in the workplace at Diversity Summit 2007.

led actions in the country, with more than 6,000 expected participants. The Night of Noise, open to all youth, will feature a keynote address by City Commissioner Sam Adams. There will also be free food, music and entertainment. Possibly the most important element of the evening is the open mike, which allows youth the opportunity to share coming-out stories and experiences from the day.

For more information contact Dunlevy at stephenpd69@hotmail.com or Jonathan Weedman at jonathan@cascadiabhc.org. 10

By MALKA GEFFEN and EVAN NEHRING



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