

KEEP PORTLAND QUEER!

June 16th & 17th 2007 Tom McCall Waterfront Park

The board says checks and balances are in place to keep Pride Northwest not only queer, but in the black.

and balances in place to prevent any one member from acting independently from the board. "Here in Portland, I don't have that kind of responsibility, and there are procedures in place that prevent it from happening," he said.

According to *Night Beat*, a budget distributed at a May 28, 2003, Pride meeting revealed that \$11,468 in expenses—centered around parties, shuttle buses and street cleanup—were unbudgeted.

As entertainment and marketing chairman, Ryan also exceeded the budget by \$12,842 in DJ fees, hotel accommodations and other talent expenses, according to that report. Though the board had only approved \$12,500 for talent, *Night Beat* reported that Ryan spent \$17,581.

As published in the *Night Beat* article, in the days leading up to Pride, Ryan wrote checks totaling approximately \$22,000. Those checks—although for legitimate expenses, according to the treasurer—did not contain two signatures, as was required on all checks except those written by the treasurer. In his treasurer's report, Dalebout announced that of those checks, \$16,584 exceeded the money in the organization's account.

In a May 23, 2003, article that appeared in the *Bugle*, "Pride, at What Cost?," Ryan responded to that activity by insisting he had agreements with the

There was also a conflict, as reported by the *Bugle*, about a car that Ryan requested from the dealership. According to John Saksa, general manager of Findlay Saab, the *Bugle* reported that Ryan "requested a car to run Pride errands, and it was our pleasure to assist in that manner." Saksa said Ryan was provided with a Subaru Outback. However, Ryan never reported to the board that Saab had provided him a vehicle.

Finally, regardless of whether Ryan's actions were proper, Schafer criticized that they looked improper at least once—when Ryan signed a \$700 check to Sasha's, the nightclub he managed, for Pride-related expenses.

"A nonprofit organization needs credibility if it is going to be successful," Schafer wrote. "It needs clean hands, without a whisper of doubt about integrity."

The *Bugle* printed the following statement Ryan made in his president's report: "None of us have spent [our] time to 1) hurt LVAPI or the organization, 2) hurt the festival or its' [sic] reputation, or 3) performed any act that was either intentionally or negligently meant to harm this organization's purpose. And, anyone who says differently is wrong."

With the help of James Healea, Ryan's successor as Las Vegas Pride president, the organization drafted a plan to pay back or negotiate down debt, increase sponsorship and raise money to make up for the deficit. The following years, according to Keys, brought more modest, regional entertainment and tighter reins on expenditures.

"Ultimately we came out financially more stable than we were in the past," Keys told *Just Out*. "We brought in a board that was knowledgeable with business practices and started running the nonprofit organization more from a business-type perspective."

Healea turned the 2003 books over to the Las Vegas district attorney's office, and there was not enough evidence found to file charges against Ryan. Ryan denies violating any bylaws or making decisions without the consent of the board.

"That was thoroughly investigated, and those charges were found to be baseless," Ryan said.

Within three months, Ryan left Vegas and headed for Reno. He says because of his past, not despite it, he deserves to contribute to Portland Pride.

"A great tragedy comes when mistakes do happen or things do not turn out the way that people want, that there's too much emphasis on not letting people have a second chance," said Ryan. "Good people make mistakes sometimes, and I don't think we should be kept from contributing in the future. One of the things I offer this board is having lived through that and learning from the mistakes."

McFarlane-Smith, who co-authored the *Bugle's* 2003 article about the incidents following Pride, offered this warning: "Portland needs to take what Josh Ryan, aka Sasha Scarlett, did to Las Vegas Pride very seriously. In the end, our Pride started the 2004 event with a \$40,000 debt. It was not easy trying to regain the confidence of our community when supporting Pride." 

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—Kelly McFarlane-Smith

recipients of the checks that they wouldn't deposit the money until after the weekend event was over.

In the *Night Beat* article, Schafer wrote that Dalebout accused Ryan of signing at least one contract "without knowledge and consent of the board." The contract was with KLUC radio for \$4,090 in advertising spots.

In the editorial, Schafer accused Ryan of several other counts of poor business practices, including shorting *Night Beat* approximately \$1,000 for ads placed with the publication, and granting contracts to straight-owned businesses without offering them to gay businesses first.

Night Beat accused Ryan of rookie errors such as overestimating the projected income by \$43,000. This income, it reported, is received through sponsorship, admission ticket sales, vendor booth sales, beverage sales and parade entries.

The newspaper also accused Ryan of misleading an event sponsor, Findlay Saab. An unsigned contract, which *Night Beat* reports was distributed at a May 20 board meeting, referenced benefits to the auto dealer including "access to over 10,000 attendees for distribution of literature." The 2003 attendance, which was touted as the highest in Pride history, only hit 6,013.

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