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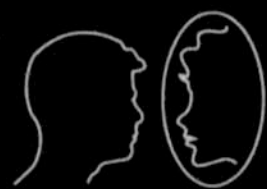
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event planning and fund raising, Field is qualified for the challenge. In addition to the formal cocktail party, this year's event will feature a number of surprises including an auctioneer, a Hollywood red carpet theme and a spacious new venue.

Since the resignation of Equity executive director Linda Traeger, the board of directors has been searching for a permanent replacement. Vice chairwoman Dawn Holt said: "Hiring Liz gives us the opportunity to be thoughtful about the hiring process. Linda has left enormous shoes to fill, and we want to take our time to sift carefully through the qualified applicants."

BRO Hires Communications Director

When Karynn Fish accepted the position as communications director for Basic Rights Oregon in November, she'd already been on the job for a couple of months.

She was hired originally as interim communications director to fill the slot left by Melissa Chernaik.

Fish comes with seven years of experience working on progressive political issues in Oregon. She worked with the Legislature in 2003 and during campaigns in 2002 to 2004 on issues affecting Democrats.

"I've been really impressed with BRO's mission, so I jumped at the opportunity to come aboard," said Fish.

Her first political job was with George Soros in New York and Washington, D.C., in the field of drug policy reform.

With that came harm reduction policy with an emphasis on needle exchange programs and pain relief through medical marijuana. Some of this policy affected people with AIDS.

"All of these are causes the work of AIDS activists brought to the fore and created some real change on in the early '90s," said Fish, who has also done a fair amount of online organizing for political policy and advocacy.

She also volunteers for Friends of the Library, writes creative essays and studies dead languages. She lives in Northwest Portland with her dog, Brooklyn, and her partner of 11 years, Adam Smith, whom she describes as a "top-notch political organizer in his own right."

Fish would like to be a resource and to help facilitate the coming-out process by encouraging community members to tell their stories. "My highest hope has to be when young people can come out in a community that is supportive, when young people don't have to be afraid that the world will accept them," she said.

BRO's communications department was supported by communications coordinator Bryan Boyd, who has since returned to the private sector to work as an interactive designer and main contributor to the blog Gay Rights Watch.

Gay Club Proposed at Catholic University

Students at University of Portland applied for club recognition for a Gay Straight Partnership last month. According to *The Beacon*, a student-run campus newspaper, the approval of the club will "end a history of the administration denying the official recognition of various sexuality clubs due to their clash with the university's Catholic ideology." Such clubs that failed official recognition include Up'N'Out in 1994 and Friends Uniting to Educate Lives in 1999.

The university's president, the Rev. William Beauchamp, said that sexual orientation is not the issue but whether a person lives a chaste life. "Because homosexuals are not allowed to marry," he said, "sexual activity between homosexuals would be inappropriate."

The process of granting a club official status is not decided by the president, according to Beauchamp.

The proposed Gay Straight Partnership club's constitution was approved and recommended by the student government, the Associated Students of University of Portland, before advancing to various vice presidents.

Zoe Zuschlag, a bisexual student at the university, thinks an overarching mentality that it's not OK to be gay has informed decisions to reject queer-oriented clubs of the past.

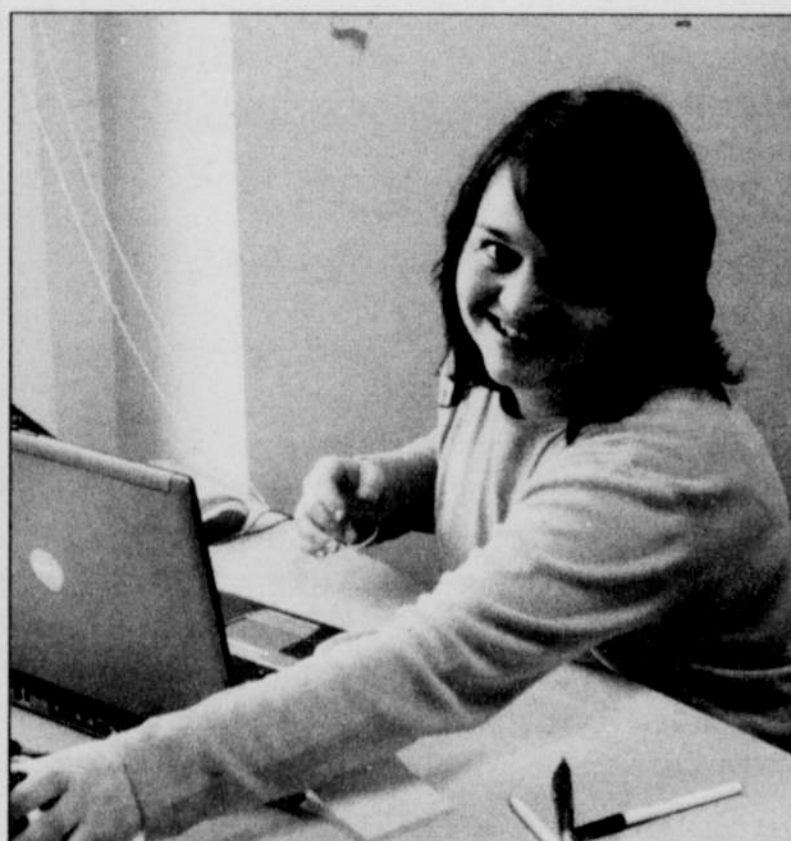
"Part of being in college is being part of a community to learn and understand each other," she said. "People who are nonhetero can get the wrong impression that the world is against them."

Matt Santos is heterosexual and grew up Catholic.

"If you're gay, you're gay," he said. "If you're straight, you're straight. It doesn't matter as long as you are nice. I'd want [the Gay Straight Partnership] to pass because I think it's time that the Catholic Church moves on with the times."

Approved clubs are given more resources than unrecognized clubs such as the ability to reserve rooms for meetings and events and funding from the student government. If approved, the club would meet twice a month, throw a welcoming concert and provide an educational interactive training that is open to all students at the university, according to the Associated Students' spring budget. **JO**

By JULIUS CALASICAS, JEDIDIAH CHAVEZ, JAYMEE R. CUTI and JULIE SABATIER



Karynn Fish of Basic Rights Oregon has a background in progressive politics.