

Continued from Page 27

"The most significant story I can tell about a holiday experience is the year that we started the Bears Holiday Show.

"It had been a dream of our founder, R.B. Hiatt. We had a short period of time to put it on, and I turned to some recommended contacts in the gay community—Rose Emperor XX Babalou and Laurel Hurst—and together we brainstormed.

"It was incredible that in a short period of time we put a lot of imagination to work. The number of people from the community that came out to support the show was mind-blowing.

"Darcelle was very generous in opening her club to a cross section of the leather community, the court community, the bears—just about every corner of the community that you can imagine. We really did represent the GLBT alphabet.

"It was so much fun, but as a result we raised an outstanding amount of money. The fun was first, and the fund raising followed."

DOUG WATSON

Oregon Bears founding member

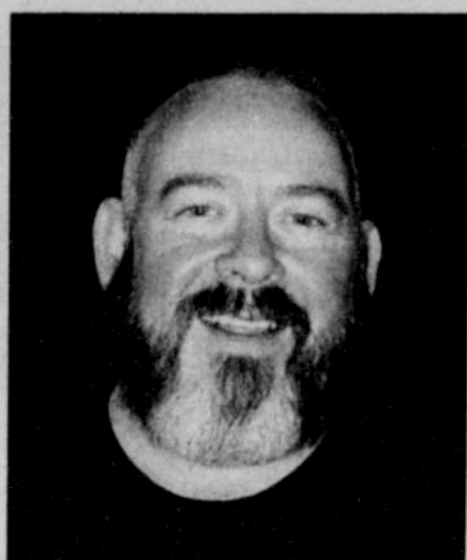
"The Christmas holiday I have the least memory of was last year. I had surgery on Dec. 18 and was in the hospital for the holidays. It was a combination of pain and pain medication.

"My memory is from when I was 6 years old. My mom, God bless her, was very frugal, and she insisted on using the Christmas lights that she got from her aunt. We had to be very careful putting them on the tree because they would short out. After a number of Christmases of having to get them just right for the lights to turn on, the lights had had enough of doing their job, and on Christmas Eve they just started smoking.

"My dad, ever quick-thinking, dragged the smoking tree in the front yard. We all gathered around the Christmas tree, which was somewhat blackened, in the front yard. I can only imagine what the neighbors thought."

SAM ADAMS

Portland city commissioner and 2008 mayoral candidate



Continued from Page 27

For those who are looking for something more spiritually oriented this holiday season, why not spend a Sunday afternoon at a **Hanukkah party** and **potluck** hosted by members of the gay Jewish group Keshet? (Keshet means "rainbow" in Hebrew.) There will be latkes and applesauce starting at 5 p.m. Dec. 9, the sixth night of Hanukkah.

The event is free, and Keshet steering committee member Mike Winer says, "We're asking that people bring an alcoholic beverage of their choice, a white elephant gift for the gift exchange and a vegetarian dish to share."

Winer also encourages people to attend the group's monthly meetings. "It's an opportunity for people who identify as Jewish and queer to socialize, to build connections," he said.

Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center will host some community events to celebrate Kwanzaa. A **Kwanzaa marketplace** will feature jewelry, handmade notecards and journals, textiles, dolls, Kinara candle holders and other items made by artisans from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 30.

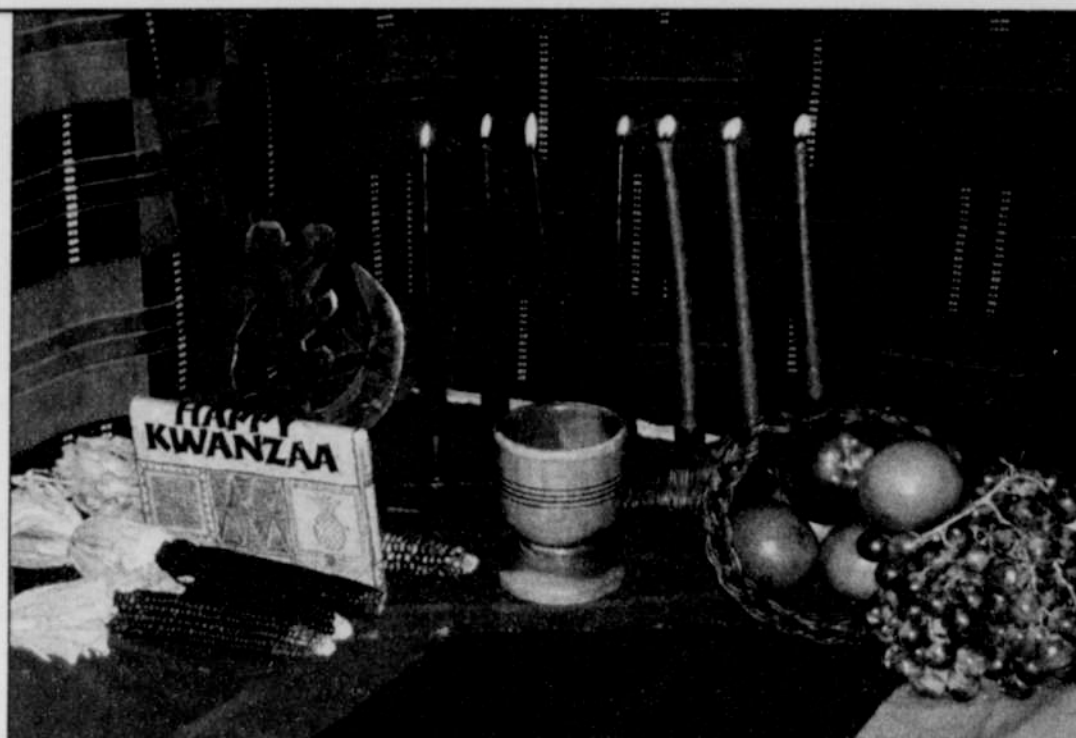
The center will also have a Kwanzaa-themed gallery exhibit showing throughout the month of December. Seven area artists will each create an altar highlighting a different principle of Kwanzaa.

The center will celebrate Kujichagulia (the principle of self-determination) with a candle-lighting ceremony Dec. 27, the second night of Kwanzaa. The gallery exhibit will also feature live performances by poets and drummers as well as refreshments provided by the National Forum for Black Administrators.

"It is a traditional African-American celebration, but it's open to all," said the center's managing director, Kimberly Howard. "Kwanzaa is really a celebration about empowering a community, and I think any community can be inspired by that."



Crafty Wonderland Super Colossal Holiday Sale happens Dec. 16 at Norse Hall.



Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center hosts community events to celebrate Kwanzaa with ceremonies, a marketplace and a gallery exhibit.

Speaking of inspiring the community, nothing brings people together like a good cause. *Just Out* is giving back this year with a **winter food drive** to benefit Esther's Pantry. The food drive will continue through the end of January.

Those wishing to donate are encouraged to drop off items at the *Just Out* office, 6234 N. Greeley Ave. More than \$900 has already been donated, and the money is being set aside for purchase of fresh food items that are not usually available at food banks. Check *Just Out* and the blog at [www.justout.com](http://www.justout.com) for locations and dates of other events where food drops will be available.

Once you've done your charitable giving, you might be looking to pick up a few items for those near and dear to you. Why not support Portland artists at the same time? A group of women is having an **art show/sale** from 4 to 9 p.m. Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 8 and from noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 9 at Celia Lyons' **Nova Luna Arts studio**, 3520 S.E. Division St. It's adjacent to Haven Coffee, and Lyons will have a sign outside so you can easily find the spot.

Lyons, a lesbian artist and community supporter, will be selling her gemstone beaded jewelry and fused glass art alongside photographer Lorraine Stratton, who will have several prints available. Painter Margaret Shields will also be selling some of her abstract, organic work in oils and acrylics, and Carla Mortensen will have crocheted and knit scarves and hats for everyone on your list.

According to Lyons, the prices range from \$10 to \$500. "It's a great way to do your holiday shopping and support local art," she said. Be sure to bring checks and cash, and feel free to call Lyons with any questions at 503-260-6231.

Two more opportunities to purchase local arts and crafts are the **Rebel Rabbit Holiday Craft Fair** from noon to 5 p.m. Dec. 9 and 16 at Hipbone Studio, 1847 E. Burnside St., and the **Crafty Wonderland Super Colossal Holiday Sale** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 16 at Norse Hall, 111 N.E. 11th Ave. 10

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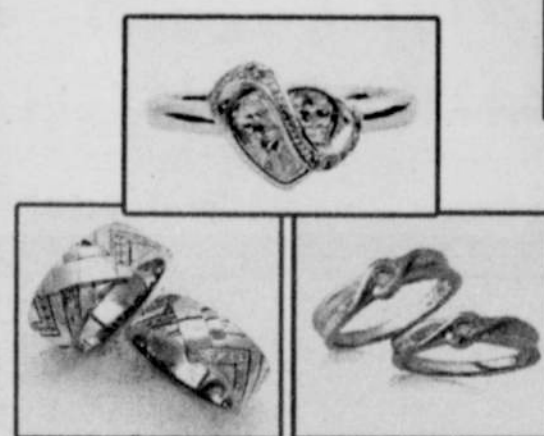
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