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nant/Planning Lesbians of Portland. A technical writer for the creative firm Laika and domestic partner to Stumptown singer Elizabeth Lavenue, Myra says lesbian parenting for her has been a "completely positive" experience, as she and Elizabeth raise their 4-year-old daughter named—appropriately, perhaps—Aria at their Sullivan's Gulch home in Northeast Portland.

For the couple, Pride 2008 means new faces, waterfront adventures and, of course, moms on parade.

SMB: How do you celebrate Pride?

Myra Lavenue: I never miss a Pride. A lot of people get jaded and stop going. They say, "Same old, same old." Two of my best friends don't even go anymore. But I always feel really empowered by it. It's really good to reinvigorate your lesbian juices once a year.

SMB: What makes you proud?

ML: The freedom I feel being out at work, I'm out everywhere...continuing to come out to people I feel like I'm furthering a social movement, I'm doing my part to help a minority and I'm proud of it.

SMB: What is your best bet for Pride?

ML: Marching with my gay moms group, PLOP. It's our second year doing it, and we just love it! It's so exciting having people screaming at you, "We love you!" We get a ton of "we love yous" from complete strangers passing by. It was a high for us last year.

SMB: What do you say to members of the queer community who boycott Pride?

ML: Pride evolves every year. The Pride you are resisting is one from five years ago. It's like saying, "I can't stand that person" and that person is no longer the same person.

Has Hammer, Pounds with Pride

JP Phillips is tough as they come: high school track star and basketball coach, check; card-carrying carpenter's union Sauvie Island Bridge builder, uh, double check.

She's also building other types of bridges with her Portland social and conversation club for queer women of color, Happy Ours Productions—connecting a seemingly disparate community together through potlucks, club nights and, yes, an annual Pride Parade appearance. (For more information visit www.happyoursproductions.com.) The Detroit native has been a PDXer for nearly a decade, and she's happily hitched to girlfriend Amara Perez.

SMB: How do you celebrate Pride?

JPP: We're gonna be in the march, and I'm also part of an organization called Happy Ours Productions. We throw parties and have discussion groups for LGBT women of color. There aren't many things for the lesbian community of color to do here, so we've kind of created our own space. As a couple, we normally see some of the things at the waterfront during Pride.

SMB: What makes you proud?

JPP: It makes my life happier. Being in the closet I was just unhappy and miserable, and since I've come out [people are] so much more accepting of me, it just makes life easier.

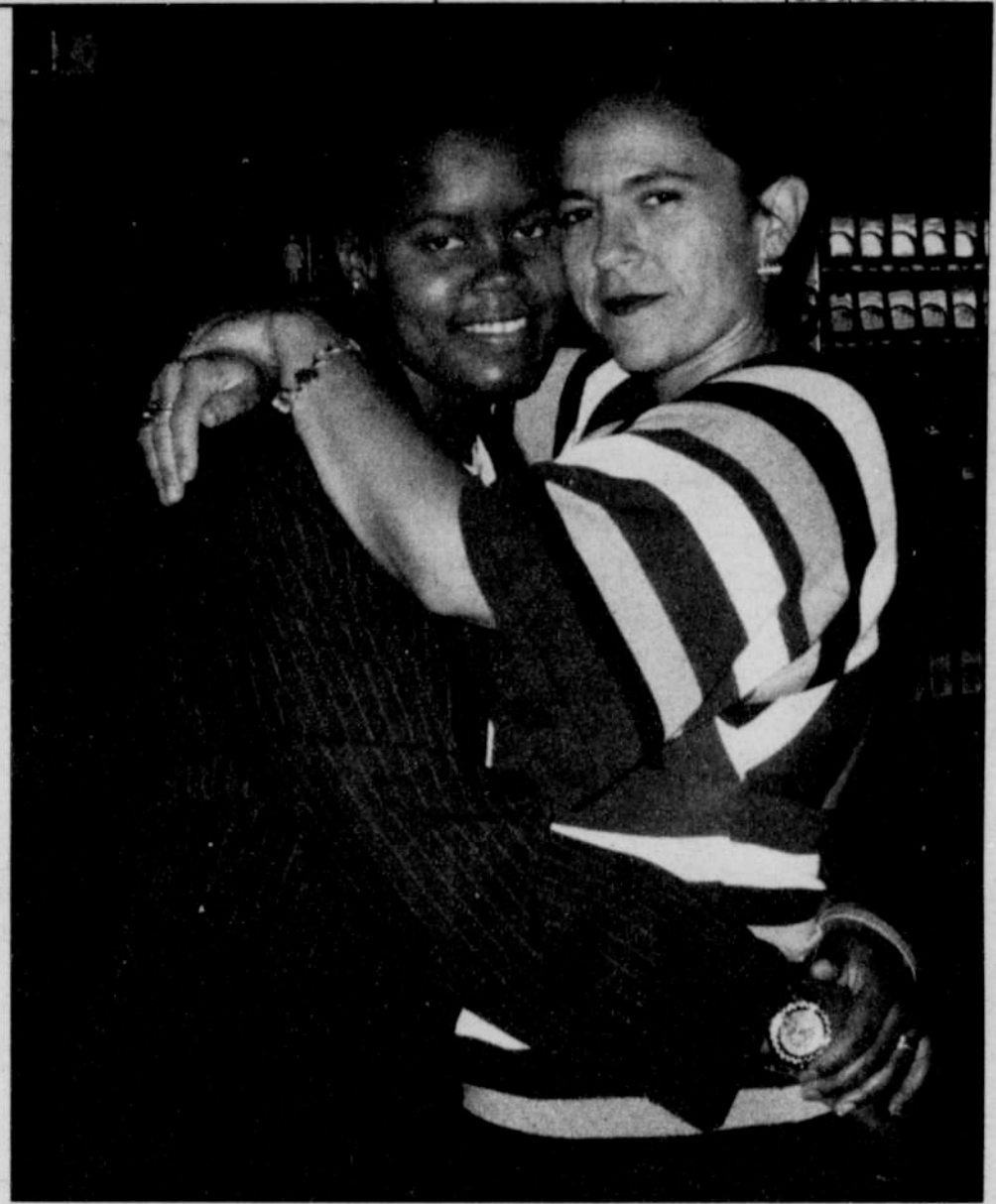
SMB: What is your best bet for Pride?

JPP: The parade—I always look forward to see if there are any new groups to come out, how many people we can get to come march with us. Each year for us has been better. The march kind of helps build our membership. Not too many people know there's an organization for lesbian women of color that they can just come and be themselves.

SMB: What do you say to members of the queer community who boycott Pride?

JPP: I feel like Pride each year for me is

always something new and different. It's not just parties and clubs and parades; there are a lot of informational booths; you can just walk around and learn; there are a lot of organizations that are gay-friendly that want to support the LGBT community. Pride is not what it used to be. **JO**



JP Phillips (left) spends Pride with both Happy Ours Productions and with girlfriend Amara Perez.

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