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Calls made Dec. 4 to Mayor Tom Potter's office and a ring to the Office of Human Relations yielded a conversation with a staffer who had no information about the GLBTQ Equity Panel or Human Rights Week, no idea when the Web site would go live or even when Johnson, the office director, could be reached.

If this is a signal of how Portland's Office of Human Relations is going to be managed and run, there might be cause for concern, especially when the office's budget allocation is threatened in a belt-tightening environment.

Mayor-elect Sam Adams stopped by the Dec. 4 meeting to voice support for the office, saying: "The work that you have under way and your willingness to serve on this commission is really important to me personally, and I know it's very important to the City Council as a whole. María Lisa is doing an excellent job with her team."

An hour before the Dec. 4 panel began, Johnson told *Just Out* who would speak on the panel: Latino Gay Pride co-founder David Martinez, political and trans activist Laura Calvo, Q Center's Kendall Clawson, gay marriage poster woman Mary Li and city of Portland employee Debbie Caselton. She apologized for the Web site not being finished in time to promote the events.

Mayor's Ball Benefits Q Center

Next month Portland Mayor-elect Sam Adams will be putting the "gay" back in "gala."

To celebrate his historic election as the first openly gay mayor of a major U.S. city, Portland's gay glitterati are planning one of the most glammed-up, high-strutting mayoral balls ever seen in Stumptown at 8:30 p.m. Jan. 31, 2009—with raucous entertainment, fabulous food and drink and the stylish setting of Portland's new Nines Hotel, 525 S.W. Morrison St.

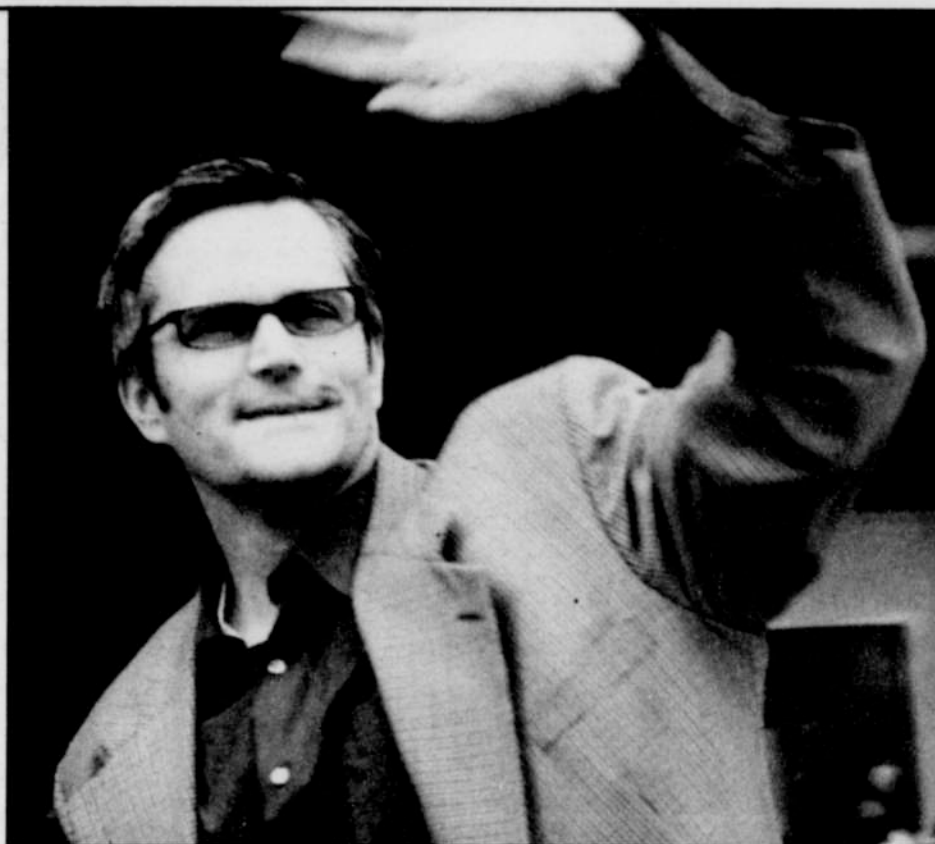
The inaugural Winter Gala is also a fundraiser, with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting Q Center, Portland's queer community center.

Donors can choose between a general admission ticket for \$75 or a VIP pass for \$175. For more information call 503-234-7837 or visit www.pdx-qcenter.org.

Kotek Among Highest-Ranking Queer Reps in U.S.

Openly lesbian state Rep. Tina Kotek, D-North/Northeast Portland, has just ascended another rung on the political ladder.

After being elected as deputy majority whip of the Oregon House just last month, she got a big break when recently appointed Majority Whip Peter Buckley, D-Ashland, stepped aside from the role to focus on another key committee appointment. After a Dec. 6 vote, Kotek was unanimously chosen by her peers as the new House majority whip. The appointment makes her among the highest-ranking openly gay state representatives in the country.



Celebrate the mayoral inauguration of Sam Adams on Jan. 31, 2009.

In a statement, House Speaker designate Dave Hunt, D-Gladstone, praised Kotek for possessing the "skills, leadership and trust of her colleagues necessary to ensure that we pass our Roadmap for Oregon's Future. Oregonians expect us to confront the tough issues around our economy, and Kotek will help us take bold steps to move Oregon forward."

Kotek said she was "honored to be my colleagues' choice for majority whip.... We face challenging times, and House Democrats have a chance to strengthen our economy, expand access to health care, create jobs and improve education."

Athletes Make New Year's Resolutions

Jan. 2: The day that most Portlanders have shaken off the hangovers and stopped the feeding frenzy of the holidays, finding the inner resolve to start their list of new year's resolutions. About 40 percent of U.S. citizens will make a resolution—often focused on improvement in some health, fitness or nutritional aspect of their lives—and queer athletes are no exception.

Patrick Shearer got serious about his fitness routine in 2008 in order to gain more energy to manage the demands of being a busy college student. "I started off with walking on the treadmill for 20 minutes, building to a goal of running under a nine-minute mile," he tells *Just Out*. To improve his lung capacity he also stopped smoking. Shearer recently spent an evening in the fitness section of Borders to explore different bodybuilding texts, determined to find a program that fits his ability level and to build on his progress.

In addition, health and fitness entrepreneurs are hoping for a strong business year. Ken Reader, a yoga instructor and massage therapist with Elixia Wellness Center, strives to provide "healing through more education and intuitive touch." By implementing his techniques in their daily lives, clients will "create the balance and peace to remove stress and illness."

For those who prefer a social element in achieving their fitness goals, consider joining one of the many community sports leagues next year. The Rose City Softball Association will be holding its 15th season, with many more teams available for athletes to join. Team Tennis annually hosts the Rose City Open. The Amazon Dragons Paddling Club is recruiting new members with an informational meeting from 10:30 a.m. to noon Jan. 11, 2009, at Q Center, 69 S.E. Taylor St.

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