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Obamicon Me

Chris Kramer found a site Jan. 27 that customizes President Obama's iconic campaign art.

"Brought to you by Paste magazine comes Obamicon Me at www.obamiconme.pastemagazine.com. Now we can all make our own Obama posters.

"It's super easy. Just upload a photo or take one with your webcam, position it and choose what you want it to say. You can also balance the colors and zoom or rotate the image. Once it's done you can even Twitter, Facebook or e-mail it to friends. It's all in good fun!

"Maybe you shouldn't do this at work, since the past two days has proved the job market is bleeding dry."

Community Loses Queer-Specific Counselors

Jaymee R. Cuti called attention Feb. 3 to a community resource that has crumbled under the economic recession. The closure of Samaritan Counseling Centers after 25 years in business leaves queers without a variety of culturally competent services.

Portlanders will lose a host of queer mental health care, addiction/recovery services and same-sex relationship counseling when Samaritan

Counseling Centers closes shop Feb. 28.

Executive director Michael Sorensen announced the closure Jan. 30, citing the "negative effects of this economic time and reality that needed donations to subsidize care" weren't available.

According to board chairman Mike Stastny, half of the agency's budget is federally funded, 30 percent is donated and patients pay the remaining 20 percent.

Several queer therapists work at Samaritan Counseling, providing counseling to sexual minority individuals, couples and families.

"You shouldn't have to educate your therapist," said therapist Michele Pearce. "It can really help to know that the counselor you are working with will be affirming of you and your relationships as well as knowledgeable about all the queer-specific resources available in our community." Pearce was especially driven to serve the transgender community.

A low-barrier, confidential substance relapse prevention group for gay, bi and questioning men, along with a lineup of queer workshops, will continue through February.

For questions about alternative programs, call 503-281-3318, ext. 0, or e-mail main@sccpdx.org.

Equality Now Or Later?

Jaymee R. Cuti asked Jan. 26 if queers wanted organizational and political leaders to push for marriage equality at the next opportunity, in the November 2010 ballot, or wait until 2012. Some local leaders believe the election year will result in better voter turnout.

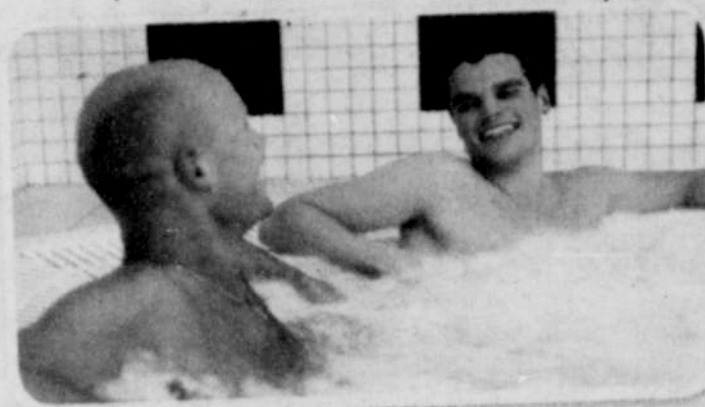
"Gay and lesbian Californians had a taste of equality when the state Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage.

"Since that right was eliminated with the passage of Proposition 8, some gay rights activists are getting behind 2010 initiatives to bring the issue back to voters. Others, including Basic Rights Oregon executive director Jeana Frazzini, think activists have a better chance at bringing on marriage equality (in Cali and Oregon) in 2012, a presidential election year." 

Compiled by JAYMEE R. CUTI

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