

NORTHWEST BRIEFS

Same-Sex Couple Chosen as Couple of the Year. Again

On Saturday, April 18, the North Lincoln Lions Club honored Lincoln City's Scott Summerfield and Eric Simpson for their service to the coastal community, naming them Couple of the Year.

This is the second time a same-sex couple has been given the award, as part of Lincoln City's Community Days. The first same-sex duo to be recognized was Rick Brisette and his partner, Daniel Beck, in 2002. Brisette and Beck were given the award by *The News Guard*, a Lincoln City newspaper.

In a recent phone conversation, Brisette extended his congratulations to the 2009 winners, stating, "It's wonderful because it proves that Dan and I are not an anomaly."

Brisette also expressed his thanks to the Lions Club "for putting any biases they may have had aside and honoring another gay couple." After winning the title, he admitted "small resistance in the community," which resulted in *The News Guard* dropping its sponsorship of the award.

There's nothing controversial, however, about Summerfield and Simpson's contributions to Lincoln City's hungrier residents. The couple earned this year's accolade for their efforts to found the St. James Meal Program, which provides dinners on Monday

and Thursday evenings. Since its inception in 2000, the program has grown to include four churches and counting.

Simpson said winning the award, presented at the Chinook Winds casino, came as a pleasant surprise. "We are involved in the community just like everyone else," he deferred, but "it really was sort of out of the blue."

Simpson, who works as a local music teacher, downplayed the pair's uniqueness, describing themselves as "just a plain, old, boring couple." He said that, unlike that experienced by Brisette and Beck, there had been "no negative feedback" from the community. In fact, they received a number of cards from people wishing to congratulate them.

Summerfield and Simpson's next project is to expand the meal program to include Saturday morning breakfast.

For information about Lincoln County food pantries, call Lincoln County Food Share at 541-265-8578 or 800-939-3663.

— A. Daniels

16th Annual Oregonians Against Discrimination Business Leaders Luncheon

Over 500 area business owners, elected officials and community leaders went back to school



Area business owners and community leaders attended April 23's Oregonians Against Discrimination Business Leaders Luncheon.

April 23, when the Oregon Convention Center's Portland Ballroom hosted the 16th Annual Oregonians Against Discrimination Business Leaders Luncheon.

During her introduction, Basic Rights Oregon Executive Director Jeana Frazzini reminded attendees that "there is no substitute for marriage," referring to the OHSU story about a Northeast Portland man unable to visit his gravely ill, registered domestic partner in intensive care. The incident, the subject of an editorial in the prior day's *Oregonian*,

made national news.

Taking a cue from its "Community Conversation" theme, this year's event bridged "the Classroom to the Boardroom" with a panel discussion of issues affecting Oregon students. Jonah Edelman, co-founder and CEO of Stand for Children, joined Gabriele Ross, homeless education coordinator and substance abuse counselor for Evergreen Public Schools; Isaac Dixon, regional director of the Office of Diversity Initiatives for Providence Health and Services; and Portland

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