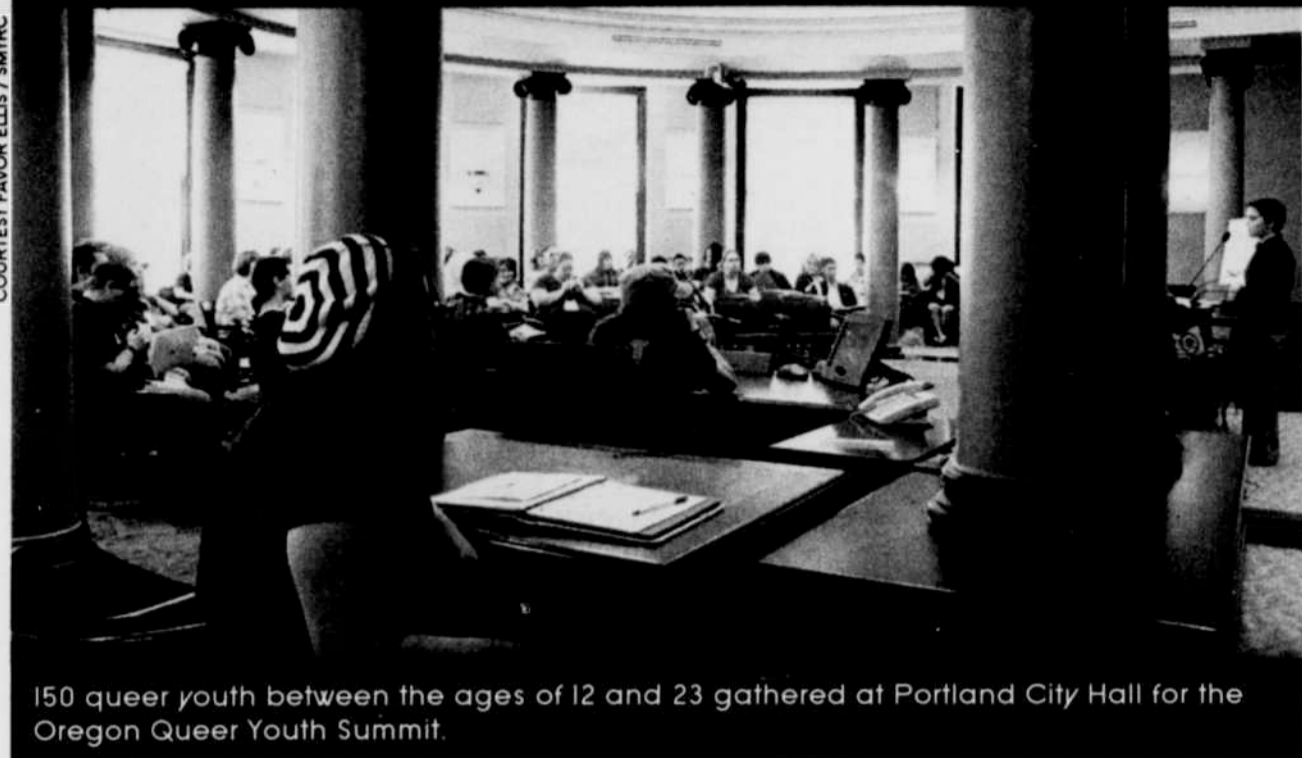


NORTHWEST NEWS



150 queer youth between the ages of 12 and 23 gathered at Portland City Hall for the Oregon Queer Youth Summit.

president of Pride Northwest, spoke to attendees on the importance of political organizing. Kelsey Jarone, a University of Oregon student and the outreach coordinator for the university's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Alliance, gave the keynote address, which focused on how she dealt with a break-in at the alliance.

Though she can walk Eugene's streets holding her girlfriend's hand, she said afterward, obstacles for the queer community persist. "We can't lose sight of that," she added.

Mason Leed, 17, the president of Gresham High School's GSA, attended the summit to "learn how to do activism" and make the alliance more politically active. She already felt that her past activism had made "it safer for myself and other people."

Students in attendance from the Kennewick, Wash. area described a challenging high school environment.

"A lot of the students are homophobic," said 17-year-old Echo Shimer. Shimer identifies as transsexual: "You can't be open about it."

The words "faggot" and "gay" are often used derogatively, and people have to "stay quiet" about being queer, he said. Shimer felt encouraged by information he received during one workshop about the transition process, and meeting other queer youth inspired him to speak out more.

A workshop on the sexual and gender spectrum's terminology took place in Mayor Adams' office. Eight youth sat around a shiny, dark wood conference table and considered an acronym much broader than the oft-used

"LGBTQ"—LGBTQQIIPAA2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer, questioning, identifying, intersexed, pansexual, asexual, ally and two-spirited).

In an energetic and politely argumentative discussion, participants noted that there are other terms and accompanying letters. Courtney Turley, 17, together with Olise Johnson, facilitated the workshop. One topic of conversation was the term "questioning."

"Is there a difference?" Turley asked, between identifying as "queer" and "questioning."

"Yes, but I don't see it as necessary to include the same letter twice," said Phoenix Ryan, 16.


"Should it be a more used term? It's not as widely used," Turley said.

"Or people say they're bi when they're questioning," Ryan responded.

"And you can be questioning your whole life," Johnson said.

"And you are questioning a lot of things," Turley added.

"I think it's cool that there are words for these things," said Gabe Petegorsky, 15. But he wondered if such terms should be readily accepted as the best way to refer to one's sexual orientation and gender identity. "They almost sound a bit clinical," he concluded.

Youth left the summit with ideas, inspiration and an excited resolve to take what they had learned back to their communities. "People will be able to express themselves the way they are and be able to be honest," Britadesco said. 



WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO ENJOY YOUR CAR? WITH GREAT MUSIC, OF COURSE!

MOBILE WEST 140 NE Broadway • 503.257.0488 • www.mobilewestpdx.com
car audio/visual • navigation • security • remote start • wireless solutions • iPod • factory integration

GAY SKATE

IS ROLLING ON A NEW NIGHT FOR ONE MONTH

Monday, June 14th, 7-9pm

Oaks Park Roller Rink

All Ages



\$6 + Donation of Food or Sundry Items



SORELLA LUNA
ITALIAN CERAMICS AND FINE ARTS GALLERY



416 N.W. 12th Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97209 • 503-973-5862 • www.thesorellaluna.com