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Holy Homos, Batman!

Iris Pride Festival calls on superhero support

BY ERIN ROOK

Iris, the Greek goddess of the rainbow, is no damsel in distress, but that's not stopping the Portland contingent of Dykes on Bikes from riding into Lincoln City to show support for the superhero-themed Fourth Annual Iris Pride Festival.

Rumors that the coastal town might be cooling on the city-sponsored Pride weekend have been circulating but remain unsubstantiated. Still, organizers figure it can't hurt to go big and remind the city that the Pride festival isn't going anywhere.

"This year, everybody wants to make a very big splash to show the mayor there is a strong gay alliance in Lincoln City so funding and opportunity aren't taken away," says Gabriela Kandziara, co-coordinator for Portland's Dykes on Bikes tribe.

The funding of events like Iris Pride was a hot topic at a July 25 city council meeting. According to the *News Guard*, concerns were raised about whether the city is getting enough of a marketing return on the events it sponsors.

Mayor Dick Anderson did not respond to multiple requests for comment, but Maggie Conrad, special events coordinator for the Lincoln City Visitor and Convention Bureau, says there is no reason to worry about the festival's future.

"I have not heard any comments about this festival in particular from the mayor. His major concern is that we have a good return on investment for our community with all our

festivals," Conrad says. "Lincoln City spends many dollars on tourism and planning our events. Because this is his first year as mayor, his only concern is that the dollars are well spent. Mayor Anderson supports diversity in Lincoln City's community."

Whether or not the festival is on anyone's chopping block, locals agree that the event could benefit from an extra burst of support.

"We have been encouraging people outside the area to write letters to the editor of the [*News Guard*] thanking the city for creating a welcoming atmosphere by sponsoring the Iris Pride Festival," says Dan Beck, who owns the Little Red Antique Shop with his partner.

Local businesses have been showing considerable support as well. Rebecca Barnhart, a Lincoln City member of Dykes on Bikes and board member for gay social group The Green Broche Society, says that although the city has no gay bars, sports bar BK Mulligan's stepped up to host two of the weekend's events.

Although Iris Pride does not have a parade, Dykes on Bikes will depart from a Saturday morning breakfast to escort emcee Lily Armani's car to the street fair and will take a seven-mile ride through the city.

"We're really excited about the Dykes on Bikes ride through town, to wake up the whole city with roaring motorcycles and a gorgeous drag queen in a convertible," Barnhart says.

Barnhart and her partner Franci Miller—

"This year, everybody wants to make a very big splash to show the mayor there is a strong gay alliance in Lincoln City so funding and opportunity aren't taken away."

-GABRIELA KANDZIARA,
CO-COORDINATOR, PORTLAND
DYKES ON BIKES

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