

will be auctioned off by the insurance company. But that doesn't mean all the chorus' problems are solved.

"The problem we still have is we have a very small nonprofit budget and [the deductible is] really putting a strain on our budget," to the tune of \$400-\$500, Winget said.

The group accepts donations through its website, but Winget said the best way to offer support is to attend one of the group's performances.

"Mostly we want people to come to our concerts," she said. "That's how we make most of our revenue."

Confluence's next performance is October 15 in Salem. The chorus will be in Portland on Saturday, December 3 for its "Holiday Wishes" concert at Metropolitan Community Church. For more information or to make a donation, visit confluencechorus.org.

— Erin Rook

Local United Methodist Clergy Vow to Marry Same-Sex Couples

More than 70 United Methodist clergy in Oregon and Idaho risked sanction by signing an October 1 statement vowing to preside at the marriages of all prepared couples, regardless of gender.

"We are United Methodists, called to inclusiveness, instructed to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons, and charged to deny every semblance of discrimination," the statement begins. "The Spirit of God calls us to affirm that we will not discriminate in the exercise of our pastoral duties."

Because marriage is one of those pastoral duties, the clergy further pledge to "meet, counsel and celebrate with any prepared couple who comes to us for Christian marriage." That statement stands in direct defiance of the church's official position, which prohibits marriage for same-sex couples.

But the Oregon-Idaho Conference is not new to this fight, nor is it alone. The conference has previously offered resolutions committed to non-discrimination, welcoming all sexual minorities, confronting heterosexism, and to open membership in its churches, and has petitioned the General Conference to include same-sex couples in its definition of marriage. The local conference is joined in this most recent effort by more than 1,000 clergy members across the nation.

It's a sign that times are changing, the Rev. Marcia J. Hauer said.

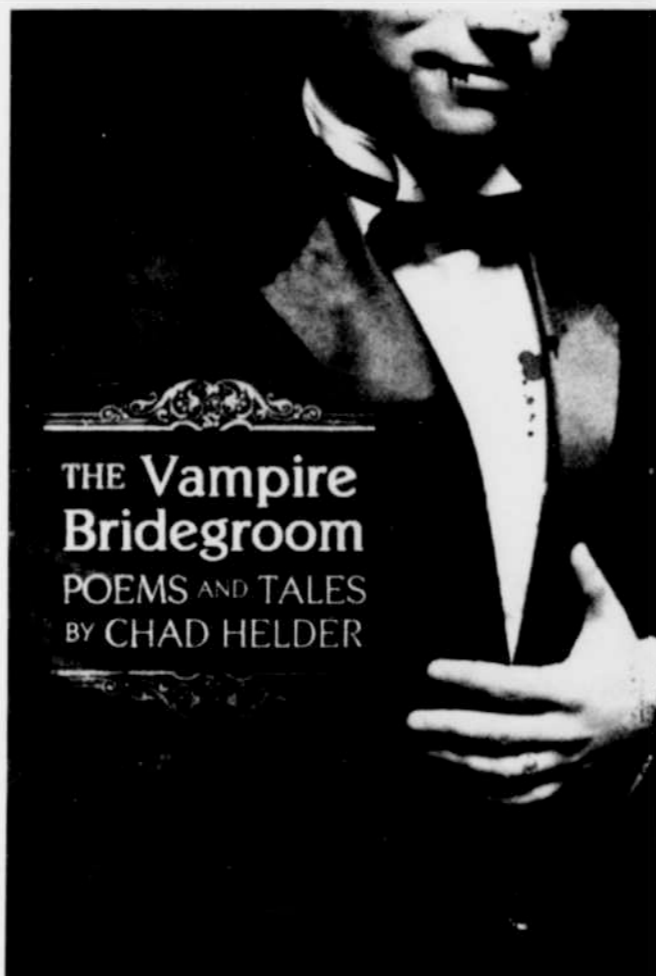
"Attitudes about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights are changing in our country. The Oregon Republican party has taken negative language out of their platform statement and Basic Rights Oregon continues to press for recognition of same-gender marriage," Hauer said via email.

The full statement and list of signers can be found at oimfsa.org.

— Erin Rook

Gay Horror Author/Poet Chad Helder to Hold Reading, Book Signing at Q Center

Q Center (4115 N. Mississippi Ave.) is celebrating Halloween a tad earlier than most. On Saturday, October 15, celebrated "gay horror" poet and Bram Stoker Award-winning author Chad Helder will hold a reading of his most recent work, *The Vampire Bridegroom*, and also sign books for fans.



The Vampire Bridegroom (Dark Scribe, 2011) is a collection of spine-tingling vampire, zombie and werewolfian poetry, inspired, said Helder, by childhood nightmares about "becoming a vampire or being possessed by Satan." He said these dream symbols were created in order to confront his fears of "becoming gay."

"*The Vampire Bridegroom* is my ultimate response to the horror genre as a gay poet," explained Helder. "Personally, I believe the horror genre is a healthy outlet for fears and anxieties about gay life: fear of AIDS and its association with blood, fear of being rejected by religious communities, fear of being alienated from friends and family, fear of hate crimes, and even fear of being assimilated into straight culture—all of these translate beautifully into horror stories."

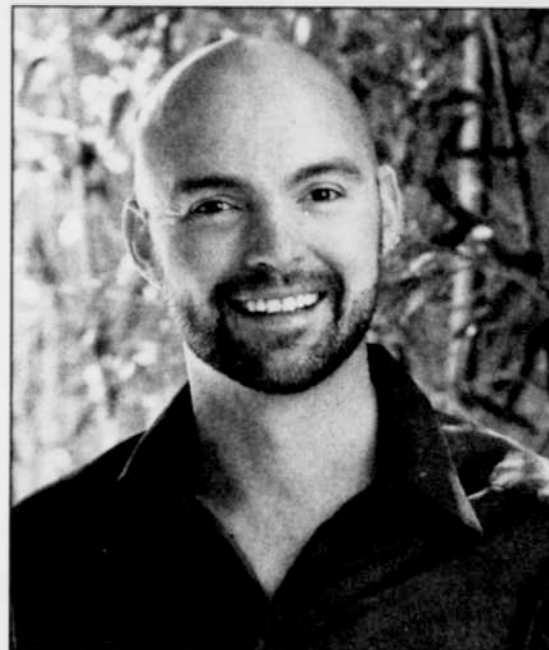
Helder's past work includes his *Pop-Up Book of Death*, and co-editing credit of the Bram Stoker Award-winning anthology of queer horror, *Unspeakable Horror: From the Shadows of the Closet*.

All sales of the book—\$14, cash or check only—go to Q Center. The event will also include a Q&A session, and will run from 7 to 8 p.m.

If you miss out on this opportunity to check out Helder in the—living—flesh, you'll have another chance Saturday, October 22. Helder will be signing his kid-friendly horror comics *Canus* and *Canus 2*, about a cyborg dog created by a mad scientist. This event runs from 2 to 4

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