

THE YEAR IN community

BY RYAN J. PRADO

It was a buzzing year for the LGBTQ community, both locally and across the country. From the landmark July ruling by Oregon Chief District Judge Ann Aiken that the denial of health care benefits to the same-sex partner of Oregon court employee Margaret Fonberg constituted unlawful discrimination to the September creation of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights and beyond, the past 12 months have been a productive, and sometimes controversial, year in queer.

• **Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.)**, the first openly gay serving member of Congress, announced his retirement on November 28. For 30 years, Frank was an instrumental and powerful Democrat, an outspoken critic of "Don't ask, don't tell," and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

• Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama took charge December 6 on **the global promotion of LG-BTQ rights by U.S. agencies**. Clinton's now widely heralded speech in front of the United Nations in Geneva condemned discrimination against the LGBTQ community, saying that it cannot be excused by culture. Clinton and Obama both stopped short of making foreign aid contingent on a nation's LG-BTQ rights record, threatening sanctions for abuses or calling out specific countries.

• **The Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC)** lost its leader and director Favor Ellis, who announced plans to move to the East Coast in August. The move put SMYRC in a precarious position, prompting potential partnership rumors to swirl around the community to keep the center running.

As of press time, it appeared that Q Center could play a pivotal role for the future of SMYRC's operations.

"Q Center and Cascadia Behavioral Health are in discussions about the most effective ways to deliver services to high-risk sexual minority youth," said center executive director Barbara McCullough-Jones. "Several plans are under consideration including moving SMYRC under the umbrella of Q Center. We expect more details will become available in early January."

• **Former Q Center executive director Kendall Clawson was tapped in early January 2011 by Governor Kitzhaber's** incoming administration as its Director of Executive Appointments, necessitating her departure from the center. A nationwide search for a new leader resulted in the summer hiring of **Barbara McCullough-Jones, an experienced figure in LGBTQ equality advocacy and community outreach.**

McCullough-Jones assumed leadership during trying times. A decline in volunteers

for the city's **Q Patrol** came when **Portland Police were investigating three possible bias crimes** that occurred in June and July, including the July 3 assault of 21-year-old queer musician and activist Kayla Stone in Old Town. The rise in bias crimes ignited Q Patrol and Pride Northwest to host a Community Safety Forum to discuss strategies for visibility and safety; and community members also facilitated the We Are Not Afraid march July 13 through Old Town.

The **assault of Pivot staff member Brad Forkner and boyfriend Christopher Rosevear May 22 near the Hawthorne Bridge** inspired a showing of community-wide solidarity with more than 4,000 people participating in Hands Across Hawthorne a week later. The event was forged because Forkner and Rosevear were walking hand in hand when they were assaulted.

Dillan Joseph Cashman was arrested July 25 and charged with intimidation in the second degree and assault in the fourth degree following a reported anti-gay assault in the 200 block of SW Harrison Street at Lovejoy Park.



Hands Across Hawthorne

MARTY DAVIS

• **An assault on a gay man June 25 was stopped short** when Newport's Andrew Smith stepped in to defend him. The Good Samaritan told KOIN 6, "I stepped in to help the man because I thought to myself, 'What if that was my little brother?'" The perpetrators were both charged with third-degree assault.

• **Cascade AIDS Project's Pivot program launched a new billboard campaign** June 27, in part as a response to the anti-gay attack on Pivot coordinator Brad Forkner and his boyfriend Christopher Rosevear in late May while crossing the Hawthorne Bridge. The couple's attack sparked a photo shoot campaign dubbed "Love is Courageous," from which the images used on the billboards were chosen.

• **Blake McCune—a 23-year-old Vancouver, Wash. man—**was found guilty of interfering with a police report but was found not guilty on the much more serious charge of intimidation based on sexual orientation during a trial January 18 at the Multnomah County Courthouse. The ruling seemingly closed the chapter on an alterca-

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