

gay people outside my circle (a failed relationship, the stereotypical, one-dimensional, drunken sex-monger) didn't exactly fill me with pride. But that kiss — so open, so honest, so real — left me hopeful. A year and a cynicism-ectomy later found me in a serious relationship and standing outside the gate to Boise's 2011 Pride.

Although permanently residing in Portland at that point, I just happened to be in the area at the same time as the parade. I had never attended any sort of gay pride event in the past, primarily because of my past experiences. I fully expected shallowness to pervade the event and my expectations went decidedly unfulfilled.

I've always maintained that the focus of such events should be on people and not sex. Perhaps the media focuses on the sensationalized aspects of the parades because, while there were some people who, to me, fit the bill, it was just like any other gathering I'd ever been to before, just with GLBT people and their allies. I had no idea there were so many of us here. The sense of community fostered by the crowd outweighed the few stereotypical moments. I felt so at ease that, if he had been there, I would have gladly held my boyfriend's hand. In a crowd of strangers, I felt safe and connected in a way I had never before.

I understand that Pride is not only a celebration, but also a reinforcement of our rights as humans. And while I do object to the sexual moments that seem inherent to any parade, it's merely the context. Just like my evolution, Pride has evolved and as it continues to evolve, maybe these ostentatious moments will be shed as well. Perhaps it is now less, "We're here, we're queer, get used to it," fighting to even be acknowledged — and more, "We're still here and we're still just like you," fighting for our rights.

I am still new to Portland, but it's impossible not to feel the community's presence. The flags that adorn store windows, the incredible outpouring for this year's Pride (that I unfortunately missed, but read endlessly about) and the supportive atmosphere; it's impossible not to feel welcome and supported.

And every now and again, when I feel like not too many people are around, I let myself enjoy the simple pleasure of kissing my boyfriend in public. And I relish every second of it.



Darcelle XV Proudly Presents...
The LaFemme Magnifique International Pageant 2012
HATS, HATS, HATS!
 Join the fun... Wear a fabulous hat and enter to win a special contest!

Sunday, September 2, 2012
 5pm - Tickets \$35.00
 Oregon Convention Center
 777 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland, Oregon

For contestant information or tickets:
 Call 503-222-5338 or visit
lafemmemagnifiquepageant.com

Official Sponsors:




Come Play With Us

The 2012 Mr., Miss & Ms. **Gay Portland Pageant**
August 25th ~ 5pm
Scottish Rite Center
 709 SW 15th Ave.
 \$20.00 Donation
 Net Proceeds benefit **Camp Starlight**
Past, Present & Future

A Night at the Tropicana
CORONATION 2012
October 13th
Holiday Inn
 at the Portland Airport



The Imperial Sovereign Rose Court
 is among the oldest LGBTQ organizations in the United States. Our tradition of entertaining to raise money for charity is continuous for over 50 years.
 If you are 21 or older, please join us for our many events each month.
 We are committed to "Keep it Fresh!" Visit us at www.rosecourt.org.