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May Day marches downtown

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News Editor

On May 1, around 11:30 a.m., the sounds of thundering drums flooded the streets of the South Park Blocks in downtown Portland. Groups of people began to migrate, small at first but as the sounds of what seemed to be tribal thumps from a deep winded drum began to get nearer and nearer the crowds got bigger and bigger.

May 1 proved to be yet another success as the May Day protests celebrated their 10th anniversary.

Starting out with a traditional Native American dance with live music, the rhythmic sounds that echoed down the streets for blocks seemed to draw in the crowds like an auditory beacon for where to gather. What seemed to be just hundreds of people quickly grew to thousands in just a short period of time.

The protest theme for this May Day was immigrants' rights, and there was no shortage of supporters. After the live entertainment from the native dancers dressed from head to toe in their traditional head dresses and clothing, the speakers began to address the crowd.

The speakers shouting over the microphone covered everything from Arizona's new immigrant laws, to rights and ideals they believe immigrants should have here in Oregon and the nation.

As the crowd began to get charged by the moving words of immigrant rights activists, a giant shadow began to form in the back of the sea of people. Faceless individuals wearing black clothing, bandanas, ski masks and goggles carrying black flags and banners saying "FUCK THE COPS, BANKS AND THEIR RACIST BOARDERS" began to appear in small groups to eventually form a large crowd. Known as the Black Block by some, these individuals are more commonly referred to as the anarchists.

With the growing trouble the police have had in the past weeks with the anarchists breaking into facilities such as banks and Starbucks, they took no chances with this May Day protest. The police were out in force blocking every street the May Day march passed and swarmed the back end where the "Black Block" and socialist Industrial Workers of the World followers chanted their beliefs.

"It was a peaceful march, and everyone behaved," said Mike Leloff of the Portland Police Bureau. When asked whether it was better or worse in comparison to last year, Leloff mentioned that they were about the same. "The weather is better this year," he added.

When asked why it was he came to the march, Joe Hill, a member of the IWW, replied "It's May Day, International Workers Day."

Hill was rolling up the red and black banners with his fellow IWW members after the event came to an end. Hill also confirmed that the march and protest was kept in order in part by the police and that the only thing that was different from last year's protest was the weather.

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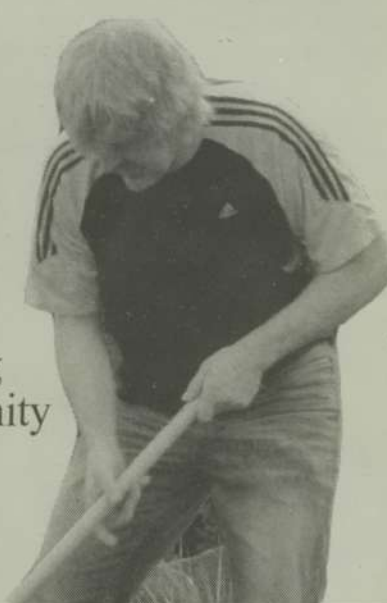
Illustration by Michael Bonn and Kelsey Schneider Clackamas Print
Costumed Native American performance
begins off with drums and traditional dance
May Day protest march began on Saturday
South Park Blocks in downtown Portland.



Richelle Heacock
Benefit Dance
fails to raise roof
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