

# GETTING HAIRIER

Beard and Mustache Competition grows this Celebration BY ALI ENRIGHT

**W**alking the streets of downtown Eugene can be an adventure. On any given day you might encounter a unicycle-riding cowboy, a man tattooed from head to toe, exotic animals (or at least a cat on a leash), pierced people, painted people, naked people and most definitely bearded people. Now there's a forum for all those hairy folk to go head-to-head in a contest at the Eugene Celebration's Beard and Mustache Competition.

The competition, organized by Andrew Lardinois and Tim Boyden, is sure to appeal to all bearded fellows. In terms of categories, there's the full-natural beard, the full beard with mustache, the Fu Manchu, the sideburns with muttonchops and full goatee, as well as the Dali category.

Lardinois says Eugene is a perfect place to sport a beard, mustache or heavy chops. "Our town is a beard-positive place to live in," he says. "I have two employers who give me no grief for growing my beard and I expect that's the case for many others in town."

Boyden and Lardinois are veteran facial hair advocates. Boyden says he's had his beard for almost 13 years — which becomes very apparent when he undoes the tightly wound band holding the waist-length hair together near his chin. Lardinois says his beard-growing days started about five years ago with a "No-Shave November" bet. He also gets creative with his sideburns, shaving in designs of cowboy boots and stars.

Boyden says he hopes the competition helps create a community of hair in Eugene. "We're hoping to form a group around here," he says, "a beard and mustache guild for Lane County."

It's not just the fun of a furry face that gets Boyden excited about the new competition. He says it's a way of bringing diverse people together. "I think it draws people from a lot of different walks of life," he says.

Beyond the competition, the coordinators are arranging a group of hairy friends to march in the Celebration parade, which kicks off 10 am Saturday, Aug. 25, and proceeds down High and Pearl streets, between 19th and 11th Avenues. "Since it's the 150th anniversary of Eugene we're trying to get 150 people to march with us," Boyden says.

While these two very bearded organizers don't expect many bearded ladies for the competition, they're welcoming creativity for the parade. "We're trying to get as many bearded people as possible so it's open to all of the public," Boyden says. This means that you don't have to be blessed with luscious facial locks to join. Artists are also welcome to create their own masterpieces and enter the contest with faux facial art.

In addition to artistic freedom, participants are encouraged to take a walk with history and dress up as their favorite bearded people. One can only hope to see Abe Lincoln, Santa Claus, Walt Whitman or maybe even a cameo appearance from Jesus Christ.

Photos of the competitors will be displayed during the Eugene Celebration at Out On a Limb gallery, located at 191 E. Broadway. Judges will collaborate and the winners will be announced on Aug. 26, the last day of the Celebration. But don't worry, it's not all about the judges; you'll have your say too. The People's Choice award depends on the voting of spectators. While the competition is open to anyone worldwide, the People's Choice is locals only.

This competition promises to give the annual Eugene Celebration Pet Stroll, which takes place 10 am Aug. 26, a run for its money when it comes to being hairy. The SLUG Queen will be conducting a Sliming of the Animals at 9:55 am. No word on whether bearded men also are eligible for that honor.



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