



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Two blocks of the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Armory from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday. Started in 1987, the quilt is a visual memorial to people who have died from AIDS.

Saturday at the Armory.

A one-act play being performed during Astoria Pride also pays tribute to LGBT history. Directed by Sen Incavo, "The Madness of Lady Bright" by Lanford Wilson was first performed in 1964 and is considered to be the start of gay theater in New York City.

The play, open to ages 18 and older, will be performed in a reader's theater format at 8 p.m. Thursday at KALA. The cast includes Davis; Nancy Montgomery, founder of the defunct River Theater; and Astoria musician and actor Daric Moore.

On a stifling afternoon in Manhattan, aging drag queen Leslie Bright reflects on his life and past loves. Figments of his imagination, Boy and Girl, give voice to old friends and lovers.

Ultimately, the play focuses on the theme of loneliness.

"It's a little more on the serious side," Incavo said. "It shows that not everything is happy — not everything is gay."

LGBT history in Clatsop County

For LGBT activist and lesbian Dinah Urell, Astoria Pride is the result of years of civil rights work in Clatsop County, including the right to marry.

"In the '90s, who would have thought that marriage equality would be legal? That wasn't even on our minds," she said. "We were just trying to be treated like people, like human beings."

In 1992, conservative group Oregon



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

The Astoria Pride flags hanging in downtown Astoria were sewed by Sen Incavo and stenciled and handpainted by Donna Galich.

Citizens Alliance initiated Oregon Ballot Measure 9, which lumped homosexuality together with pedophilia, sadism and masochism and would have required the government and schools to recognize homosexuality as "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse." The measure was defeated, but OCA sponsored many similar anti-gay ballot measures on the city, county and state level for years.

The LGBT community on the North Coast responded by forming the North Coast Pride Network, a place to meet, share news and organize politically. There were National Coming Out Day parties, monthly mixers, potlucks, movie nights and a newsletter. The functions were generally limited to the LGBT community at the time, rather than something community-wide, like Astoria Pride.

"Back then, it was more difficult to be out

in this community. It was more something that you kept hidden," Davis said. "Maybe it just needed to stay low-key, or maybe there weren't as many of us who were willing to step out there. I know I had difficulty."

Over the years, activism against anti-gay laws picked up speed. In 2004, Oregon amended its constitution to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. In response, the Clatsop County Marriage Equality Project formed and worked with Basic Rights Oregon to collect signatures for pro-gay ballot measures.

Today, public opinion, state and federal law have all changed: Oregon legalized same-sex marriage in 2014; the federal government recognized same-sex marriages in 2013 and declared any state bans unconstitutional in 2015.

'SOMETIMES I DON'T THINK WE CELEBRATE ENOUGH; WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME FIGHTING AND RALLYING FOR THINGS. THIS IS THAT ONE TIME A YEAR WHEN WE CAN ACTUALLY, REALLY CELEBRATE.'



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Lower Columbia Q Center Chairman Marco Davis, top, and other Astoria Pride volunteers hang flags to promote the event throughout downtown Astoria.

Looking to the future

Even with the victory of marriage equality, the fight for LGBT rights continues. Restroom access for transgender people is one example. Anti-trans legislation in several states seeks to regulate access to bathrooms, banning people from using public restrooms that do not correspond to the biological sex on their birth certificates. North Carolina passed an anti-trans bathroom bill into law in March. Other states that have attempted such bills include South Dakota, Tennessee and more.

"A lot of times people will choose not to think about these things because it doesn't affect them," said Davis.

However, across the river in Washington, anti-trans ballot Initiative 1515 seeks to repeal Washington's non-discrimination law — which currently guarantees transgender bathroom access — and, according to the initiative's summary, "restrict access to 'private facilities' to 'biologically' male or female individuals regardless of their gender identity." I-1515 needs about 246,000 signatures by July 8 to get on Washington's November ballot.

For Davis, Astoria Pride serves as a way for the local LGBT community to show the wider community that such legislation is discriminatory and to connect on a human level as friends and neighbors.

"It seemed like an important time for us to let our faces be out there so that people in our community know that it does effect more locally," Davis said. "As a people, I think that we have to step forward with kindness more than aggression and recognize that our country was founded on equality. We all should be treated equally."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

"Transfleur," by artist Marne Lucas, is a ceramic installation of vitreous china, made up of hermaphrodite flowers and flesh-colored glaze. Inspired by the transgendered artist Pippa Garner, the work will be featured in the art show "The Coast is Queer," opening at 6 p.m. Saturday at KALA. Curated by Portland gallerist Mark Woolley, the show features work by queer artists from the Portland area, including Wesley Younie, Chuck E. Bloom, Tabor Porter, Greg Carrigan and others. "The artists selected are not necessarily exploring queerness in their art — they are just producing interesting, well-crafted and highly original works that reflect their inner vision," Woolley said.