

Continued from Page 3

discriminatory on the job. Every gay and lesbian person has heard taunts from the public. There's a lot less of that now but it takes people standing up to say that's not OK.

People were tired of the abuse because people were being arrested simply because they were gay. Today that doesn't happen. It took standing up in the Stonewall Riots. That's not our method anymore but we have a responsibility for educating our community about who we are and how we fit.

CW: What is the mission of the Lower Columbia Q Center?

TS: We have to educate. We want that ability to be a homegrown, organic, safe and welcoming resource. Education is part of our method to getting there. We're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable group.

Education is a big part of us. Visibility is a big part of us. If we're all in the closet, it'll be like the 1950s where we thought 'There aren't any gay people in my community.'

We have to guard those rights and educate people. Most people understand it's a normal human variation. We've been around a long time. It's unfortunate people have been oppressed for centuries in this nation. There are LGBTQ people in every community. We want to be out, be loud and be proud. Sometimes it takes noise. Sometimes it takes unrest and demonstrations. We're completely peaceful but we're in the education mode and we want to be embraced by the sisters and brothers of our community.

CW: How can people who don't identify as LGBTQ support the event?

TS: There's a number of ways we can be allies in the community. A lot of people are thinking about that now for people of color.

Allyship means if you're in a social or private situation, there's got to be someone to speak up and say 'No, it's not OK to make jokes about queer people. It's wrong and hurtful.'

Also, hopefully people realize this isn't catchy. This is my normal, this is our normal. We're not a threat. There is not a gay agenda to take over the world. Sometimes people will come to the conclusion that they're gay, lesbian, bisexual or something else. I hope people will recognize that this is our normal.

The basis of all good relationships is based on trust. We want people to have a sense of trust about us as individuals and a community. We all want the same thing, a successful community and resources shared with equity.

Being an ally looks like standing up in support, contributing to an organization or as a volunteer and being able to recognize I'm your friend, not just your gay friend. I'm first your friend or your family member, not the gay one. We want to be seen as the full spectrum of our humanity and our basic self-worth. We want to be treated with basic human dignity and respect.



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

People gather for the block party at last year's Astoria Pride event.

THE CELEBRATION GOES ON

Astoria Pride goes virtual, holds parade

BY ALYSSA EVANS

The coronavirus pandemic has led to numerous event cancellations on the North Coast.

Rather than canceling this year's Astoria Pride celebration, the Lower Columbia Q Center has restructured the event through online videos and in-person events that follow social distancing guidelines so community members can participate.

Astoria Pride will be held Thursday through Sunday, followed by a couple of additional events the following

week. This year's event theme is "We are one."

The show goes on

"This year is our fifth year," said Tessa Scheller, Lower Columbia Q Center chair. "It'll have a homegrown, organic feel, which is part of what makes Astoria Pride special."

"This event is very local talent," Scheller said. "It's more meaningful that way. In the past we've had some well-known people come perform but that's not the focus this time. We're doing our best to showcase who we are."

The festivities will start on Thursday at 7 p.m. with an

See Page 5

Download The App



iPhone



Android

music first