

notes from SASG

Fostering personal development - Embracing queer identities - Cultivating community strength

Fall 2003

Volume 03, Issue 03



On Saturday, October 25th, SASG's "Saturday Shindig" celebrated its first birthday with a party at the Seattle LGBT Community Center. The centerpiece of the evening was "The Dating Gayme," a queer-girl-infused version of the old game show. Complete with donated date prize packages and consolation prizes, the "Gayme" also served to raise funds for SASG! Thanks to all the "Shindiggers" who put so much time and effort into pulling off a fabulous party! For more information on upcoming "Saturday Shindigs," please write to shindig@sasg.org.

SASG's 14th Annual Christmas Tree & Holiday Greenery Sale Fundraising Event offers festive volunteer opportunities and a fabulous selection of holiday décor!

This year, the day after Thanksgiving will mark the opening of SASG's 14th annual holiday fundraising event, a Christmas Tree & Holiday Greenery Sale that runs through Christmas Eve. With Monday through Friday hours of 12:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday hours of 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., this event offers ample opportunity for seasonal volunteers and holiday shoppers alike, all at the convenient Capitol Hill location of 303 17th Avenue East, just two blocks east of Group Health Hospital.

SASG's Airen Lydick predicts that this year's event will once again provide the non-profit agency with approximately one-fifth of its yearly operating budget. "Without this annual fundraising event—and the over 300 volunteers and many, many more customers it attracts yearly—SASG would likely not be able to continue to provide such a wide variety of free emotional support and personal development services," said Lydick.

In addition to this enormous financial benefit to the Seattle non-profit, the annual SASG Christmas Tree & Holiday Greenery Sale Fundraising Event provides many individuals, families, friends, and groups of all kinds the opportunity to volunteer in one of the most festive ways possible, helping customers to find that perfect tree, wreath, or garland.

Many folks make volunteering on the SASG "tree lot" a yearly holiday tradition! Contact Airen at SASG (airen@sasg.org, 206.322.2437) for more information on individual and group volunteer opportunities.

This year's lot at SASG will once again boast a fabulous selection of all types of freshly cut trees, including "old standbys" and some names you might not recognize: Noble, Douglas, Grand, Shasta, Fraser, Canaan, Spruce, Pacific Silver, Alpine, and more! Trees range in height from two feet to fourteen feet, with a price range beginning at only \$12.00. A wide variety of Noble Fir wreaths, swags, charms, and other greenery will also be for sale, as will cedar garland and holly bunches! So, spread the word, and don't forget to **"Get Your Tree At SASG!"**

SASG, a non-profit organization, builds community and cultivates powerful, healthy lives by providing peer-facilitated emotional support and personal development services to those affected by HIV/AIDS, the Queer communities, and those who love them. Our work is done in a spirit of safety, trust, inclusiveness, and celebration of individual differences. For more information on our agency, please visit www.sasg.org.

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Question: *What Happens Between the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic and the Tree Lot?*

Answer: *The Remodeled Home Tour!*

On the weekend of October 18th and 19th this fall, the Master Builders *Remodeled Homes Tour* was held for the eighth year in a row. And for the eighth year, SASG will be the beneficiary of half of the ticket sales for the event in return for providing friendly, helpful volunteers to host each one of the 31 homes.

Way back in 1995, when there were only 11 homes on the first *Tour*, SASG's Board of Directors assumed full responsibility for this activity. Each of them took one house for the weekend, called on a partner or friend to help, and considered this just one of the obligations of Board membership. But as the *Tour* has grown and the number of houses on it has tripled, we have needed to call upon SASG's staff, facilitators, phone volunteers, and group members to help us cover this event. Occasionally, an entire group will choose to take on one or two of the homes with the members pairing up for each day of the event.

Even if you choose not to volunteer for the event each year, you might want to attend the yearly *Tour*—especially if you have remodeling plans of your own. Located throughout the greater Seattle and Eastside areas, the homes on tour each year offer exciting examples of everything from kitchen and bath redesigns to complete additions and renovations. It's a great opportunity for homeowners who want to remodel to connect with the people who can help them.

Whether you choose to volunteer on next year's *Tour*, or pay for a ticket (usually \$15 in advance or \$20 the weekend of), this is a great way to support SASG. The *Tour* takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. For more information about the *Tour* itself, check out its website at *Remodeltour.com*. To find out more about volunteering to staff one of the homes on next year's *Tour*, contact me at SASG.

Susan Dunshee,
SASG's Executive Director

Fall Volunteer Birthdays

October

- 10 John Primeau
- 15 Sally McAllaster
- 21 Barry Ford

November

- 8 Jerry Greenblatt
- 12 Paul Gerhart
- 22 Ed Waldbauer

December

- 4 Russell Campbell
- 9 Vinnie Diana
- 15 Rain Carei
- 17 Mykkah Herner
- 22 Deb Harlow
- 31 Page Baldwin

*If you are an SASG volunteer and your birthday is missing from the above list, please inform Airen.
Happy birthdays to all!*

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Do you enjoy the company of men? Are you interested in meeting others but don't want to go to the bars? Are you looking for a place to start out your evening before you go clubbing? If so, then have we got a solution for you: *Sissy Saturdays!* *Sissy Saturdays* are gay social soirees meant just for you. They take place at SASG, located at 17th and Thomas, on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 7:00 p.m. until Midnight. (The movie starts at 8:30 p.m.).

We started *Sissy Saturdays* in June of 2002, and they have been successfully growing ever since. We've been attracting an average of 20-25 playful, intelligent, fun-loving, enjoyable men who show up every other week just to be with other men for a relaxing, social evening. It has not been uncommon to find a riveting game of UNO being played in the living room and deep and meaningful conversation going on in the 'phone' room. We even had an exciting game of "LIFE" being played one night. Who knew that when the box said "for 4-6," it meant ages 4-6!?! We had to learn how to think like kids! The game turned out to be far more complicated for adults and more fun than we had planned for.

Some guys come just to relax in the homey atmosphere of the house where they can relax and read, or spend time getting to know someone new without the interference of 'bar distractions' like loud noise, smoky air, and alcohol. Some even exchange a phone number or two.

Sissy Saturday is growing as news of the social begins to get out by advertising and by word of mouth.

Our goal is to offer a safe social alternative to the bars for adult gay men of all ages to meet and just be themselves without the atmosphere of the bars. *Sissy Saturday* is co-sponsored by Gay City and SASG as a free service to our communities and is hosted by a cadre of enthusiastic volunteers who keep the punch cold and the coffee warm and greet guys as they enter the house. We warmly encourage all of you to come join us, enjoy the party, and enjoy each other.

Vinnie Diana
Sissy Saturday volunteer

Friday Feast needs you! Sign up to help clean up today.

One of SASG's most appreciated traditions needs your support. "Friday Feast" has always relied on the dedication of SASG volunteers. Although we currently have enough cooks to sustain this treasured event on the first, second, and third Fridays of each month, we are constantly in need of volunteers for the "Friday Feast" **Clean-up Crew**.

Please take a moment to sign up for a clean-up shift the next time you're at the house. Check with the Front Desk Volunteer on duty for directions to the sign-up sheet. Also, don't forget to leave your **full name and contact phone number and/or e-mail address** for Airen. He'll give you a reminder phone call and/or send you a reminder e-mail message as your shift approaches. Thanks in advance for helping us to sustain SASG's "Friday Feast."

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GET REAL! addressing HIV for undiagnosed MSM

Given recent reporting that MSM (men who have sex with men) under 25 have the highest number of undiagnosed HIV infections, SASG packages programming just for them. "GET REAL!" programming, especially designed for queer guys under 40, now becomes the SASG programming division designed to address their particularly pressing health needs.

"GET REAL!" will focus on addressing the needs of these young men with a three-pronged approach. Through "Project Poz," "HIV+ newly-diagnosed," and the Sunday schedule of "GAYMES," "Random Acts of Kindness," and "Creative Potluck," we aim to combat the isolation, guilt, and loneliness that are among the most imminent dangers to the health of these men. Men who don't know they are HIV-positive, or who are newly-diagnosed, will have the love and support of caring volunteers at SASG. Many of these SASG volunteers look forward to supporting others with issues around which they themselves received little support in the past. These volunteers wish they had had the attention and understanding of other men who experienced the gravity of being served notice of a "death sentence." Now, they are committed to being there for men like them. They will be shoulders to cry on or pillars of support...because that's how we are at SASG. With these men as the cornerstone of our programming, we will offer these great groups and save lives.

The CDC has reported that the most effective prevention works on multiple levels simultaneously. "Successful prevention provides support for healthy decision making for people at risk for HIV infection and for those who are already infected to help them avoid spreading the virus to others." We will give these men ongoing care with high quality services. "It is essential to integrate services with other providers." We will proudly continue our partnerships with organizations like Gay City Health Project to compliment programming for the most effective service. Gay City's short term clubs will launch young poz guys into the ongoing programs at SASG.

Our overwhelmingly successful "Bonfire" & "Gaymes" spent the 2003 summer season as the unofficial off-site orientations to SASG programming. Over 250 people were estimated to have attended, with many of them having experienced SASG for the first time.

Now, "Gaymes" has moved to Sundays, recently kicking off the fall with a "Scavenger Hunt" that included amazing prizes from Patrick Bear Salon, Rosebud Restaurant, and ATT Wireless. Queer guys and friends connected through discerning clues to win prizes. Then, "Random Acts of Kindness" and "Creative Potluck" combined forces to host "Playhouse" for a one-night-only raucous game of "k.a.o.s." Finally, "HIV+ newly-diagnosed" rolled out on Wednesday, September 3rd at 7:30 p.m. to begin cultivating support among the newly-diagnosed.

Finally, one-to-one training, "On Love and Life," was held in late October. "Project Poz" volunteers gathered to develop skills on accessing their compassion each and every time they meet with their buddy.

At SASG we are committed to serving these young men. Let's welcome them with open arms and a loving spirit as they become part of the community of SASG. Email T@sasg.org for any additional info on any of the above groups/events.

Connection thru community ~ .. Community thru connection

notes from SASG is our quarterly newsletter. Issues will be distributed seasonally as follows:

Winter (January-March), Spring (April-June), Summer (July-September), and Fall (October-December).

The inclusion of persons' names in this newsletter in no way identifies their sexual orientations, gender identities, or HIV statuses. Please direct your ideas for, feedback on, or questions about the newsletter to **Airen Lydick**, SASG Programming Manager/Volunteer Coordinator: 206.322.2437, airen@sasg.org