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Jamison Green and Mariette Pathy Allen, the recipients of the Virginia Prince Transgender Pioneer Awards Pioneer Award.

Photo: Dan McKeon

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POSTED BY: TRT EDITOR NOVEMBER 6, 2014



Jamison Green and Mariette Pathy Allen, the recipients of the Virginia Prince Transgender Pioneer Awards Pioneer Award.

Photo: Dan McKeon

By: Clara Lefton/TRT Reporter—

PROVINCETOWN, Mass.—The week of October 19-26, 2014 marked the 40th anniversary of Fantasia Fair, a conference focusing on transgender issues in Provincetown, Mass. and the world’s longest running annual transgender event. Approximately 151 participants between the ages of 21-89 attended this year’s fair from across the United States and other countries such as Australia, Brazil and Germany.

“This was one of our best years ever,” said Barbara Curry, director of Fantasia Fair’s evening events and the business manager. “[151 attendees] is about the most we can fit in Provincetown, and we don’t try to be the biggest of anything. We try to be the most intimate and



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connected of conferences. It is possible to meet everyone within the week. It’s amazing the connections people make. If they come back next year, they will literally pick up a conversation.” [pullquote]The 2014 Fantasia Fair raised \$3,000 for Helping Our Women, a local nonprofit with a mission statement to provide support for “women with chronic, life threatening and/or disabling illness.”[/pullquote]


The conference is not strictly limited to members of the transgender community, as spouses and partners of trans participants are welcome and even given a discount entry fee. Additionally, the conference offers workshops for people whose spouses are struggling with their partner’s transition. Meanwhile, those who might struggle socioeconomically are encouraged to apply for a scholarship to assist with the financial burden of attending. These scholarships provide financial assistance for conference meals and lodging in exchange for working at the event.

Unlike many conferences that revolve around one hotel or conference center with hundreds of people, the Fantasia Fair provides an immersive setting. Workshops, activities, keynote speakers and other events happen throughout the town and participants are encouraged to explore Provincetown. Robert Anderson is a local resident who runs P-Town Tours year round, but says his favorite group is working with the Fantasia Fair.

“They’re just so enthusiastic and so interesting to talk to,” explained Anderson. “I just feel so at home with them when talking with and being

with them. I look forward to this every year and every year it increases in numbers.”

According to organizers, the smaller, 5,000-person town setting allows for a safe outdoor and inclusive

 **Jamie Dailey on the runway in the evening wear section of Fantasia Fair 2014. Photo: Kare Janreau**

Jamie Dailey on the runway in the evening wear section of Fantasia Fair 2014. Photo: Kare Janreau



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environment. In this way, organizers sought to include a variety of local collaborations, including working with the local police department, the **Provincetown Business Guild** and even receiving a grant from the Town of Provincetown's Tourism Fund.

To continue to foster this relationship with the town itself, the Fantasia Fair makes a point of giving back to the community every year. The Fair started this tradition on its 25th anniversary in 1999. In the past, the board has bought the fire department a defibrillator, raised money towards a new Segway scooter for the local police department, and was even the largest private donor in the building fund for the town's new library.

The 2014 Fantasia Fair raised \$3,000 for Helping Our Women, a local nonprofit with a mission statement to provide support for "women with chronic, life threatening and/or disabling illness." All of the money for this donation was raised at the Fantasia Fair Follies, an annual cabaret event featuring a variety of performers, singers and musicians.

"I have attended two Fairs [and] had such a wonderful time," said attendee Temperance DuWitt of Delaware. "I met so many wonderful women, all in different stages of transition. I enjoyed hearing about their lives, their support networks and their spouses. I was really fascinated to talk with the couples as well. The spouses and partners were truly exceptional women."

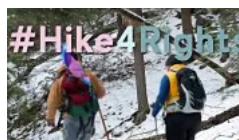
In order to stage the weeklong event, at least 20 board and committee meetings take place throughout the year. Every year on the last day of the festivities the board sits down to do a review of that year's Fair. Curry expressed that the biggest criticism for this past year was questioning whether or not the Fair was getting "too serious." The original Fantasia Fair was known to be more focused on makeup sessions and scarf tying, which led the board to ask whether adding some similar components, like a burlesque coach, might add something to the conference.



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“One of the unique differences is that it doesn’t focus primarily on content. It gives a strong emphasis on engaging other people,” Presenter and Participant Dr. Erica Anderson said. “That kind of mixing quality contributes to this interesting blend of learning, having fun and experience.”

For more information about Fantasia Fair, visit www.fantasiafair.org.

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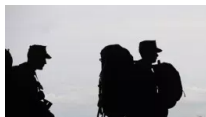
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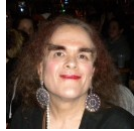


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