

A modest proposal for Stripes tickets

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

By Rhiannon Coppin *News Reporter*

How badly do you want White Stripes tickets?

Enough to be gay for a day?

Stephen Dunbar-Edge has four extra tickets to the June 25 rock concert, but he's not selling them to the highest bidder.

Instead, the local businessman will reward open-minded local men willing to pose as gay models on his Yukon Pride Adventure Tours.

"I'm just asking for services in return" for the tickets, he said.

Dunbar-Edge is looking for four men roughly over 26 years of age to pose together as couples for photographs to promote his travel business.

The four men will each get a Yukon Arts Centre balcony ticket to the show.

The tickets, Dunbar-Edge expects, will be a much more effective motivator than cash payments.

"Usually when I approach someone to model for my website, I give them money. Since I have these tickets, I thought there's a value to them, so I thought I would appeal to people who are White Stripes fans," he said.

Though it's a bit of a social experiment to recruit heterosexuals to pose as homosexuals, Yukon Pride Adventure Tours already features a mix of gay and straight models on its site.

In the past, straight models didn't mind being portrayed as homosexual couples, he said.

"It's a more open society. People who are comfortable with themselves and know who they are won't mind — if they're White Stripes fans — taking on the job."

The Yukon is also fairly open, he said.

"Generally people are pretty good with it up here."

A long time Yukoner, Dunbar-Edge and his husband Rob became the first same-sex couple to legally wed in the territory after a successful Yukon Supreme Court challenge in July of 2004.

Though it's not usual to have "sue government" as an item on the wedding preparation checklist, Dunbar-Edge finds it easy to market the Yukon to gay Americans who are considering a trip to Alaska.

While just as scenic, the state was one of the first to enact the Defence of Marriage Act and is also processing legislation that would deny benefits to same-sex partners, he said.

From a marketing perspective, Dunbar-Edge wants potential visitors to see themselves reflected in his website and brochures — to see themselves in the Yukon.

Accordingly, he'll be choosing the models based primarily on how believable the pairings are.

“It's not about good looks, because the gay and lesbian community is as diverse in looks as the rest of the world,” said Dunbar-Edge.

Those interested should check out the website yukonpride.com and send snapshots with contact info to info@yukonpride.com.

The models will be selected on June 22, and will be photographed around Whitehorse for three hours on June 24.

The chosen models will also get to sit together at the concert.

The White Stripes show in Whitehorse sold out in 12 minutes the morning of May 4.

The 420 tickets went on sale over the phone and through the Arts Underground and Yukon Arts Centre box offices.

Dunbar-Edge was recruited by an out-of-town friend to fetch a bundle.

To secure his allotment of eight tickets Dunbar-Edge did what most White Stripes fans did that cold and unfabulous night.

“I camped out.”