

A Conversation With The Men Behind the Beard and Moustache Championships Coming to Bend

Written by Mike Bookey
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In the event that you're habitually are slow on the uptake when it comes to facial-hair-related news, the [Beard Team USA National Beard and Moustache Championships](#) are taking place in Bend this year.

In advance of the Championships, which are slated for June 5 at the Les Schwab Amphitheater during the [Balloons over Bend festival](#), the founder (and "self-appointed captain") of Beard Team USA, Phil Olsen and two-time defending [Natural Full Beard World Champion Jack Passion](#) stopped into the Source offices yesterday to chat about the event. They brought along their pair of staggeringly lengthy and distractingly awesome beards.

Sure, the notion of competitive facial hair growing and styling is innately weird, but Olsen says there's plenty of demand for events like this, especially in the beardier-than-normal Pacific Northwest.

"There's tremendous interest in this. It's such a quirky event and it has a lot of appeal to people looking for fun," says Olsen, who sports a long, straight, black foot-long swath of beard. When he's not promoting beard and moustache competitions, Olsen is a semi-retired lawyer and a part-time judge.

[video:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GooHISbSKcM> 425x344]

The Championships are open to everyone, and while Olsen originally estimated that the contest would draw between 200 and 400 entries nationwide, he says after speaking with [Visit Bend](#) (which was key in bringing the Championships to Bend), now believes there may be as many as **20**

0 entries just from our region

Sitting next to Olsen, Jack Passion lays out his red mane of facial hair that extends to his beltline and explains how although this is a competition, it's also a chance to meet some like-minded and like-bearded folks.

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“I’ve made some of my best friends at these events. When you have extreme facial hair and you try to get a job and things like that, it’s a shared experience with these people,” says Passion, the author of [The Facial Hair Handbook](#) . And if you flip over his business card, you’ll see him holding a wicked bass guitar, which he uses in his other profession as a musician.

I’ll keep you posted on all things beardy and mustachy as the event gets closer. In the meantime, I’ll just keep growing my beard.