

PROFILE

Cherry Hartman is moving on

by Jay Brown

When Cherry Hartman first heard that a lesbian and gay social service agency was being created by the now defunct Portland Town Council, she went after the job of running the counseling program. "I was the best person to do it," Hartman said.

Hartman had more than ten years of experience in counseling; she had worked in children's welfare for three years in Grants Pass right after college and had originated and run the counseling program for Lutheran Family Services in the Portland Metro area for eight years. Her experience and her feminist politics proved a winning combination for the fledgling organization.

Cherry Hartman has always been a political person and she has always been a public person. "when I lived in Grants Pass, I was one of only three single women in town. It's very conservative there. I finally had to move to Ashland and commute to work in Grants Pass," Hartman commented.

Back in the early seventies, when this writer was living in Southern Oregon as a publicly gay person, Cherry Hartman's name was mentioned in many conversations I had with people in Ashland. She left the area just about the time I moved there so I didn't meet her until after I had come to Portland, but her name was familiar. She had left her mark there and was remembered for her activism in the human rights struggle.

In the late seventies Portland Town Council was offered a substantial sum of money to establish a social service organization to provide counseling for the lesbian and gay community in Oregon. That organization became the Town Council Foundation and was one of the first gay non-profits in the nation. "At that time there was open discrimination against gay non-profit organizations," Hartman added.

The Town Council Foundation became an entity separate from the Portland Town Council, and for a time the name similarity caused quite a bit of confusion in the com-



munity. "... so we had a naming contest and Phoenix Rising was the winning name," Hartman said.

Phoenix Rising lost its major funding source about a year and a half after the program was founded. Since the summer of 1981, Phoenix Rising has depended on counseling fees, private donations and infrequent small grants. The program's staff consists of seven counselors, an administrator and the director of counseling. The program also utilizes fifteen paraprofessionals who run the Tuesday night groups, Phoenix Rising's successful and long-lasting social growth program.

Hartman has been the only counseling director at Phoenix Rising in its four year history and she will be leaving the position in September. Hartman's immediate plans include a doctorate on the sociology of women which she will pursue at the University of Oregon in Eugene. "Maybe Liz and I will go to Europe. We want to take our bicycles and travel around," Hartman said with a twinkle in her eye.

"After four years," Hartman says, "it's time to give it up. It's time for someone else to bring in new energy. It's time for someone new, with fresh ideas. I feel good that Helen [Lottridge] is there; Phoenix Rising is in good hands." (Lottridge is Phoenix Rising's newly-

hired administrator. See *Just Out*, Vol. 1, No. 20.)

Recruitment is still underway for Hartman's counseling director position. "It's a wonderful job — other people haven't noticed that. We've been very fortunate in getting competent counselors, so the program will stay intact," Hartman commented on the future of Phoenix Rising.

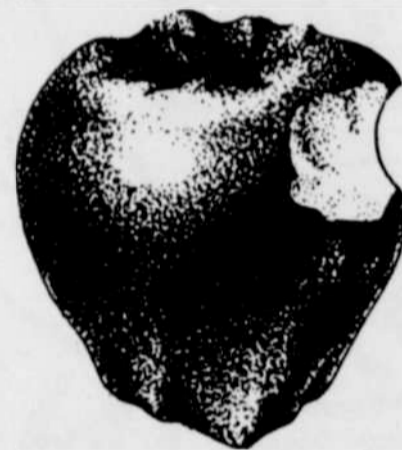
Hartman says that in the four years of Phoenix Rising's existence, substantial gains have been made in the relations between gay men and lesbians in the Portland community. "There was a man/woman split at the beginning, but our very successful Tuesday night group helped a lot. The Tuesday nights are a growth and social group, the people trust each other and work together. It is a way of coming out and building social networks and it is fun. And there's the freshness of people who are not professional counselors. The Tuesday groups are run by people who have

been through the program and are trained to lead the groups," Hartman explained.

Hartman's job at Phoenix Rising involved her in many activities in the wider community; she has talked to students in high schools and colleges in the area. She has counseled staff at local hospitals as well as professional organizations such as the Oregon Personnel and Guidance Association and the National Association of Social Workers in ways to improve relations with the gay community.

What are Cherry Hartman's long-range plans? "There must be room for openly gay people in Eugene," Hartman says. "There are many professional lesbians down there. But they don't have much openness or political power."

Whatever she decides to do in the future, we can be assured that Cherry Hartman will be in the forefront of the struggle. As she always has been.



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