

# just out

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**Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.**

**Out About Town** is a courtesy to our readers. Performers, clubs, individuals, or groups wanting to list events in the calendar should mail notices to *Just Out* by the 15th of the month preceding publication. Listings will not be taken by telephone.

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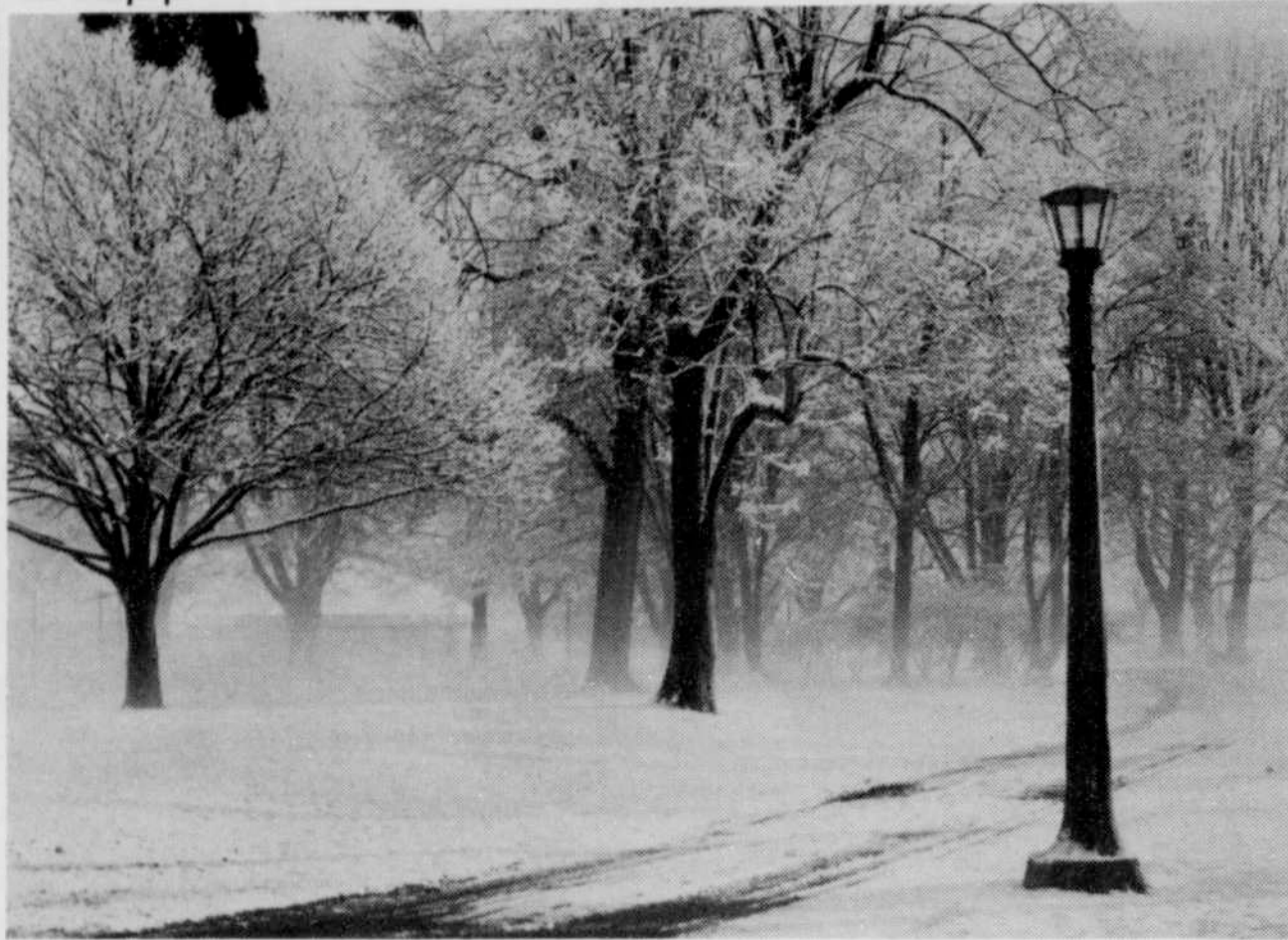
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## Steppin' Out

Photo by Sallie Bird



## Willamette Reek

*Some people feed on the calamities of others.*

—Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*

Say you want to discredit a poor queer — an acknowledged homosexual who has taken a public vow of poverty.

He "plays by his own rules" and has earned a reputation of heroic proportions as an advocate for the homeless. He recently "announced plans to move Baloney Joe's across the river to inner-northwest Portland. The proposed move threatened to interfere with an agreement worked out by a number of interests and, in doing so, frustrated the administration of Mayor Bud Clark." [Emphasis added.]

What you do to the poor queer, of course, is accuse him of being a pedophile and recommend that he "seek treatment for his illness."

You find someone who will listen to gossip and innuendo, someone who is willing to repeat what she or he has heard and sign it.

You play to the myth that anyone under the age of eighteen is mentally deficient and a potential victim of manipulation and corruption by anyone over the age of eighteen.

You find a doctor whose questionable ethics and agenda will corroborate your allegations.

You cloak your "news" with serious high-

mindedness so as to outrage your readers but not offend your large gay audience.

You exploit the public's willingness to believe and accept any salacious gossip about any public figure.



I spoke twice with Kay Durham while she was researching her story on Michael Stoops. I did not know who she was when I returned her call. I did know that *Willamette Week* was planning an attack on Stoops based on old, unsubstantiated allegations of sex with minors. I also knew that Stoops had announced he planned to move Baloney Joe's back across the river.

Durham and I talked for more than half an hour about Michael Stoops without once mentioning his name (which I still think is quite odd). I did not, and do not, believe the accusations she made about Stoops, and neither does she, apparently, because nothing of what she told me was incontrovertible evidence was used in the article.

On the occasion of our second conversation,

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Durham and I were in my office. She would not look me in the eye and deny that the story she was writing was politically motivated.

"I have been working on this since February," Durham said with a shake of her head. "And besides, *The Oregonian* has had two investigative reporters on this since then, too."

We know only too well how willing are *Willamette Week* and *The Oregonian* to publish unsubstantiated proof of alleged sexual misconduct, especially if it's homosexual, when it concerns a public figure. (Remember Gordon Shadburne?)

I do not believe that Michael Stoops is a child abuser. Not one person with whom I have discussed this issue agrees with *Willamette Week's* allegations. I have heard such terms as "yellow journalism," "character assassination," and "lack of social responsibility" used to describe the sensational story. After my experience with Kay Durham and having read the story she and Mark Zusman wrote, I believe those terms to be fair assessments of their "news."

— Jay Brown

Note: All quotations are from *Willamette Week*, Vol. 14, No. 4.

## CATHARTIC COMICS

BY RUPERT KINNARD

