

# Just news

## Pattie Ladd: lesbian activist

*Cascade AIDS Project's volunteer coordinator brings years of activism to battle against AIDS*

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

Cascade AIDS Project has added a new staff member. Pattie Ladd is filling the new position and will coordinate the activities of the 250 volunteers.

Prior to her job at CAP, Ladd worked as medical services coordinator at Outside-In, an agency for medically needy people. A resident of Portland since 1973, Ladd says that for several years she has felt she was headed toward working with AIDS. At Outside-In she was involved with AIDS-prevention education for street kids.

Ladd feels strongly about her work to help fight AIDS, but questions in the women's community are being raised about the amount of energy lesbians are putting into combatting AIDS.

She responds: "I would ask lesbians who approach AIDS this way to remember that we all bear the same stigma. If AIDS is ever used as an excuse to round up homosexuals, do you think they will stop with gay men? Someone said 'survival is a collective act.' As a group, lesbians are at very low risk for the HIV disease. When this fact leads to smugness, and to distancing, I sense denial.

"Unfortunately, more women are being affected by the HIV disease, especially women of color and including some lesbians. I think lesbians should be concerned when *The Oregonian* blames prostitutes for the on-going epidemic, calling them 'the greatest threat.' The greatest

threat isn't prostitutes, who have always practiced safer sex than the rest of the population, but the johns who pay more for sex without a condom — a growing trend.

"The real threat is the lack of meaningful drug treatment for addicted prostitutes and other IV drug users. The waiting period for treatment, when it exists, is obscenely long, and the lack of childcare saps the motivation of addicted mothers. The real threat is the failure of public officials to help people change the rituals of risk, like needle sharing. But it can be done.

"Culturally relevant risk-reduction material is working in the gay male community, but it's barely attempted in other 'dispensable' populations. Where is the funding? Women with HIV disease don't live as long as men do. They can't get AZT for treatment because it might cause birth defects. Poor women of color in particular have less access to services and don't enjoy the creative organized community response to AIDS that gay men are finding.

"But this disease is really a great leveller. My stereotype of the well-heeled gay man is shaken by news of men who have lost their jobs and other resources through the disease and have died the same week they are denied Social Security benefits, because the government denied they were well enough to be working.

"Would gay men 'be there' for us if lesbians were the ones getting AIDS? I don't know that we have the luxury of conjecture. Besides, when did we ever model ourselves after anyone but ourselves? I think lesbians with a sense of

their own oppression are a very sensitive lot."

CAP volunteers help out in the following ways: facilitating support groups for diagnosed people, HIV-positive people and significant others; facilitating New Attitudes safer sex workshops; helping with special fundraising events; public speaking; working with the AIDS hotline; answering CAP office phones; data entry and light bookkeeping.

The next PAL training is April 8-10 and 16-17. PALS provide emotional one-on-one support to persons with AIDS, ARC and the HIV disease. The 44-hour training is done by a committee of skilled volunteers. Deadline for application to become a PAL is March 25.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact Pattie Ladd at 223-5907.

## Community notes

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

### Phoenix Rising offers self-defense program

This month Phoenix Rising will be sponsoring a ten-week coed workshop on self-defense. The program is in response to an increase in calls Phoenix Rising has received from people complaining about "gay bashing" and other forms of harassment. Many people are reluctant to report these incidents to the local police because it often falls on unsympathetic ears and they fear exposure.

Janese Kruse of "One With Heart/Fighting Arts" will facilitate the workshop.

"I believe a self-defense course should give you the tools to create your own self-defense. There is no magic formula to deter an assailant. The most important asset is to have the wherewithal to be able to assess the situation, then to determine the best response and to act on it," explains Kruse.

"One With Heart/Fighting Arts" is built upon a variety of sources, including Pokoulan, an Indonesian Martial Art that "helps to inspire the spirit of the entire program."

Evening classes will be held once a week beginning March 24, for a fee of \$60, at the Echo

Theatre, 1515 SE 37th (at Hawthorne). Early registration is suggested, because the number of participants is limited.

### Big Mountain Support plans gathering


Approximately \$1 billion in taxpayer money is being used in an attempt to complete the unsuccessful relocation of 12,000 Dine (Navajo) people into border towns and subdivisions on land contaminated with radiation in the Rio Puerco area. About 6,000 of the Dine people are resisting relocation. They are now living under daily aerial and land surveillance, harassment, stock impoundments, arrests and death under the arm of the U.S. government.

The United Nations has reported 13 genocide violations that the United States has committed upon the Dine people of Big Mountain. The U.S. government has refused to appear in World Court for any of these charges.

Northwest Big Mountain Support is holding a food drive until April 7. They seek donations of storable bulk food and functional tools for the direct support of the Dine. Drop-off address is upstairs at 3029 S.E. 21st Ave.

The next meetings will be held March 8 and 22 at the Big Mountain office, 3029 S.E. 21st Ave. For more information, call 236-0399.

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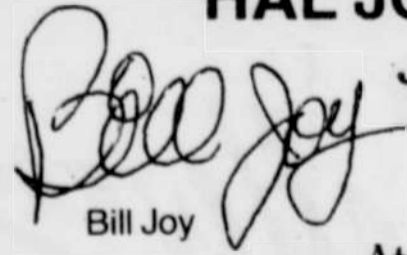
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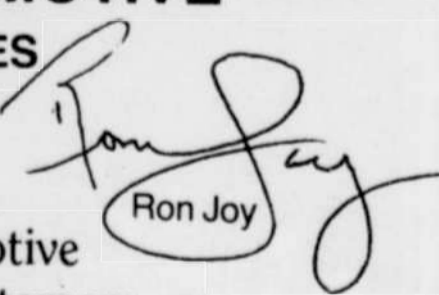
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