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PUBLISHER AND EDITOR
Renée LaChance

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
Ariel Waterwoman

CALENDAR EDITOR
Jann Gilbert

PHOTOGRAPHER
Linda Kliewer

REPORTER
Pamela Lyons

ADVERTISING
Fred Allemann
Meg Grace
E. Ann Hinds
Jewel Robinson

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
E. Ann Hinds

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Rupert Kinnard

COPY EDITOR
Kelly M. Bryan

PROOFREADER
Thomas Lauderdale

TYPESETTERS
Dee StarDancer Fultz

DISTRIBUTION
Up Front Distribution

OFFICE MANAGER
Aaron Bong

CONTRIBUTORS
Miss Betsy Hunt
Bob Roehr
Jann Gilbert
Rupert Kinnard
Dale Reynolds

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Letters to the editor should be limited to two double-spaced typed pages. Deadline for submissions to the editorial department and for the Calendar is the Thursday before the first and third Friday for the next issue. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The display advertising deadline is the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue.

Classified ads must be received at the office of *just out* by the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue, along with payment. Ads will not be taken over the telephone.

Ad policy. No sexually exploitive advertising will be accepted. Compensation for errors in, or cancellation of, advertising will be made with credit toward future advertising.

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A copy of *just out* is available for \$1 and/or advertising rates are available on request.

The mailing address and telephone number for *just out* are PO Box 15117, Portland, OR 97215; (503) 236-1252. Our fax number is 236-1257.

steppin' out



PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

editorial

Accessibility issues hit close to home

We are all just temporarily abled, and something could happen at any time to throw any one of us into a totally new consciousness

by Renée LaChance

The last several weeks have been extremely difficult at *just out*. Our editor, Ariel Waterwoman, has been absent and was in the hospital. She had been suffering from nausea and vomiting for weeks before she was admitted to the hospital for kidney failure. Regular readers of *just out* may be aware that Ariel has colon cancer.

After minor surgery Ariel was able to regain the functioning of one kidney. It has since stabilized to do the work of two.

When she came out of the anesthesia after the surgery she realized that the right side of her body was partially disabled. It took several days while her kidney improved for the doctors to do a test that showed that Ariel had a brain tumor which was swollen and causing the dysfunction of her right side. With the aid of steroids and radiation treatments, the tumor has slowly been shrinking and she has been regaining mobility.

It has been an incredibly frightening experience for me, dealing with news of the cancer advancing through her body and the idea that she was facing mobility issues that would require her to be in a wheelchair at times and otherwise walk with a cane.

As her primary caregiver, I found it ironic that *just out* had recently done an issue featuring mobility disabilities—thinking about access became all the more personal to me. How would I get her up the two steps to the house?

Would I have to build a ramp? How would she use the bathroom—it barely has room for one person let alone a wheelchair. Was the grocery store accessible? Were the doctors offices we frequent accessible? Everywhere I go I now look at the doors, the steps, the lips in doorways, and wonder if I would be able to get Ariel and her wheelchair through them. Would I be able to lift the chair in and out of the car? There are so many things to think about that are now a part of my reality.

I know people who deal with these issues daily are going, "Duh, welcome to the real world," but it blew my mind. It really struck home that we are all just temporarily abled, and that something could happen at any time to throw any one of us into a totally new consciousness about accessibility issues.

Over the next year we will cover other areas of accessibility to educate people about the day-to-day struggles of members of our community.

I want to take this space to thank the staff of *just out* who pulled the last issue of the paper together, the day before we went to press, without me and without any preparation for my absence. It is the tenacity and dedication of this staff that makes *just out* what it is today, a well-read and appreciated newsmagazine throughout the United States. I appreciate each of you and the gifts you bring to *just out*. Thank you for being here.

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