

**T**he Amazon Dragons paddled their way to second place in the Women's Division of the 1994 Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races, held Saturday and Sunday, June 11 and 12, at the Riverplace Marina. The team, sponsored by the Lesbian Community Project, has been competing since 1992, and this year has 22 members.

The Amazon Dragons originated as a spin-off of LCP's visibility project "Margins to the Mainstream."

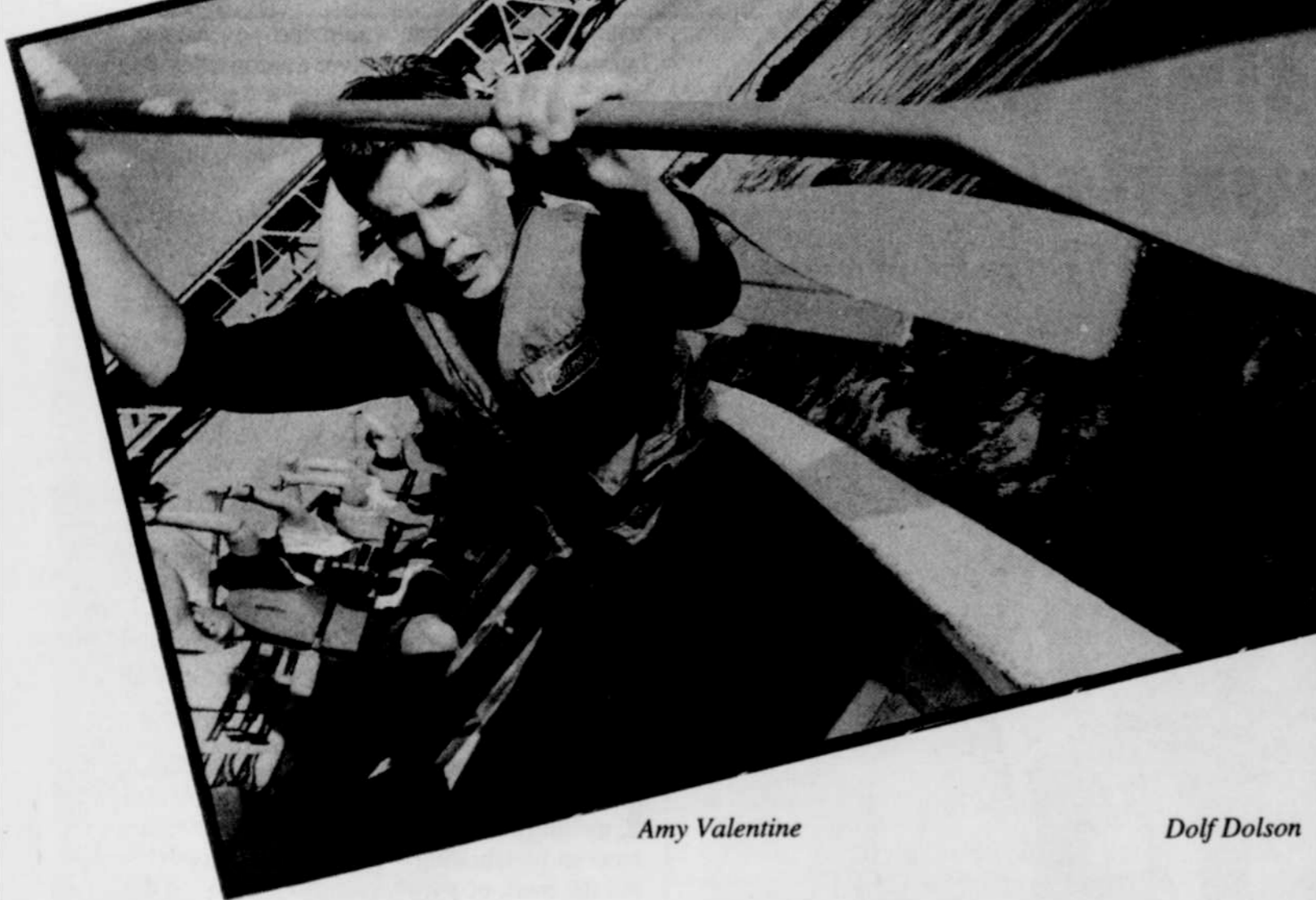
Chris Mack, an LCP board member at the time, began looking for further ways to bring a lesbian presence to the Rose Festival. She began advertising in the LCP newsletter for women interested in starting a dragon boat team. Although only four women attended the first meeting, they were so enthusiastic the project took off.

Has the team affected lesbian visibility in Portland? Mack tells of two women who were living near where the races were held during the team's first year. The two reported how excited they were to hear the word "lesbian" proclaimed over a loudspeaker in Waterfront Park!

Mack, the team's captain, says the dragon boat team is less visible than were the floats in the Starlight Parade, but the attention paid to the team has increased over the three years of their participation. This year, two Amazon Dragon members were featured on the front page of the *Sunday Oregonian*, posing in one of the boats. This year's team also boasts two participants who are mother and daughter, projecting a clear picture of positive family values.

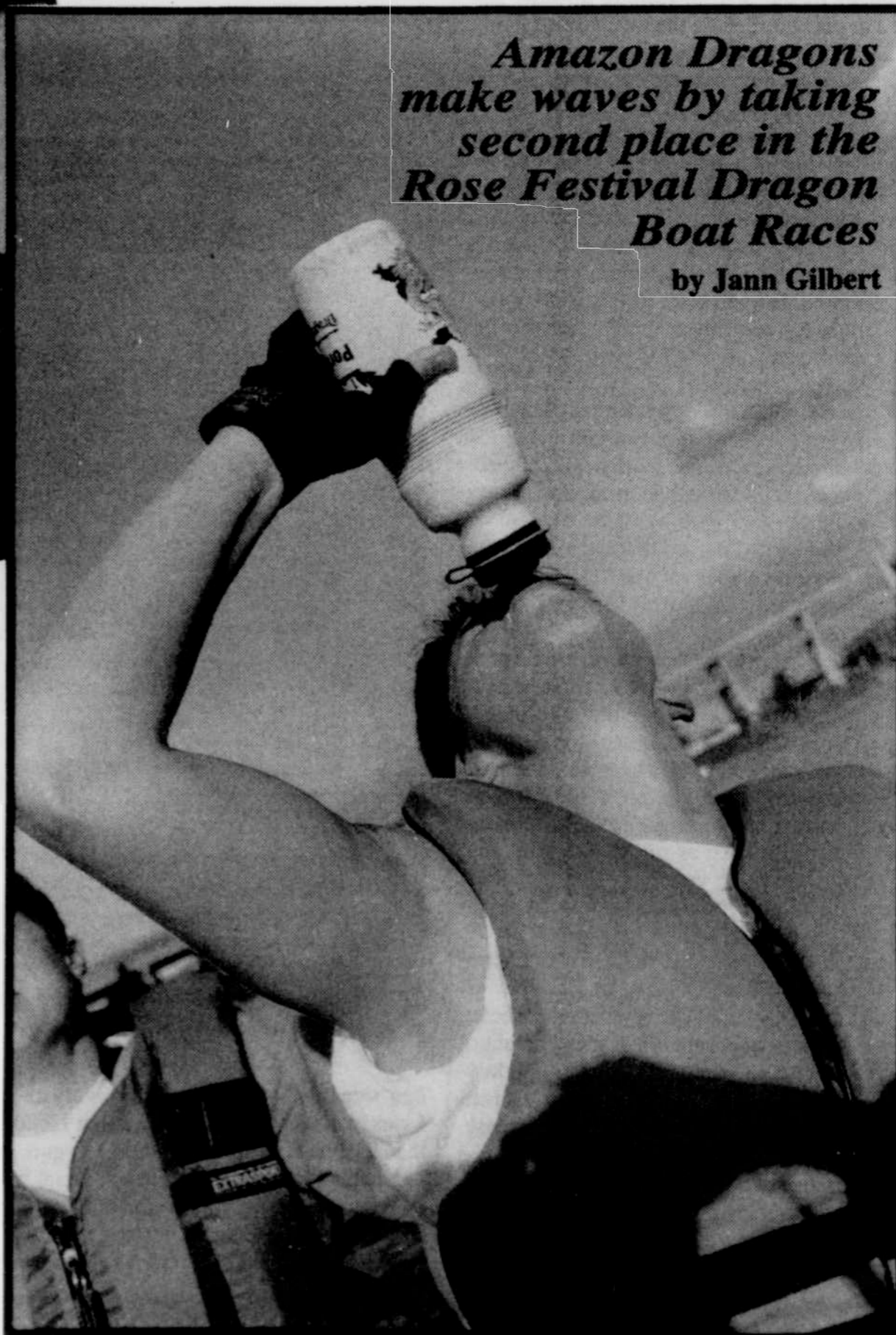


# LESBIAN WAP IT UP



Amy Valentine

Dolf Dolson



*Amazon Dragons make waves by taking second place in the Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races*

by Jann Gilbert

**T**he racing of dragon boats is a popular early-summer event wherever Chinese cultural influence prevails. According to legend, the sport represents the search for the body of Chu Yuan, a high-ranking minister of great talent and genius, who was greatly loved by the people of his state. Chu Yuan, banished from his home by a faithless king, committed suicide in the Mi Luo River. Hearing of his death, the people rushed to the river, thronging into boats and rowing out to the middle, where they threw rice into the water to feed the fish, in hope that Chu Yuan's body would be left alone. The search for his body has evolved into the present day tradition of dragon boat races, and the custom of eating sticky-rice cakes during the festivities.

The Portland dragon boat races are sponsored by the Portland-Kaohsiung (pronounced "kowsung") Sister City Association, founded to promote Portland as a symbolic gateway to the Pacific rim countries. The association's primary goal is to foster cultural exchange. One of the benefits for Portland of this exchange was the gift of several dragon boats from its Taiwanese sister city. In September 1990, one of these boats was hung in the south tower of the Oregon Convention Center.

In return, the association donated a state-of-the-art, U.S.-made ambulance to Kaohsiung in 1991.

Each year, in October, the association has led a goodwill tour to Kaohsiung, and each year, in June, a delegation from Kaohsiung has visited Portland to participate in the Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races and the Grand Floral Parade.