

HOME LOANS

- ▼ new purchase
- ▼ refinance / cash out
- ▼ 100% equity loans
- ▼ pre-qualification by phone/fax
- ▼ appointments at your convenience



"Financing to make your dreams come true!"

COLLEEN WEED
 274-1500 Office
 780-1561 Eves./Weekend



Nora Isacson
 Portland's Alternative Realtor

I have chosen to take a more human approach as a Realtor. I build my business on a referral basis and firmly believe that the satisfaction of my client is far more important than my financial gain. I communicate clearly and openly, and I'm always honest with my clients. I'll gladly climb a nearby tree to check on a roof or get a bit dirty investigating a crawl space or an attic. I work mainly in Portland's close-in Southeast and Northeast neighborhoods and specialize in older homes with character. Whether you're thinking of buying or selling, please do give me a call.

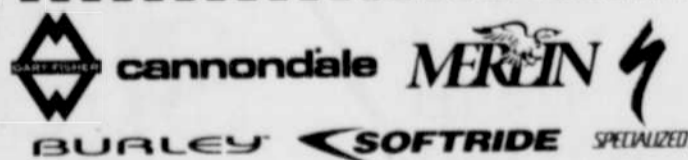
Nora Isacson

The Prudential Performance Group One, Inc. REALTORS®
 215 SE 102nd, Suite 300
 Portland, OR 97216
 (503) 256-1234
 VM/pgf 9503) 948-5610

Kids dig 'Em! and so will you!



We all love the freedom of two wheels. Here, at River City Bicycles, we know that everyone needs a little something different in a bike, that's why we make sure we have the best and the biggest selection of bikes and accessories for you to choose from. Whether you're poppin' wheelies or riding to your nine to five, we've got ya covered.



River City Bicycles

706 SE Martin Luther King Bl.
 (Across from Corno's, next to Morrison Br.)
 MON-FRI 10-8 SAT 10-6
 SUN 12-6

503 233-5973



THE AMAZON TRAIL

Creating support

The Mautner Project offers much-needed services to lesbians with cancer and their caregivers

by Lee Lynch

At 50, Gerry is a class A, old gay, good-looking, smooth-talking butch from North Dakota. She's been around the block a few times and has that twinkly, lovingly bemused, ultra-cool and quietly hot look in her eyes that takes decades to get down pat. You might say that I admire her. And she has breast cancer.

The news of her illness rocked me almost as if it were my own diagnosis. Aside from the fact that old gay butches are invincible—aren't we?—and that people my age are supposed to have a lot of years left on our engines, there is something about this particular classic model lesbian getting ill that's unthinkable. Once I got over the if-she's-vulnerable-then-what-does-that-make-me syndrome and looked at the situation of the real-life unattached Gerry, I began to worry about the what-ifs. What if the therapies don't work? Who will take care of her if she undergoes surgery? Who would be there for her if she doesn't get better?

Another friend, Debbie Morris, happened to call and tell me about The Mautner Project. She's a board member of this volunteer organization dedicated to helping lesbians with cancer, their partners and caregivers. I wanted to bundle Gerry up and transport her to Washington, D.C., where lesbians are actually living the women's movement dream of women caring for women.

How? By the determined leadership of its founder, Susan Hester, and the dykes who, with her, are willing to turn their losses and pain into service. Deb Morris is a prime example. A commuter, she'd see Susan at the train station and Susan would tease her, asking, "Are you ready to come on board?" But it was a process for Debbie.

The two women who raised her died of cancer. One of her friends was diagnosed. "She was a character," Deb told me. "She said, 'OK, we can go to board meetings together and make fun of the other board members.'" Then poet June Jordan, for whom Debbie has great respect, got sick. Not long after, Debbie, who was in broadcasting at the time, found herself working on a project about breast cancer and women of color.

"If you know anything about cancer rates, the Washington-Baltimore area has one of the highest cancer rates in the country. More African American women die of cancer than do women in the larger population." She stepped on board.

What does something like The Mautner Project do? Each lesbian family that calls gets a coordinator who organizes some of the nearly 200 volunteers to perform services like giving haircuts, making hospital visits, helping with problems like insurance. Women are referred to lesbian-sensitive physicians, therapists, support groups, and to other lesbians with the same type of cancer.

Her late partner's nurse told Susan Hester, "I've never known lesbians before and am just so moved by how you all create family." This kind of education makes all the difference in the world to someone like proud, independent Gerry who's likely to walk out on a biased physician and postpone or ignore a problem. Surveys show that OB/Gyn doctors particularly, and other health care providers in general, say they prefer not to treat lesbians.

How did Gerry's cancer go undetected for so long? Gerry's always worked at what she could

get, sometimes entrepreuneuring all her money away on sure things, other times taking straight jobs till she couldn't stand the pawing guys and the women who loved them. Every day at an office or a factory was a culture shock to her. She's had health insurance once or twice, but couldn't afford to keep it on her own. Even when she had it, she's one of those dykes who would rate pelvic exams about as high as a one-night stand with Newt Gingrich. She never thought about her breasts, except for a secret smugness that she was almost as flat-chested as she had been when she first came out—at age 11.

One of The Mautner Project's goals is targeted outreach, including advertising at lesbian community centers, bars, clubs and other places Gerry might go if she lived in D.C. She might have picked up a breast examination brochure. Might have talked with a woman who'd found an inexpensive clinic with a nurse practitioner who was cool about dykes. She might even have volunteered to drive someone to a doctor's appointment or helped a partner take some time off.

Susan Hester marvels, "It's remarkable that people give up the amount of time that they give up. Volunteers in direct service always say they get more than they give, see more strength and love than they've ever seen, and end up with close friendships."

For Hester, The Mautner Project started when her partner, Mary-Helen Mautner, was diagnosed with breast cancer. This year marks the sixth anniversary of her death, and the fifth anniversary of the project. An attorney, Mary-Helen Mautner left a page of notes outlining how a project could be structured to provide the kind of support and assistance she was receiving from Hester, family and friends.

As the project grew, so did the original vision, now Hester's life work. "We've just made available a great technical assistance manual that any small group of women can use to start a similar project. It's a resource that should cost \$100, but we're selling it for \$10."

The Mautner Project, explains one of their brochures, "recognizes that cancer is not just a personal trauma but a political issue." As long as Gerry remains intimidated by the health care system, as long as research money focuses on male health concerns, as long as information and services are not readily accessible to lesbians in her shoes, her life depends on groups like The Mautner Project.

The project is an amazing accomplishment. Every week it receives calls from people across the country. At this point it's not only directly touching the lives of women like Gerry, but is involved in presenting workshops and advising policy makers. The YWCA in Cleveland and the Little Red Door Cancer Agency in Indianapolis are two of the organizations that have asked for information to help them better serve the lesbians in their communities.

Help is coming, Gerry, hang on. You may not have to go through this alone.

The Mautner Project can be reached at 1707 L Street NW, Suite 1060, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 332-5536.

