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since 1983

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Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. **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 **just out** office by 3 pm the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue, along with payment. Ads may be accepted by telephone with VISA or MasterCard payment.

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

Subscriptions to just out are available for \$17.50 for 12 issues. First Class (in an envelope) is \$30 for 12 issues.

A copy of **just out** is available for \$2. Advertising rates are available on request.

The mailing address and telephone numbers for **just out** are PO Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400; (503) 236-1252. The phone number for the advertising department is 236-1253. Our fax number is 236-1257. Our e-mail address is JustOut2@aol.com.

steppin' out



Portlander Mary Larsen atop the Marquam Bridge for the Providence Bridge Pedal, held Sunday, Aug. 10. The cycle tour of the city's causeways, which came with a six- or nine-bridge option, drew 10,000 participants, many of them queer. Event proceeds went in part to the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and the Willamette Light Brigade.

PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

guest editorial

Visibility bites

Cunanan has bumped Ellen as the public's queer flavor of the day, but the rest of us are in for the long haul

by Kerry Lobel

I fly a lot. And although I hate to admit it, my airplane reading is usually found on the racks of airport bookstores. For example, right now I'm reading Tom Clancy's *Executive Orders*, a story about the devastation of our government as we know it. Last week I read Sandra Brown's *Exclusive*, the story of a first lady and a president whose child has mysteriously died. As my mind wanders through these stories' twists and turns, I imagine that I could come up with a better plot line.

Here's my latest premise: The main character is the executive director of San Diego Pride. She's planning for one of the nation's largest pride events, including an afternoon parade, an evening rally and two full days of festivals. She's under siege by media from throughout the world. FBI agents and other law enforcement officials swarm around her. She's wondering if an alleged murderer will turn up back home for the event. She's building community. And she's trying to keep perspective while shielding herself from the glare of the country's spotlight.

As the story develops, the alleged murderer takes his own life just days before Pride. Over 100,000 participants attend Pride—a record number. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers, the Pride event ranks as one of the best ever. The executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is there as keynote speaker to mark the momentous event.

Of course, the story is true. And of course, it doesn't have such a tidy ending.

When organizers of San Diego's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Pride celebration chose the slogan "Share the Vision—Equality Through Visibility," little did they know just how much their visibility would be put to the test. As a community, we've been put to the test as well.

We've moved in a few short months from Ellen Morgan to Andrew Cunanan. Many of us expected that a backlash would follow Ellen's coming out, yet few of us could have imagined the degree to which the media would create a new character: the HIV-crazed homosexual prostitute on a murderous rampage.

Ellen was the girl next door. Andrew was America's most wanted criminal suspect. Ellen was proof that if America knew us, America would love us. Andrew represented the country's and our own worst fears.

The truth is that our visibility comes in many shapes and with many stories. And for some of these stories, the spin will be beyond our control. We will continue to work to build the vision and shape the message about our own communities. Our road to equality will be filled with episodes that nurture, attack and challenge us.

But there's no turning back, and we're in for a wild ride.

Kerry Lobel is executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

contents

VOL. 14 NO. 20 AUGUST 15, 1997

FEATURES

To be or not to be 'me'

Some queers chafe at being asked to tone down their dress and behavior on the job
(p. 19)

Reclaiming the word

A gay theologian uncovers the origins of the age-old 'sodomy' bugaboo
(p. 17)

DEPARTMENTS

World news

Argentine teachers union grants benefits to the partner of its only out gay member
(p. 4)

National news

Log Cabin calls on the GOP to adopt a neutral stance on abortion rights; AIDS officials and activists debate morning-after treatments
(pp. 5-9)

Local news

Journalist Sandy Nelson asks U.S. Supreme Court to hear her case; Oregon sexual minority community ponders a proactive antidiscrimination measure
(pp. 10-15)

COLUMNS

Enough about me

An insulated KFC tote bag can't keep you warm when your idealism is gone
(p. 34)

ARTS

Music

The Indigo Girls would be closer to fine with some respect from the mainstream media
(p. 29)

Entertainment

Artquake is dead: long live Art in the Pearl
(p. 30)

Pretty in print

Breezy book briefs to keep you cool
(p. 31)

Cinema

The Watermelon Woman takes a refreshing bite into sex, race and cultural history; Kiss Me, Guido is a goofy, carefree romp
(pp. 32-33)