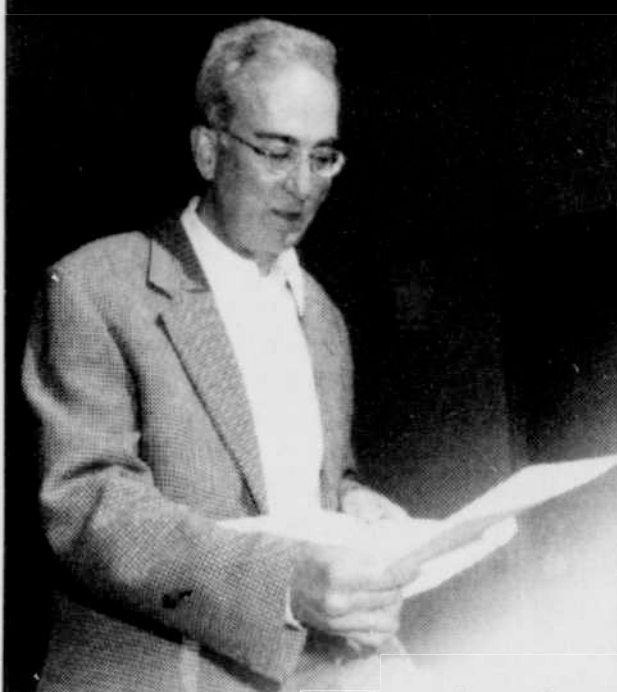


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LOCAL news

MULTIMEDIA BLITZ

Out checks out Portland, Providence Health System does good while Fox Sports Northwest does bad by women's b-ball fans by Inga Sorensen

Portland is slated to be among 10 U.S. cities profiled as gay- and lesbian-friendly metropolises in the June issue of *Out* magazine.

Free-lance journalist Bruce Shenitz, a third-generation New Yorker who had not previously spent time in the Pacific Northwest, was in the Rose City recently getting the local queer lowdown from, among others, attorney Hala Gores, president of the Portland Area Business Association, a lesbian and gay business network, and the Rev. Roy Cole, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland.

Shenitz's itinerary included visits to the Portland Police Bureau, Mayor Vera Katz's office, the sprawling West Burnside Powell's City of Books,

As for any Portland surprises, Shenitz, who lives on the Big Apple's cramped Upper West Side, answers: "I wasn't expecting the amount of open space I saw within the city, like around Powell's."

As for how Portland landed on the list (many queers here view the city as relatively friendly, but some folks in places like New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles tend to overlook this place), the idea was pitched by Donna Red Wing, the former head of the Portland-based Lesbian Community Project who now works in D.C. as the national field director for the Human Rights Campaign.

"Bruce called me for ideas about possible places he should cover for his article. I told him that Portland must be on the list," says Red Wing, who still owns a Northeast Portland home, though she and her partner, Sumitra, only get back a few days a year.

"Aesthetically Portland

In a soothing, even voice the woman says, in part: "I don't care if you're old. I don't care if you're gay...I'll take care of you."

The "nurse" also says she'll take care of folks regardless of whether they have "hate in their heart," live in a beautiful house, or have a pierced nose.

Renée King, Providence's communications coordinator, says the ad ran in Seattle this past fall, and started airing in the Portland market in February.

"Response in both places has been very positive," she says. "Probably if the feedback had been negative in Seattle, we would have thought twice about running the campaign in Portland, but that didn't happen."

King says she has fielded a number of calls from local viewers who simply thank Providence for running an inclusive commercial.

She admits there had been some discussion among personnel as to whether Providence clients, or potential clients, would be put off by the gay-positive ad.

"But we felt that it was vital our core values come through in the campaign," she says. "Those values are compassion, justice, respect and excellence."

According to King, Providence worked with the Los Angeles office of the national agency BVK/McDonald in crafting the campaign.

The e-mail message came flying across my computer screen: "Your coverage of the final game of the ABL championship series sucked! Next year if you contract to air the series, do it right!"

The target of the message was Fox Sports Northwest, a regionally-aired cable sports channel which is part of the national Fox Sports Network.

A dyke friend and fellow Portland Power season ticketholder zapped me a copy of her curt, frustration-laden missive, which I and untold numbers of other women's basketball junkies could easily relate to.

Though the Power didn't make it into the American Basketball League's championship series, many fans were still interested in the Long Beach StingRays versus Columbus Quest contest.

On March 15, the exciting series went to a fifth and final game, which, for starters, was aired locally on a tape delay rather than live. What's worse, however, is that six minutes of the second quarter, the entire half time and the post-game MVP ceremony were edited out.

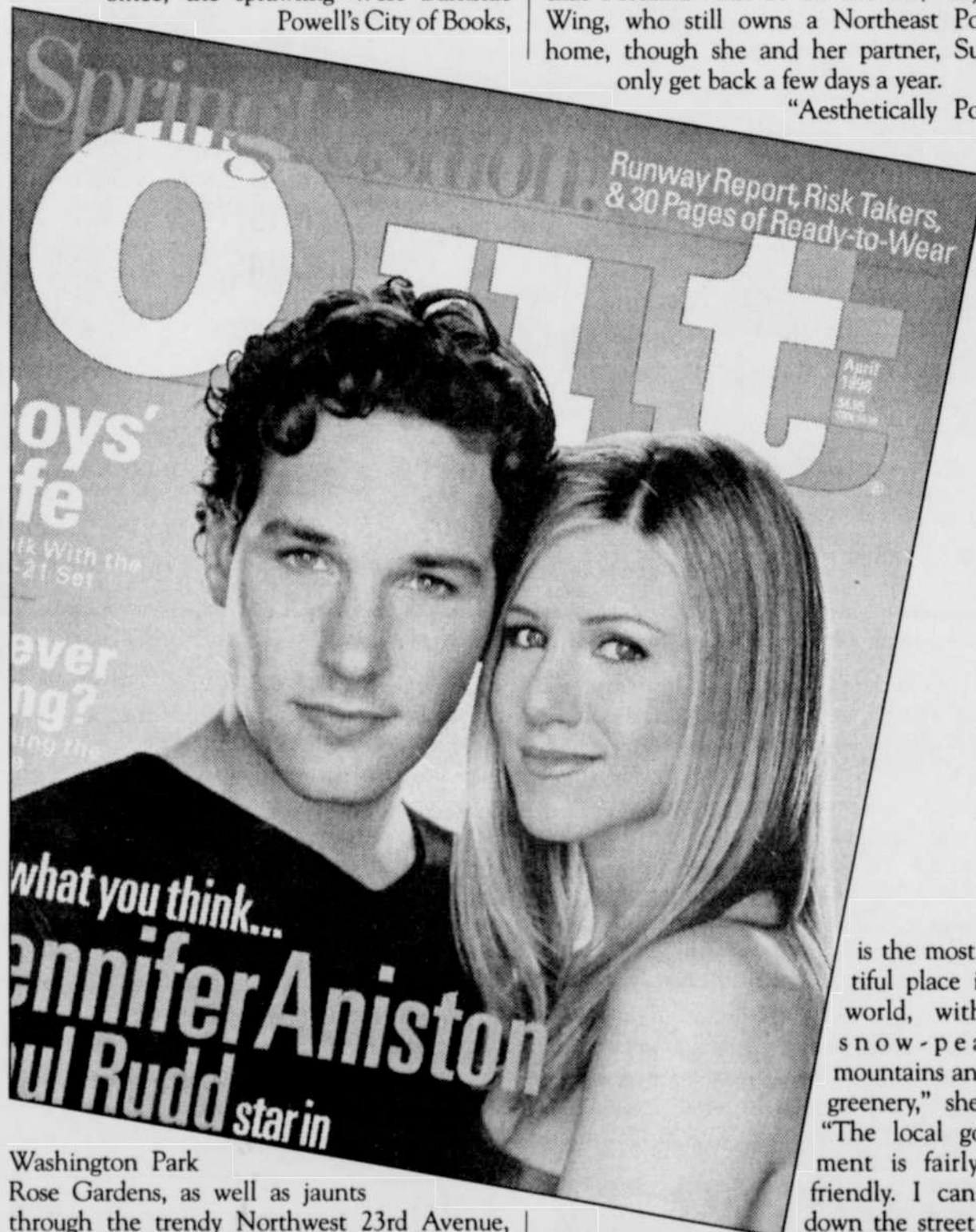
To add insult to injury, the butchering didn't occur so Fox Sports Northwest could, for example, quickly jump to a live broadcast of some major sporting event.

No, viewers were instead treated to the entire broadcast of the less timely *Goin' Deep*, a prepackaged national Fox Sports program about—what else—guy jocks galore.

"*Goin' Deep*, huh? Isn't that appropriate?" chirped my angry pal, the sarcasm dripping.

Fox Sports Northwest spokesman Dennis Johnson tells *Just Out* the Bellevue, Wash.-based affiliate received many calls and e-mails from viewers complaining about the coverage.

"Given that it was such an important game, we should have, in retrospect, aired the entire thing and then joined *Goin' Deep*," he says. "Someone should have told the tape operator to do that. It didn't happen, but it will next time."



is the most beautiful place in the world, with the snow-peaked mountains and lush greenery," she says. "The local government is fairly gay-friendly. I can walk down the street holding my girlfriend's

hand. There's a long history of gay and lesbian politics. I told Bruce it would be a huge oversight not to include Portland."

Red Wing's other recommended must-see spot? Columbus, Ohio.

"It is gorgeous and incredibly queer-friendly. If you've got some vacation time this summer, check it out," she advises.

Providence Health System has launched a new and notable television ad campaign in the Portland media market.

One commercial, shot in drama-inducing black and white, features a young woman who is supposed to be a Providence nurse. To heighten the effect, it includes some very close-in facial shots and a dark, sparse backdrop.

Washington Park

Rose Gardens, as well as jaunts through the trendy Northwest 23rd Avenue, Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard, and Northeast Broadway business districts.

Upon Shenitz's late-afternoon arrival, Gores and a handful of PABA members wine and dined the reporter at Zefiro on Northwest 21st Avenue and then dropped in at the Brazen Bean, a swanky cigar bar around the corner.

"I think [the article] will be a boost to Portland. Perhaps more gays and lesbians will visit, or come to stay. That's what I'd like—more and more lesbians and gay men to move here. The more the better," Gores laughs.

Shenitz, 42, says *Out* editors were not comfortable publicly disclosing the other cities on their profile list this early, but he concedes he was gathering info on (and in) Seattle immediately prior to his Portland delve.

"Seattle was bigger than I had expected," he tells *Just Out*.