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LOCAL news

MEDIA MOMENTS

From mysteriously disappearing *Just Outs* to national magazines and fabulous fashion sense, queer news abounds nationally, locally, and in the trash by Inga Sorensen

OREGON PUBLIC TRASHING

Lisa Gonzales used to enjoy grabbing a *Just Out* from the stack in the Oregon Public Broadcasting lunchroom. After all, it was how Gonzales—and several other lesbian and gay employees—kept up on queer happenings.

"Someone recently asked, 'When's gay pride?' And we didn't know and couldn't even check *Just Out*," explains the 36-year-old master control operator for OPB's television section.

It's not that *Just Out* isn't regularly delivered to OPB; it is, and has been for quite some time.

But Gonzales, who has been with the station for three years, began noticing weird things happening to copies of *Just Out* at OPB. Most notably, copies of the paper were becoming harder and harder to come by.

"I always used to look forward to seeing them in our lunchroom," she says.

During the past several months, she would check for new issues and often come up empty-handed. One day, she looked in a recycling bag and found a stack of recently distributed *Just Outs*.

"It was a brand new stack," she says. "So I dug them out and put them back."

Not long after, she noticed the stack missing again and looked in the recycling bag, only to find them buried again.

"So I dug them out again," she says. "It was definitely deliberate."

According to Gonzales, this happened frequently over many months, prompting her to approach OPB's human resources director, Debbie Rotich.

"I told her what was happening. She agreed it was wrong and said she'd look into it," Gonzales reports.

A month went by, Gonzales says, and she heard nothing back. She eventually sent a missive about the problem to the union and to management.

"I said OPB was condoning [the trashing actions] by not doing anything about it," she says.

Gonzales says Rotich finally, after copious prodding, issued an April 24 memo to staff, which read: "The employee lunchroom is for everyone's use. Let's go over some common rules of courtesy that apply: If you make a mess, clean it up. This includes eating materials, tables, microwave, etc.

"If you post materials on the bulletin board, remove it when it is no longer timely.

"Books in the lenders' library—remember to return them so others may enjoy.

"Newspapers: Don't take sections of the *Oregonian* out of the lunchroom—it's for people's use in the lounge.

"Leave the *Oregonian* in some semblance of order, makes it easier for the next reader.

"Don't toss other newspapers out—they're placed in the lounge for everyone's use; while you may not want to read a particular newspaper, others may."

"It was a totally inadequate response," says Gonzales. "It didn't even mention *Just Out* or anything about what was going on."

For a few weeks the problem seemed to disappear, "but it now seems to be happening again," Gonzales says.

She adds that several other employees are

upset by the mysterious disappearances of *Just Out*, as well as management's response.

During a June 16 conversation, Rotich told *Just Out* she was initially asked by concerned employees to keep the situation "low-key," hence the nonspecific nature of the April 24 memo. (Gonzales denies Rotich was asked to go low-key.)

"I think it's time to be more specific," says Rotich. "We tried outlining general rules, but now I think we have to mention *Just Out* specifically.... We have to be more aggressive."

FROM FINANCIAL ADVICE
TO FASHION ADVICE

Floreid Walker was just out enjoying a Portland gallery walk with a couple of gay male friends during a recent First Thursday.

Walker, a longtime lesbian activist and a familiar face in *Just Out* ads (Waddell & Reed Financial Services), was looking sharp: black pantsuit, cream silk blouse, gold pin at the neck, black cuff links.

"But it was the vest that really made the outfit," says Walker, who describes the vest design as a cream, black and gold brocade. "It's quite something."

So there she was, going about her business when a woman runs up to her and says, "You're dressed like the type of person we'd like in our article."

It was an *Oregonian* fashion writer who was pulling together profiles of selected people and their respective styles.



Next thing Walker knows, a photographer is snapping shots, and she's talking fashion sense.

"Dress for success, that's my fashion philosophy," says Walker. "I told the writer I was a financial advisor and needed to look successful. She then asked me if I was successful and I said, 'Well, yes.'"

Walker landed in the June 14 Sunday *Oregonian*.

"It was totally spontaneous. The reporter didn't know me or know about my political involvement," she says. "It was all about fashion."

MAGS TOUT
QUEER PORTLAND

Portland landed on the queer media map a couple of times in June via nationally-distributed magazines.

Perhaps most notable was the Rose City's selection by *Out* as one of its "10 choice cities to call home."



The spotlight was not unexpected, however. In our April 3 issue, we told you an *Out* freelancer from New York City was in town to get a taste of queer Portland. Bruce Shenitz, who had not previously been to the Pacific Northwest, had dropped down from his perusal of Seattle, another top 10 gay spot.

While in Portland, he was wined and dined by attorney Hala Gores, president of the Portland Area Business Association, and other PABA members, at Zefiro on Northwest 21st Avenue. He met with the Rev. Roy Cole, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, and he visited the Portland Police Bureau, Mayor Vera Katz's office, Powell's Books and a handful of other locales.

Shenitz's report doesn't offer much in the way of substantive info about queer Portland, rather it's mostly tidbits—some of which have no queer-specific implications at all. For instance, he mentions that the "beautiful Mount Tabor Park contains the only extinct volcano within the limits of a U.S. city."

That's interesting in an encyclopedic kind of way, but what does it have to do with queers' supposed attraction to Portland? (Perhaps one could concede that lots of gay men, lesbians, bisexual and trans folk hike, hike and roam the sprawling park with their unleashed dogs.)

Among the other benefits to being queer here? According to *Out*, "you can use your Seattle wardrobe."

The other tapped cities are: the perennial faves Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco; the not-too-surprising Atlanta and Minneapolis-St. Paul; and in the "who knew?" category, Durham, N.C., Columbus, Ohio, and Las Vegas.

Portland also landed on the queer map—literally—in the June issue of *Girlfriends*, a slick monthly which focuses on lesbian culture, politics and entertainment.

The publication features a two-page spread that includes a map of the United States and little queer snippets about each state.

Seattle and Olympia get the mentions for