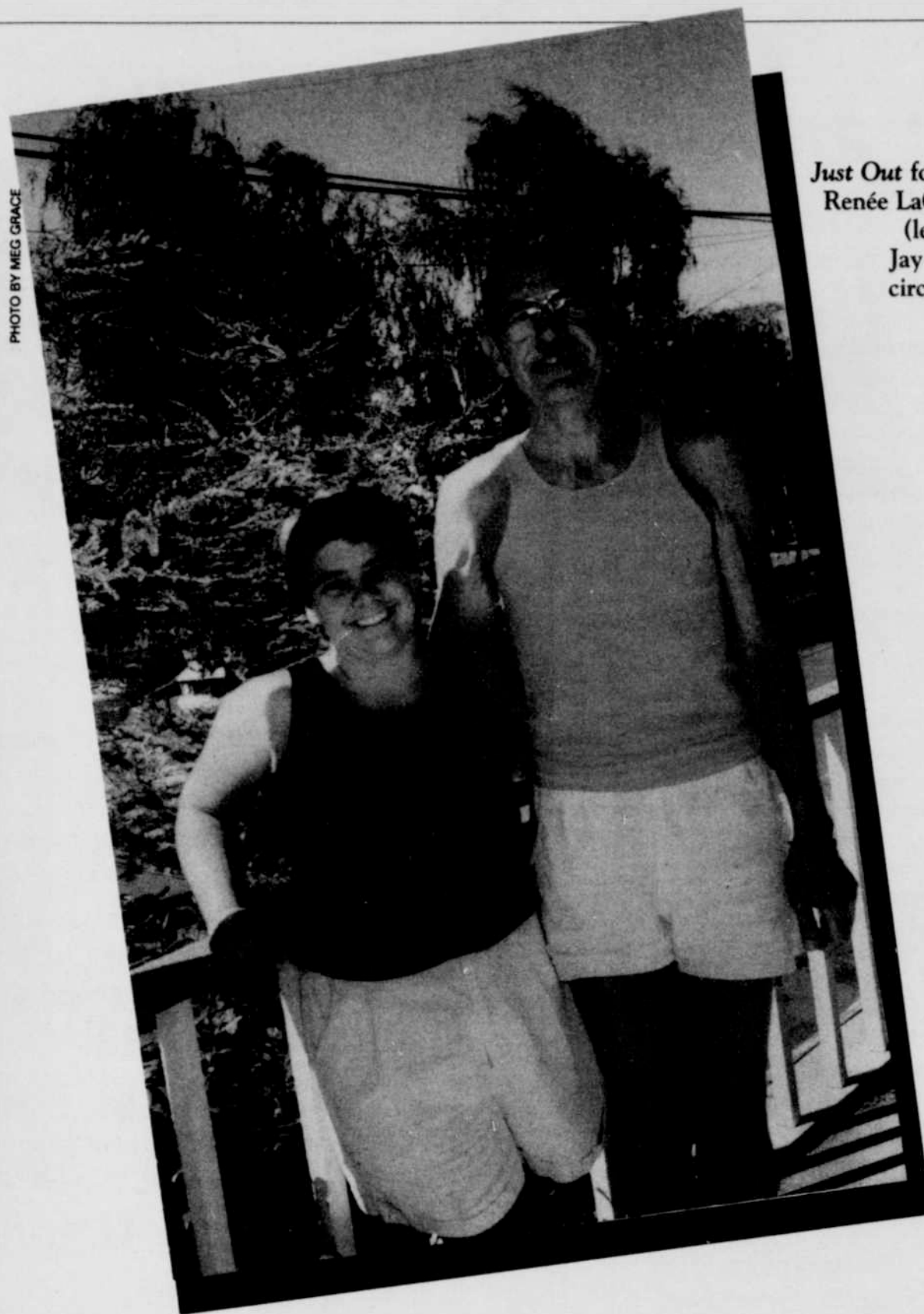


Celebrating 15 Years

It was the fall of 1983. Jay Brown and I were enjoying a bright September day lounging on the lawn in Portland's Waterfront Park. The southwest hills were calico and the autumn light lay low in the sky. We were thumbing through the index of Roget's Thesaurus, brainstorming a name for the newspaper we were going to begin publishing.

We didn't have a clear idea for a name, we just knew it had to be "out." So under "out" we searched: "out with," "be out of it," "be out of one's mind"—we laughed. Then, there it was: "just out." "Yes!" we exclaimed simultaneously. Just Out—what a great name for a queer paper. Of course, we had no idea what we were getting into

PHOTO BY MEG GRACE



Just Out founders
Renée LaChance
(left) and
Jay Brown
circa 1987

THROUGH ADVERSITY TO DIVERSITY

*The co-founder recalls the long road to
Just Out's 15th anniversary*

BY RENÉE LACHANCE

what we were getting into. Jay was in the autumn of his life at 48, and I was in the spring of mine at 24. We were both idealistic, full of newfound political consciousness, and we both possessed a drive and desire to get the word out.

We had a name, and with the \$300 Jay got from selling an antique couch, we hooked up a phone in an office space by Lincoln High School on Southwest Salmon Street in Portland. We were in business.

Over the next 15 years, Just Out would follow in the footsteps of publications that had come before it. Like its predecessors, Just Out would provide information and support to individuals who were taking their first steps in the coming out process. The paper would act as ambassador for our community, greet ignorance with knowledge and trepidation

with positive stories of lesbians and gay men.

Just Out would watch, report and educate as so many members of our community died from complications of AIDS.

We at Just Out would mourn as three members of our own staff would die, including Jay in 1990.

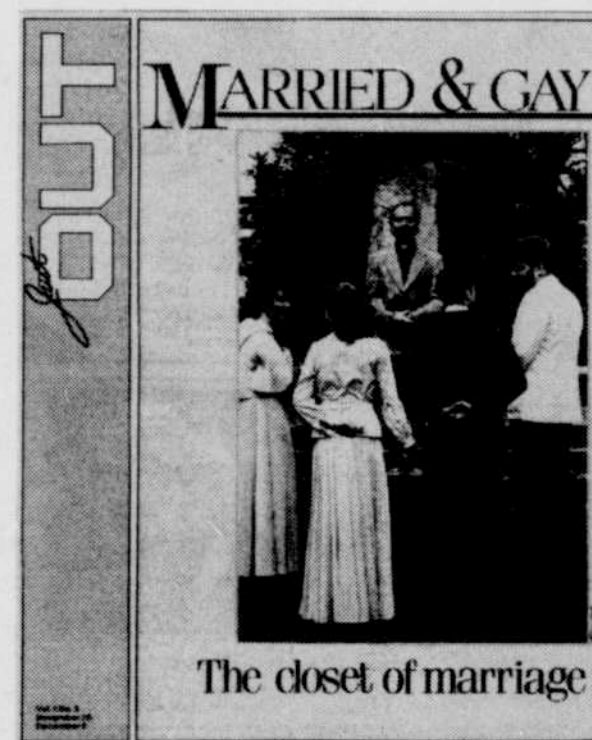
Over the years, many readers would trust Just Out for their news, information and potluck or cocktail party conversation starters.

The publication was pivotal in the evolution of many businesses and organizations. Our lesbian and gay community was just budding in 1983. The Portland Lesbian Choir, Bridges Vocal Choir, the Lesbian Community Project,

the Rose City Freedom Band and the Rose-town Ramblers did not exist. These groups and many others placed their first announcements in Just Out before growing to be vibrant organizations in our community.

It's hard to remember when gay was the love that dared not speak its name. How many of us got our first look at the lesbian and gay community by going to a bar and then—if we didn't leave with a newfound love—walking out with the local gay paper tucked under our arm? Often those bar rags and tabloids were our first look at a larger gay community.

Just Out has always taken its sovereign responsibility as a member of the lesbian and gay press seriously. Since the 1940s, the queer press has affirmed the community it serves and documented the homophobia mainstream and alternative publications ignore. It has provided a forum to discuss the issues of the times. That is what getting the word out meant to us: the word about homophobia and oppression, the word about who lesbians and gay men are and what we do.



Those words solidified and grew this community. Those words saw us through the hard times and the good times. Over the years, we rallied around words and each other.

In 1988, Priscilla Martin, a local anti-abortion and anti-gay-rights activist, was spotted throwing out stacks of Just Out. She and Jay often verbally battled one another at rallies and demonstrations. We created and distributed a flyer so community watchdogs could report Martin in the act of hijacking the newspaper. People confronted her, and her attacks eventually stopped.

In August 1989, we called on readers to boycott all Alpenrose Dairy products after Alpenrose Dairy instructed Food Front Cooperative Grocery not to advertise Alpenrose products in gay publications, specifically Just Out. Food Front had included an Alpenrose logo in an advertisement that appeared in several issues. Food Front, People's Food Store Co-Op and Nature's Fresh Northwest all dropped Alpenrose products from their shelves in response.

