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# Just Out



**inside**

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PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER



## The Gift of Gab

Pride Northwest's Conversations Project proves the healing power of honest dialogue

BY INGA SORENSEN

**O**K, so here we are pushing the new millennium, and we're all supposed to be traveling the Infobahn. It's a global village, right? Even when you're snarled in the remote jungle there's a good chance some techno-gizmo will allow you to communicate with someone, somewhere.

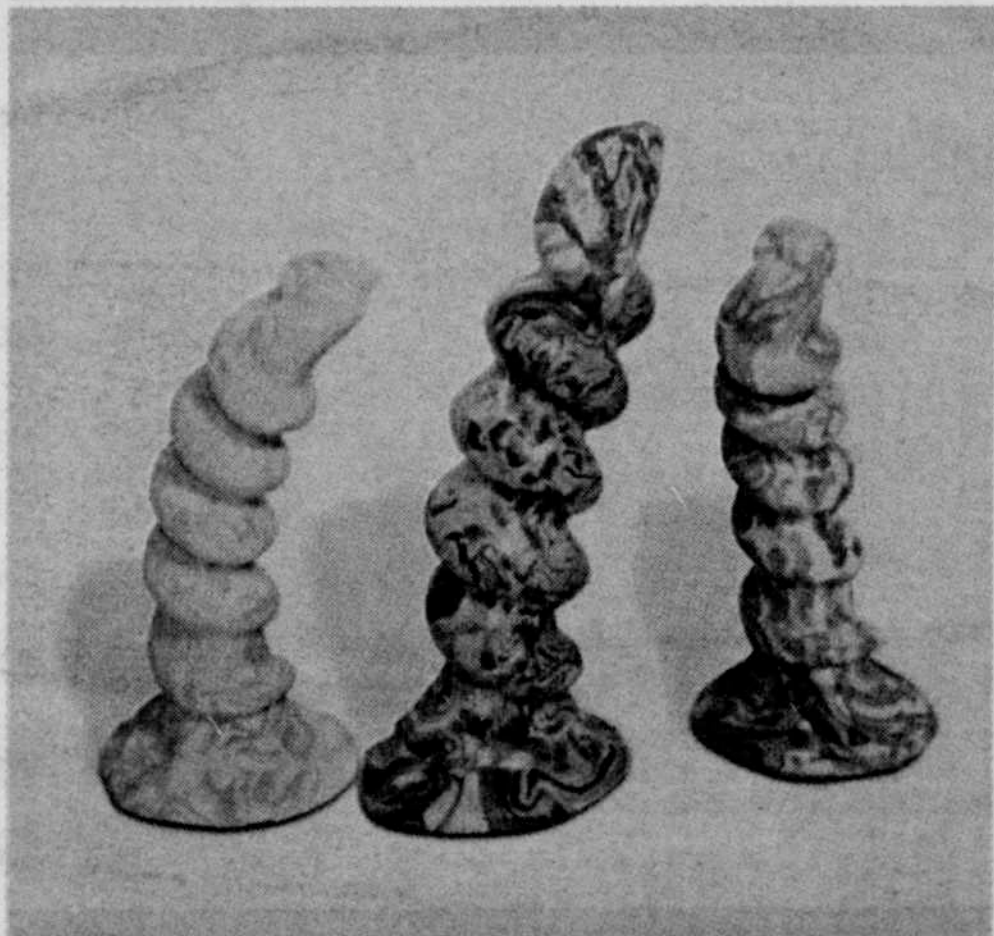
Given that, why does it feel as though, at least in much of U.S. culture, connecting with others on some meaningful level is an elusive destination? Drivers are often peevish and pushy, strangers can't cough up a piddling "thank you" when a door is held open, someone says "blue" and someone else hears "red."

Perhaps it's time to swap that computer, television or movie screen for some in-the-flesh, face-to-face time getting to know folks. Take it a step farther: Make them be people you view as "different" or "the unknown."

One more challenge? Pumping vigor into the seemingly weakening art of conversation. That's right, sit down and actually talk to people, perhaps carving a bond where none previously existed.

For the past several months, that's exactly what participants of the Conversations Project have been doing.

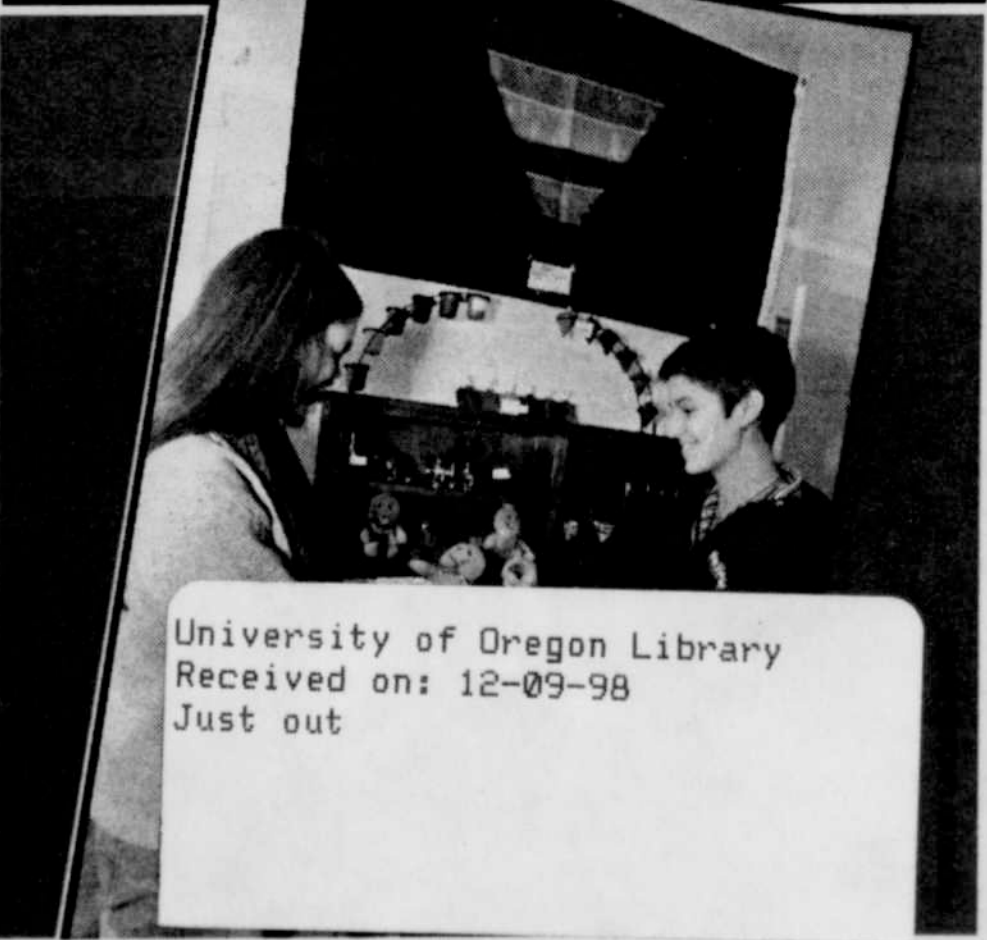
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# NAUGHTY OR NICE?

*For everyone on your list, Just Out offers gift suggestions that beat the heck out of fruitcake*

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## A softer Sandra?

Has motherhood mellowed Sandra Bernhard?

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