

# Just Out

VOLUME 16 + NUMBER 4 + DECEMBER 18, 1998



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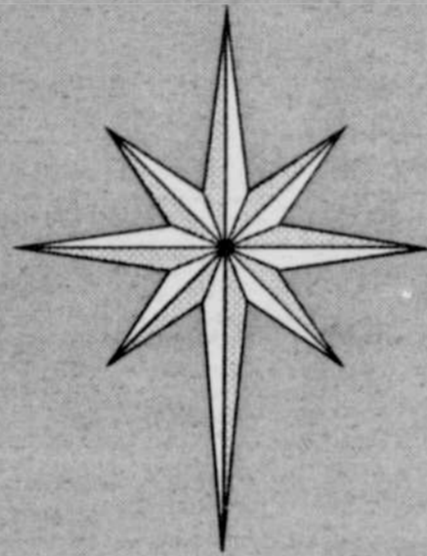
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Portland, Oregon FREE

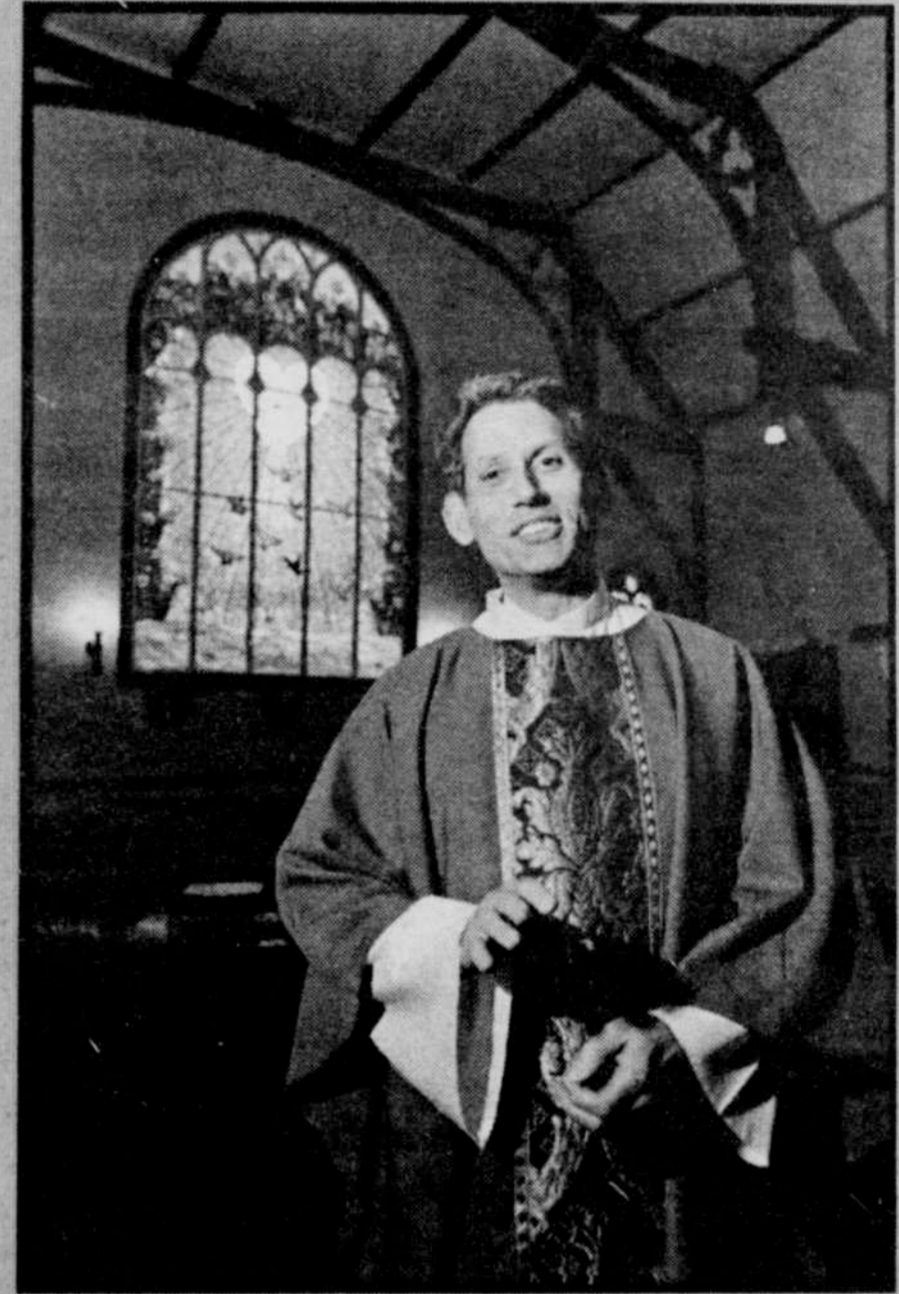
PHOTOS BY LINDA KLEWER



## KEEPING THE FAITH



The Rev. Frodo Okulam (left) and the Rev. Roy Cole



The acoustic environment has changed. Like Quasimodo, thousands of queer Oregonians are plagued by the bells. According to the Portland Salvation Army's public relations office, there are 420 Salvation Army kettles in the Portland metropolitan region.

We're charitable people, we give a lot. But this seasonal tradition understandably leaves us hedging. "Is the Salvation Army anti-queer?" we ask ourselves. They say they don't discriminate, but they lost their contract with the city of San Francisco over queer issues.

It's like a million other debates that illustrate the precarious position of queers and spirituality. Some use it to attack us, some of us use it to attack ourselves, and some of us escape persecution via spirituality. Whether you have a spiritual faith or not, there's no denying that spirituality influences the queer community mightily, for better or worse.

Just Out has profiled some of the people in our community with strong feelings about their own spirituality. There's a long list of queer supportive spirituality groups in the area, so it wasn't difficult to find people to talk to.

What was difficult was finding non-Christians. In some ways, organized queer spirituality is still new. For example, queer Muslims reportedly held their first international gathering just this year with an expected crowd of only 60 people. And what of Hindus? We don't know of any queer Hindu groups. At least not in Oregon.

Accordingly, the following profiles reflect the general makeup of queer spirituality in our back yard. There are, of course, infinite variations and possibilities. Here are just a few.

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## Kudos to the Court

The Oregon Court of Appeals gives gay folks plenty of cheer

BY INGA SORENSEN

Four-year-old Jacob Chickadonz rested on his parent's lap serenely noshing a cookie, while his sister Katie, 7, roosted in a seat of her very own, entranced in her reading material.

The siblings gave scant notice to the television cameras that soaked in their little images, nor did they seem moved by the slew of reporters poised before them tossing questions at their mothers and their moms' attorney.

"You mean all those [same-sex couples] who are getting married don't get the same rights?" inquired one television reporter.

"Are you now going to mount an assault on the private sector?" asked another.

From left: attorney Carl Kiss; Christine Tanner; Barbara Limandri; Lisa, Jacob and Katie Chickadonz

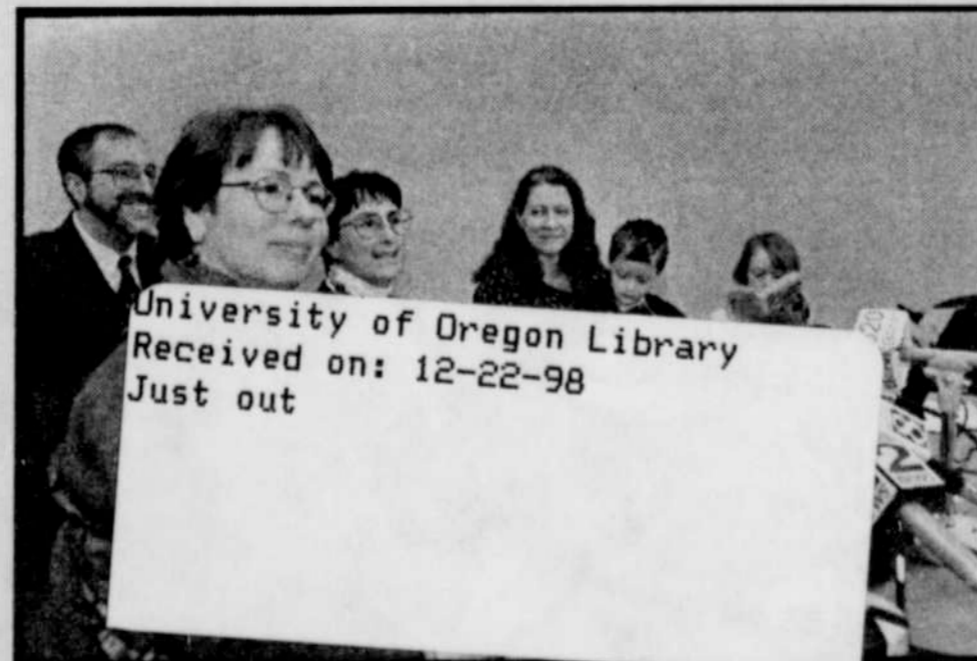


PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

"What about same-sex roommates, will this apply to them?"

The tenor and content of the questions highlighted the widespread ignorance in the mainstream media when it comes to the issue of rights for gay men and lesbians.

Still, while the queries were jolting to the more well-versed in queer life, it really didn't seem to matter much at this particular—and beautifully historic—moment.

On Dec. 9, the Oregon Court of Appeals issued a ruling stipulating that all state and local governments in Oregon must offer spousal benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of their employees.

The ruling stemmed from a lawsuit by three lesbian employees at Oregon Health Sciences University who claimed their domestic partners were entitled to benefits. The unanimous three-judge panel said denying the benefits violated the equal protection provisions of the Oregon Constitution.

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