

PHOTO BY LINDA KLIEWER


just out
 The IN publication for the OUT population

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EDITORIAL

BY MARTY DAVIS

Acting humanely

Just Out works with the Oregon Humane Society for a good cause

Bubba, Angel and Henri. These are the first three of the new ongoing "Pet of the Week" ads sponsored by *Just Out* in conjunction with the Oregon Humane Society. These three pets represent only the proverbial tip of the iceberg in relation to the number of animals available for adoption at the shelter.

Three times now I have gone there to take pictures and three times I have left nearly in tears. It's the dogs that hurt me the most. Unlike their feline neighbors, they offer no pretense of disdain, they flaunt no air of indifference. No, they simply rush to greet all visitors with excited cries of "Pick me, pick me! I'll be good, pick me!"

As gay men and lesbians, we cherish our pets. Our community and our unique culture abound with tales of gay men and their cats; of lesbians and their dogs and their Subaru wagons.

We treat our pets as family members; perhaps we even treat them better than family members. Pets provide us an outlet for our need to nurture and to be caretakers. Pets are accepting, loving and totally dependent upon us to provide for their needs. They provide companionship, security, laughter and an endless supply of soggy, sloppy tennis balls. Lovers come and go, friends ebb and flow; yet the cat remains steadfastly sprawled across the dining room table. As constant as cat hair in the morning toast, pets remain loyal.

A word of caution, however, should you find yourself relying too heavily on a pet for emotional comfort. Pets are meant to enhance

your life and help you grow as a person. They are not meant to replace healthy relationships with other human beings. Cherish and care for your animals, but not at the expense of your own maturity and development.

Yes, it's easy to walk a dog, and it can be very hard to build bonds of trust and love with other people. Yes, the pet will be better behaved and you always get to be the boss, but is that what's really best for you? We need people also, no matter how annoying they can be.

If you are thinking of taking on a new pet, I encourage you to visit the Oregon Humane Society, which is currently filled beyond capacity with cast-off pets. There are dogs of all shapes and sizes and cats of all dispositions. There's a rabbit and rodent room, and now and then a goat, chicken or duck is known to pass through.

While most of us embrace the notion of the upcoming warm weather, the Oregon Humane Society goes on alert because its busiest time of the year is just ahead. The unwanted spring litters of non-neutered and unsplayed cats and dogs will soon fill every possible nook and cranny of the shelter.

If a new pet isn't in your plans at this time, the shelter welcomes donations of money and time. Volunteers are always needed for animal care. If your circumstances don't allow you a pet, this would be an excellent way for you to be a "surrogate" owner.

You will benefit as much as the animals. Trust me.

FOUNDERS • Jay Brown, Renée LaChance

PUBLISHER • Marty Davis

NEWS EDITOR • Inga Sorensen

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR • Will O'Bryan

COPY EDITORS • Christopher D. Cuttone, Will O'Bryan

STAFF WRITERS • Patrick Collins, Gip Plaster, Holly Pruett, Rex Wockner

CALENDAR EDITOR • Debby Morgan

CONTRIBUTORS • Kristine Chatwood, Tim Joyce, Lee Lynch, Christopher McQuain, Bob Roehr, D. Richmond, Suzanne Sigmund, Flora Sussely

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR • Meg Grace

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE • Patrick Collins

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR • Christopher D. Cuttone

GRAPHIC DESIGN • Rupert Kinnard

PRODUCTION • Oriana Green

PHOTOGRAPHER • Linda Kliewer

OFFICE MANAGER • Oriana Green

DISTRIBUTION • Amy Aycrigg, Kathy Bethel, Ed Carder, Mary Hauer, Marie Price, Ruth Traut, David Wardell

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Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. Announcements regarding life transitions (births, deaths, unions, etc.) should be limited to 200 words; photos are welcome. **Deadline for submissions** to the editorial department and for the *Calendar* is the Thursday 15 days before the next publication date. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The **display advertising** deadline is the Monday 12 days before the next publication date.

Classified ads must be received at the *just out* office by 3 p.m. on the Monday 12 days before the next publication date, along with payment. Ads may be accepted by telephone with VISA or MasterCard payment.

Ad policy. No sexually exploitative advertising will be accepted. Compensation for errors in, or cancellation of, advertising will be made with credit toward future advertising.

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Contact *just out* at PO Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400; (503) 236-1252, advertising: 236-1253, fax: 236-1257; e-mail: justout@justout.com.