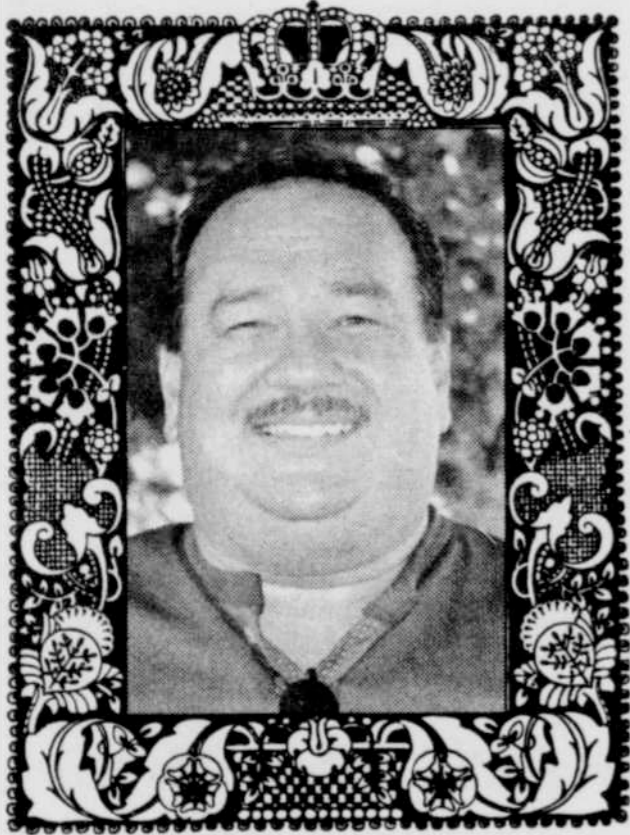


Steve BULGER

Steve Bulger lives in the suburbs. Wood Village to be exact. Why? Because it's his home. It's where he lived as a straight married man and it's where he enjoys his friendships and sense of neighborhood community. He shares his home with his partner of seven years, Heath Britt.

Bulger enjoys maintaining the yard and gardens of the couple's hillside home. One of his special interests is the duo's large fish pond stocked with more than 20 koi of all shapes and sizes.

Bulger also has a career as an antique dealer. He maintains booth space in antique malls in Seaside and Lafayette, Ore., and Centralia, Wash. Honoring his goal of visiting each store once a month keeps Bulger on the road a good deal of the time. When not stocking and maintaining his retail inventory, he also sets up shop temporarily at antique shows that are promoted



several times a year at the Expo Center and Convention Center in Portland. His specialty is oriental objects d'art.

Of gay pride, he says: "I'm proud of the way that my family and friends support me."

He tells of his friend and neighbor, a 70-year-old woman, who describes Bulger as her "best friend," making it clear that, whether straight or gay, Bulger is a man she admires and holds dear. M.D.

Dionne FOX

Dionne Fox loves kids. "I'll be marching with them," says the 26-year-old facilitator of Rainbow, a Portland-area social and support group for queer young people, particularly youths of color.

"It's amazing working with kids because they have so much energy," Fox says with a stellar smile. "It seems they don't really care as much about what people think, so they're more willing—and seem more comfortable—coming out. That, needless to say, is thanks to the people who have come before them and paved the way."

Fox, who moved to Portland in the early



1990s, began paving the way after coming out as a lesbian while attending college in Boulder, Colo.

These days she's quite the role model for young African American lesbians and other queer youths of color.

"It feels good to know that you're doing something for your community, that you're making a difference," she says.

Fox says she marched in her first pride parade two or three years back. "It was an amazing feeling, I just completely tingled because of all the support. It also reminded me of the diversity that we have within our own community." I.S.

Brenda FRAZIER

This is not your garden variety dyke. "I'm really proud I'm a butch dyke, and I'm comfortable in my own skin—comfortable how I look, how I dress, how I talk," Frazier says with a confident jut of her chin. This is a woman who has invented herself from the inside out and created an artistic triumph.

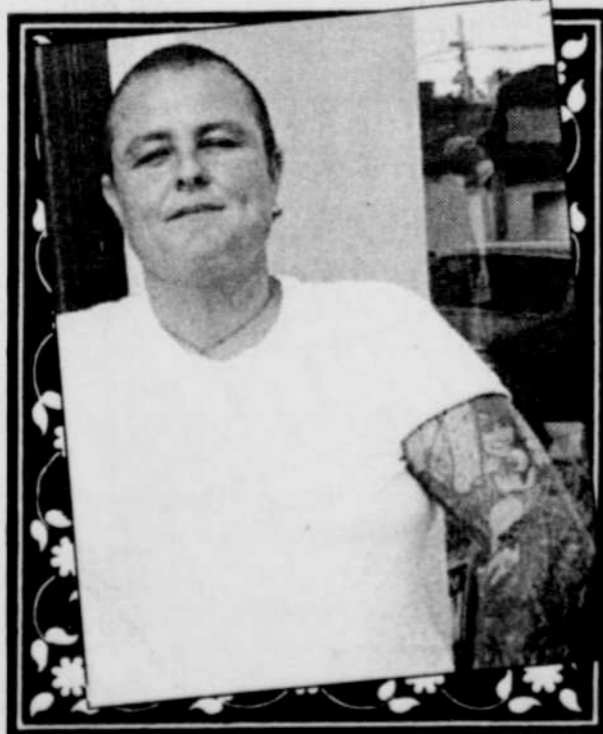
"I consider myself a minority within the gay community, because I have tattoos, piercings and am a known leather dyke," Frazier explains, showing off the fabulously colorful designs on her arms that illustrate much of her life story.

One tattoo honors her Native American father, another the Celtic side of her family, and one very prominent one on her forearm commemorates the breakup of an important relationship. It's a bright red broken heart inscribed: Love Bites. At least three girlfriends' names have been needled into her and subsequently covered over by other interests.

"Tattoos give me a sense of power, but I don't like them on other women, unless she's a fellow butch. I'm old school, butch/femme all the way—but all kinds of femmes," Frazier is quick to add, with a sparkle in her cool blue eyes.

One of her tattoos is of a skull and crossed wrenches—a reference to her profession as a carpenter.

"I worked on the Rose Garden," Frazier explains proudly, flexing her bare arm and displaying how buff she is. "I'm totally addicted to



working out; I want to be fit, because it makes me feel secure and safe.

"But I had to work on my insides, before I could work on my outsides...I had to get spiritually connected," she adds quietly.

She has spent a lot of time in the last five years volunteering with the Hospitals and Institutions program of Narcotics Anonymous, bringing 12-step programs into women's correctional facilities in the metro area. "It helps me stay clean and sober, and it helps break the cycle for women on the inside."

When asked about gay pride, Frazier says she's participated in the Dyke March since the beginning, sometimes marching with other leather women from Bad Girls.

"I love all the estrogen concentrated in one place," she remarks, clearly anticipating a good time again this year.

Asked if she's one of those gals who likes to get a little crazy and go topless, she quickly disagrees with that behavior. "I don't like to flaunt myself where it's not appropriate," she says. O.G.

Kathy GARRARD

"I was a great little airman except that I loved a woman," explains Kathy Garrard, 36, who served in the U.S. Air Force in the 1980s.



Hers was a fine military experience. Garrard worked in England a couple of years and traveled to Asia. She took her tour of duty seriously and with honor, snagging a slew of honors along the way.

"I loved the military," says the Portlander, who entered the profession in her early 20s, before she knew she was a lesbian.

Then a funny thing happened. She met a female comrade in the Air Force and fell in love.

"We were scared to death," Garrard says. Maybe so, but the tug of desire was stronger than that of fear. "We would rendezvous in the middle of the night, terrified we'd be caught."

The coupledom lasted just a year, but Garrard's sense of identity stuck: She was a lesbian—a big-time no-no if your gig is the military.

"So I left," says Garrard, who believes she'd still be in the Air Force if she weren't gay or the military didn't bar openly gay men and lesbians from serving.

She is proud of her contributions to her country and her identity.

"Gay pride means never having to say I'm sorry because I'm a lesbian," says Garrard, who is now an adjudicator with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs.

Her tone is crisp, her answers direct.

"I went to my first pride 10 years ago. It was Portland pride, and back then it was kind of small. It was rainy and icky, and yet it filled me with joy and happiness," she says.

Garrard admits that first experience was a tad intimidating, but she began to see her level of comfortability shift over the years, partly in response to the anti-gay initiative campaigns waged in Oregon earlier this decade.

"I changed a lot internally as far as my willingness to be out," she tells *Just Out*. "And now I'm out everywhere—it's very empowering—and people are very accepting. I've never had a bad experience. In fact, most people make an effort to let me know that they care about me and want me to be able to be me, and that's a wonderful thing." I.S.

Robert HANSON

"Like Harry Hay says, the notion of pride suggests that there's a less-than aspect to being queer," says Robert Hanson, a 47-year-old architect who came to Portland from the East Coast six years ago. "My queerness has forced me to look beyond myself, to understand myself in the community at large, and that's something that's a real advantage. I don't think I'm as insulated to the rest of the world as non-queers are."

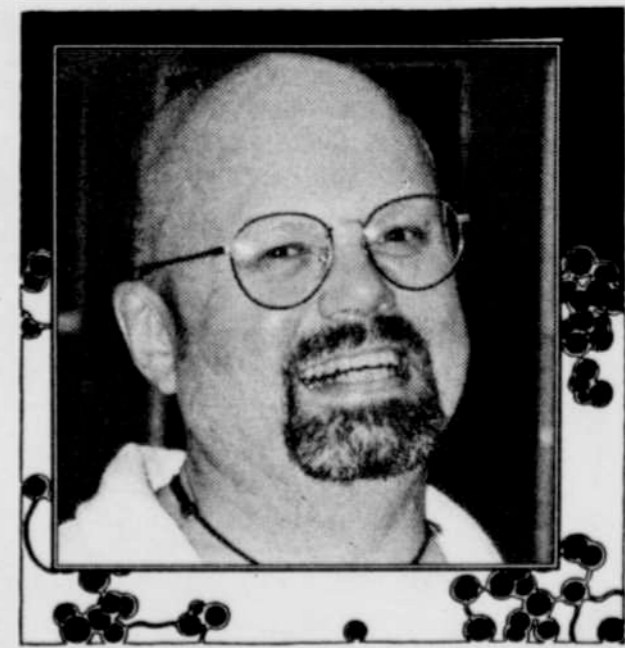
Of course, for Hanson and countless others, life has not always been so clear. He spent his twenties entering and exiting the closet in a seemingly endless cycle of frustration.

"I definitely went back in the closet when I went to college in Virginia," he says. "The second day of school I heard the first racist joke I'd heard in years, and I was called 'faggot' by a group of fraternity boys. At that point I realized it would be safer to be closeted."

Eventually, Hanson realized the closet is no place to live.

"The cost of staying in the closet became too expensive," he says. "The cost of denial is greater than we realize. I had to keep separating myself into compartments."

Today, he lives his life as a fully out queer man. His family, he says, is very supportive. His journey, however, has not been without its costs.



"Unfortunately, we got here over lots of bodies," he says. "But some kid, somewhere, won't have to go through all the stuff that the rest of us have gone through." P.C.

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