

Family Pride *Continued from Page 29*

Jesse JORDAN

Serenity is reflected in the face of 58-year-old Jesse Jordan, a legal secretary in the advocacy unit of the Portland-based Juvenile Rights Project.

Jordan, who has held the post for the better part of 14 years, says one of her proudest accomplishments has been her work as a "resident advocate" for gay and lesbian youths.

When she's not at work, Jordan's involved with Women in the Woods and the North-Northeast Portland lesbian group Dykeworks.

The proud owner of a righteously-used orange '72 VW camper, Jordan raises chickens and currently has a flock of 10 hens. She sells the eggs and plops the manure into her garden. We are talking Renaissance woman here!



that pride, at least historically, has proved heavy on outrageous spectacle and light on true community celebration.

"I didn't identify with the people I saw...the parades often presented negative images to me. It seemed like many [participants] were playing into the worst stereotypes that people believe about gays. What does that have to do with pride?" she asks.

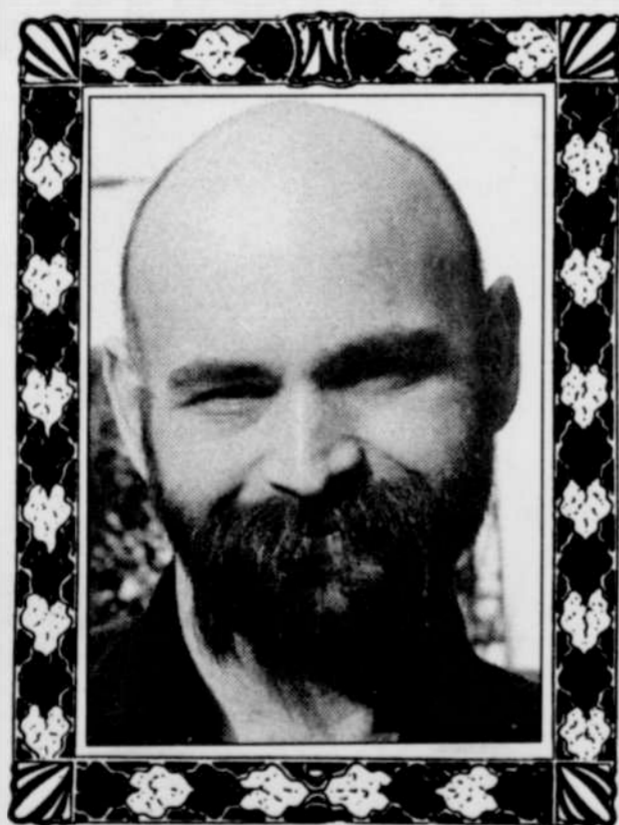
Still, Luckeroth concedes that pride events are "definitely improving" and becoming more representative of the overall gay and lesbian community.

So when exactly does Luckeroth anticipate attending pride? "Next year—with her," she says, pointing to her new girlfriend.

I.S.

Ron MORRILL

Ron Morrill is a bear's bear. When the Oregon Bears began about four years ago, he was there to help organize the club. He was Mr. Oregon Bear in 1996 and an Oregon Bears coordinator for 1997-98.



And being a bear is something Morrill can be proud of.

"I can sum it up in one word: family," says Morrill. "It's a group of friends that doesn't hesitate to support when needed. Whether I need to move, or I'm having a medical problem, they're there."

Falling in with the bears seems to have been Morrill's fate. He didn't search them out, but vice versa. Living in central Florida in the '80s, he found himself amiably stalked by a pack of bears.

"They kind of grabbed me and caught me up," recalls Morrill. "I was a heavy man at the time. I was hairy and going bald—not the classification of the 'perfect gay male.'"

Finding a family within the bear community isn't the sort of family Morrill had always imagined for himself, though. For a short time, he was in a heterosexual marriage.

"I wanted a white-picket-fence family," says Morrill. "Once I got into it, I was very, very unhappy." Morrill confesses that the marriage is possibly the only thing in his life he regrets.

He says he wouldn't trade being gay for the world.

"Hell no," he says proudly. "I would not take away that part of my life in any aspect. It's opened a much more peaceful and relaxing world for me.... With pride coming up, everyone should look at their lives and be proud. Gay or straight."

W.O.

Rob (CLOSETED)

For Rob, 24, the coming out process is still a work in progress.

"I'm afraid of being rejected by my family and friends," he says. "In the future I see myself being out more completely, but I'm easing into it."

Rob, who grew up in a small community in rural Oregon, never knew another gay person until he went away to college. He moved to Portland after graduating, primarily, he says, to broaden his experience.

"I liked it the first time I went to a gay club," he recalls. "Just meeting other gay people was amazing. It was new to me and I wanted to see what it was all about, but I was nervous about someone I knew seeing me."

Easing out of the closet has not, he says, been without its rewards.

"The thing I'm most proud of is the sense of community," he says. "People are so accepting, no matter who else is rejecting you. If your family and straight friends reject you, there's a family out there waiting for you. I've been to groups where, even though they didn't know me, they were open and accepting."

Another positive aspect of his experience, he says, is his relationship with his partner of a year and a half, with whom he lives. The two met on the Internet, and while neither were looking for love, it happened.

"The biggest struggle we have is that he can share me with his family, but I can't reciprocate," Rob says. "Someday I will, but I can't say exactly when."

P.C.

Donald ROGERS

If you've been out and about in Portland for any period of time, you may have met Don Rogers. He was a friendly man who, for a while, was known as Don Rogers, handyman. He was a man striving to set aside old lifestyles and careers. He was a man working to find his personal place.

Don Rogers isn't with us anymore. In his place, meet Donald Rogers: Donald is the man who recently, symbolically, reclaimed his birth name. The catalyst for this was his victory over alcohol and substance misuse. Out of the struggles of Don Rogers, victim, emerged Donald Rogers, victor.



Donald speaks proudly of his life, his roles and his accomplishments. His description of himself includes professional man, father, loving partner and proud member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Even though the main tenet of AA is anonymity, Donald speaks of his involvement to acknowledge how sobriety has brought tremendous positive change to his life.

Donald is proud of his life as a gay man. Previously married and a father of two sons, he has been with his partner for more than 17 years.

In reference to the concept of celebrating pride, he says: "We can be free now to be who we are. We can take our lives a step further and be proud. When we are honest with ourselves and others, we are no longer subject to emotional blackmail."

Donald will be attending the parade this year as a quiet observer.

"For one day it's all turned around. Gays and lesbians become the mainstream and we're OK. I can look at all the straight people and be open-minded...and say that they're OK, too," he says.

M.D.

Dawn TREANOR

"His will be my fourth pride," notes Dawn Treanor, who, despite having plunked down on U.S. soil 18 years ago, retains the thick accent of her native England.



Treanor, 41, came to the States "as an adventure," landing first in southern California before making her way to Portland six years ago.

Perhaps she was subconsciously drawn to the cloudy, rainy weather so similar to her homeland?

"No," she says. "Why do you think I went to California—I wanted the sun!"



Asked about gay pride, she says: "I'm proud of being out and I really appreciate being able to be out at work. Being able to be out is pride. There is no hiding."

M.D.

Denise LUCKEROTH

Denise Luckeroth has a formula for happiness.

"A wonderful childhood, an education, a sense of stability," says the 43-year-old Portlander, who describes herself as "mainstream."

Luckeroth is a quiet woman who lives in the outer reaches of the City of Roses. Her parents were married for 50 years; she grew up middle class. Like most people, she's not an activist; instead, she's someone who delves into recreational sports during the weekend and relaxes by tinkering around the home she recently purchased. During the week, Luckeroth heads off to her job as a certified public accountant.

"These are the things I enjoy," she says.

And don't expect to catch Luckeroth at Portland pride this year. She hasn't gone in the past, and 1999 isn't any different. OK, the fact that she'll be at the beach celebrating her girlfriend's birthday may have a little something to do with her absence, but like some other lesbians and gay men, Luckeroth holds the view