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AU NATUREL

Continued from the cover

In the same issue, there's also the Letter from the Editrix and an interview with "Sharon Mitchell: Hard Core Activist, Damn Good Porn Star." Peppered throughout the publication are advertisements for the Multnomah County Health Department's STD and HIV Clinic, as well as self-defense classes for women.

When LeFey's not working to pay the rent, you'll likely find her assisting with *Danzine*, or at the Sexual Minorities Roundtable telling police honchos about the harassment she and other sex workers encounter—sometimes from the men in blue—or she's promoting needle exchange on the strips where street walkers are found.

"That's where I'm off to tonight," she says. "You never hear people talk about hepatitis C, but it's a real problem. We're trying to make things safer."

Indeed, LeFey is part of a group called Scarlet Letter, which recently presented the Portland City Council with a "Sex Workers' Wish List for a Safe Environment."

The list's creation was spurred by the city's campaign to regulate lingerie modeling and personal-escort businesses in an effort to crack down on the illegal components of the sex industry, notably prostitution.

On Jan. 26, the City Council unanimously approved a new version of a sex worker licensing measure initially adopted in September. Among other points, the ordinance requires those in the escort and lingerie-modeling businesses to submit to criminal background checks and obtain licenses and identification cards. It takes effect in a few weeks, and many sex workers fear for their futures.

Says LeFey: "There are probably a thousand sex workers in the city of Portland, and only about 20 people working on this campaign. This ordinance would not have passed if a thousand had stood up and said, 'No we're not going to let it.'"

LeFey is a graduate of St. Mary's Academy, a private Catholic school in Southwest Portland.

"Not only am I queer, I'm a sex worker, too!" she laughs. "If the nuns knew, they'd say, 'Can we deny she was ever a student here? Burn those records!'"

Her parents have been married 30 years, and she describes them with tenderness: "My mom is my best friend, and my dad is my favorite man alive."

According to LeFey, mom is a high-energy accountant who runs her own firm, and dad is a mellow builder content to tinker in his garage. A few months ago, mother and daughter hiked the Grand Canyon, while dad was happy to skip the arduous activity and instead nourish the women with cookies and water.

She came out as queer at 16, and soon met her first girlfriend.

"The butchest dyke I ever met in my life!" she says enthusiastically.

Not long after the two started dating, LeFey says her girlfriend sat her down and said, "I can't live a lie. I can't hide who I am."

According to LeFey, the person she had called her girlfriend was someone who identified as male and planned to pursue a transition.

"So I started dealing with trans issues. Until then, I had never heard of the word *transsexual*," LeFey explains. "I'm like, 'OK, my girlfriend is now my boyfriend.'"

Though no longer together as a couple, they remain close.

A month after LeFey graduated from high school, she dipped her toe into the sea of the sex industry. College wasn't for her, though she attempted it at Portland State University.

A friend, noting LeFey's penchant for exhibitionism, suggested she try stripping.

"I said, 'Those women are 6-2, they have long flowing blond hair and legs that come up to their belly buttons. What are you thinking!'" she recalls.

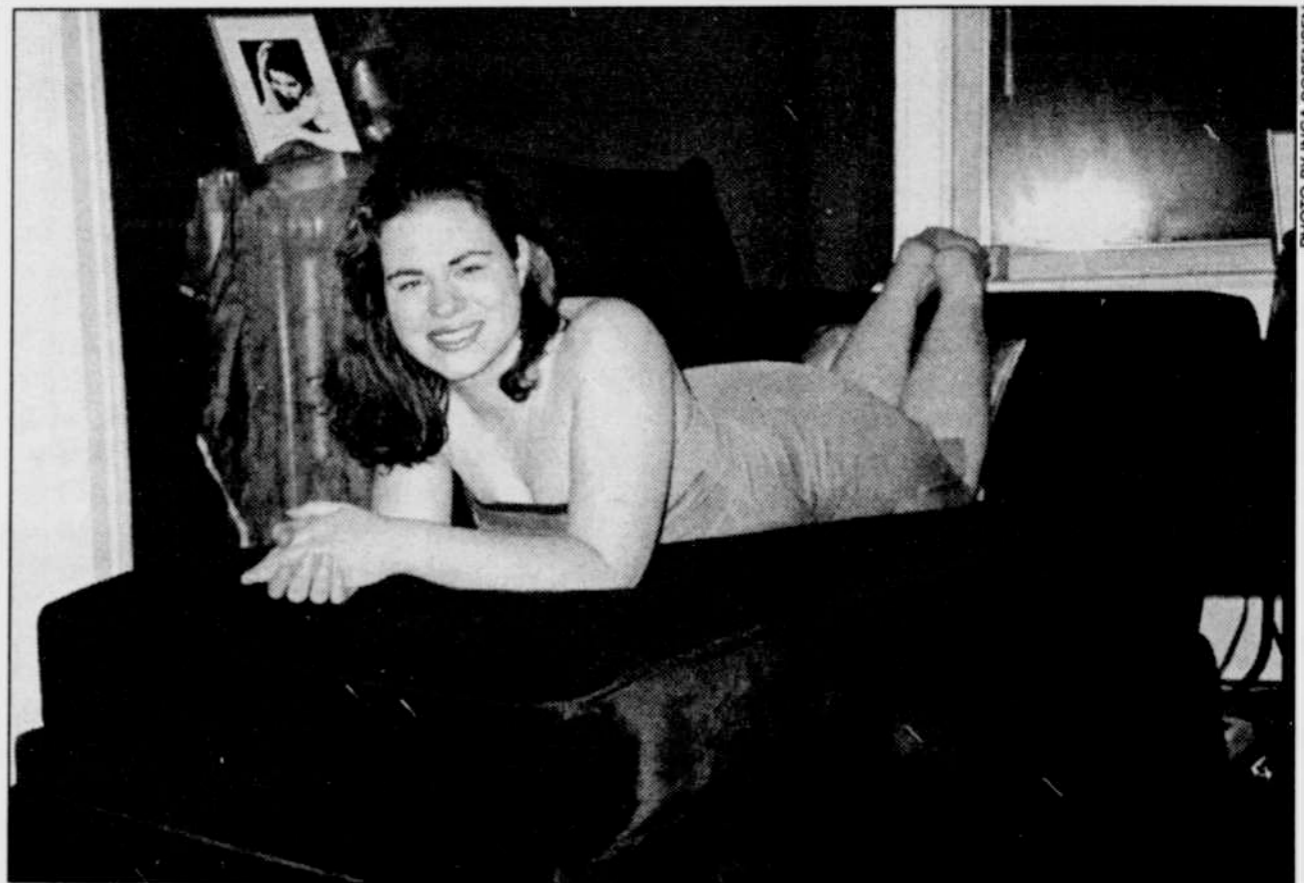
The friend then asked LeFey if she had ever actually seen a stripper.

"I said, 'Well, no,' and he said, 'Trust me, there are only 12 strippers in the whole world like that,'" she explains. "So I went down to a strip club and it was great. All the women had tattoos and piercings."

At 18, LeFey underwent her first audition, which was at a small club in Old Town.

"The most wonderful experience in my life was when I stripped for the very first time. I mean, I was *home*," she bubbles.

That sensation permeated every cell in her body—a feeling not dissimilar to a gay man honing in on his sexual orientation, or a trans person securing her gender identity.



Morgan LeFey doesn't let the antics at City Hall get her down

"I felt so right to me," explains LeFey, who has always been a physical person.

She was an excellent skier before injuring her knee onstage. Another dancer had slathered baby oil on the pole that LeFey unwittingly went to use, sending her crashing to the floor.

"I'm a weird mix. I'm fine talking one on one, but if it's two on one, I don't say a word," she says. "When I went to a bigger club, I had to talk to men to make money. If I did sit down with them, I'd ask them about their wife and kids—and take it from me, that is *not* want you want to do!"

She adds, "I don't make small talk well, but I can do anything physical."

And she's done plenty, including sexy numbers at the Egyptian Room, a largely lesbian bar in Southeast Portland.

"There is such a huge difference between dancing for men and dancing for women," LeFey explains. "For women you really have to put on a show. Like you are not there because you have tits and an ass, because everyone there has tits and an ass."

She's done lingerie-modeling—meaning she dances while the guy jerks off. She's been in a racy flick.

"It was about big butt girls," she informs me. She's done other things, too. Street walking, however, is out.

"No. It's terrifying," she says. "It's not for me."

Save for her dancing at the Egyptian, LeFey's client base has always been men.

It may seem odd to some that a queer girl could offer her sexuality to guys. But for LeFey, it's about freedom of expression, freedom of choice and being natural.

"I enjoy sexuality. I enjoy sex. I prefer sex with female-bodied people. I prefer love with people who were raised as women, whether they are now or not. I like the softness and the understanding and the emotions. All of that," she says.

Though LeFey says her parents know their daughter is an advocate for sex workers' rights and safety, they are unaware that she currently earns her living as a sex worker.

"When I first starting stripping, my mother told me to call her when I got back from work so she would know I was alright," says LeFey. "I called her every morning at 6 o'clock for a good six months—and that wasn't easy because I got home at 3:30."

She quit the industry soon after, took an office job, hated it, and within a few weeks was back to stripping. Her parents, however, were

never informed of that decision, and think LeFey earns her due by working with artists and doing other odds-and-ends jobs.

LeFey hopes someday to develop a documentary about queer sex workers.

"I'd like to locate women-focused prostitutes, but it's really hard to do," she says.

The reason? LeFey in part surmises that if male clients find out the woman is a lesbian, they'll assume she's not into them or enjoying herself.

"It could be bad for business," she says. As for the impact the city's new ordinance will have on the sex business, LeFey says, "I love Portland but I might have to leave."

Toward the end of our interview, I ask to snap a few photos.

"You bet. Do you want me to put something more sexy on?" LeFey inquires.

Throughout our chat, she has looked like a typical college kid. She wears faded jeans, an unremarkable blue long-sleeved shirt and boots. Her hair is pulled back in a ponytail.

"Whatever works for you," I answer.

She hops off the bed and zips to the bathroom. In about 60 seconds she's in a slinky number, her hair down. She goes to that purple loungey thing.

"This feels good," she says as she stretches out.