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Portland, Oregon **FREE**

## Partners register with county

Committed couples hope  
to serve as role models  
for young lovers

BY JONATHAN KIPP

**M**ultnomah County issued the first certificate in its new domestic partnership registry Sept. 1 outside its marriage license office.

The special ceremony also served as a media event for television and newspaper reporters and provided Portland politicians a chance to speak out about gay rights. The registry allows all unmarried domestic partners, including same-sex couples, to formalize their relationships as public record.

Dick Levy and Larry Hobnet were the first couple to utilize the registry. Mayor Vera Katz and County Chair Bev Stein signed their certificate as witnesses while television news cameras surrounded the foursome during the historic moment.

The couple celebrated their 31st anniversary together during Labor Day weekend. Levy says the registry is particularly important for young couples.

He and Hobnet have a long history together as proof of their commitment. Everyone knows we are a couple, Levy says, but people who just are getting together don't have that, so the registry will be quite significant for them.

By stepping forward and appearing before the media, the couple hope young lovers will realize having a long and stable relationship is possible. People are shocked when they find out the men have been together more than three decades, Levy says.

Stein thinks the registry is an important element paving the way toward domestic partners getting the same benefits afforded to married couples; however, nothing is planned right now. The number of couples who register might help determine when a next step might occur, she says, noting the timing for moving forward must be appropriate.

Katz says that many couples live together instead of getting married by choice but that others don't have the choice. "These people lack even the most fundamental legal protections."

She says the registry is more than symbolic. "It will help get health benefits and other benefits," she says.

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# Animal Instincts

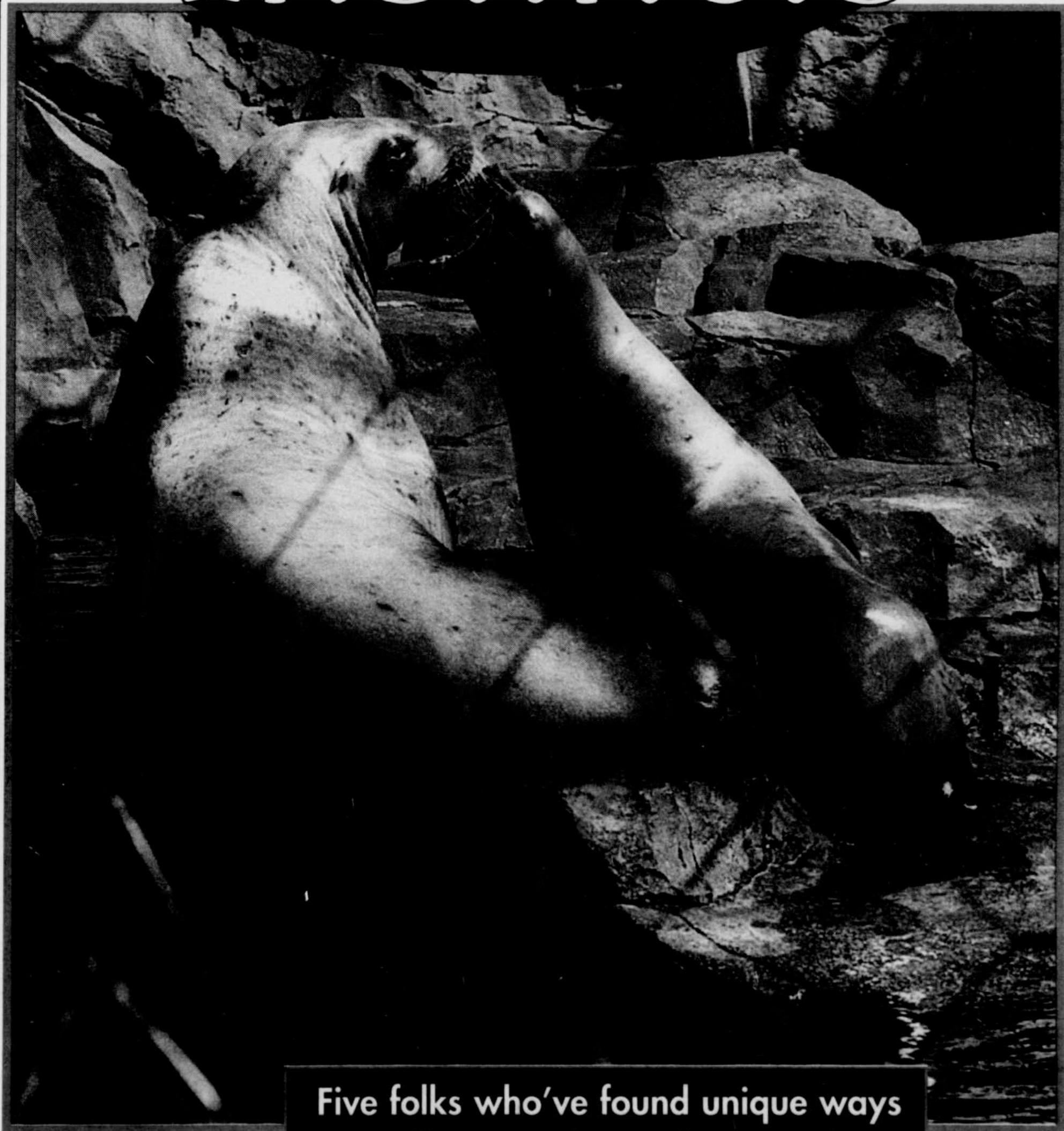


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Five folks who've found unique ways  
to talk to—and for—the animals

by Oriana Green and Katy Davidson

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