

Dharma Rain
zen center

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Dharma Rain Zen Center is a Soto Zen Temple for Lay practice, bringing people together to build community and wisdom through practice. DRZC offers retreats, classes, introductory workshops, and sesshins. The Zendo space is shared with groups in the Vipassana, Tibetan, & Zen traditions, creating a unique atmosphere and opportunities for learning about Buddhism and its daily application.

Kyogen and Gyokuko Carlson, resident teachers.



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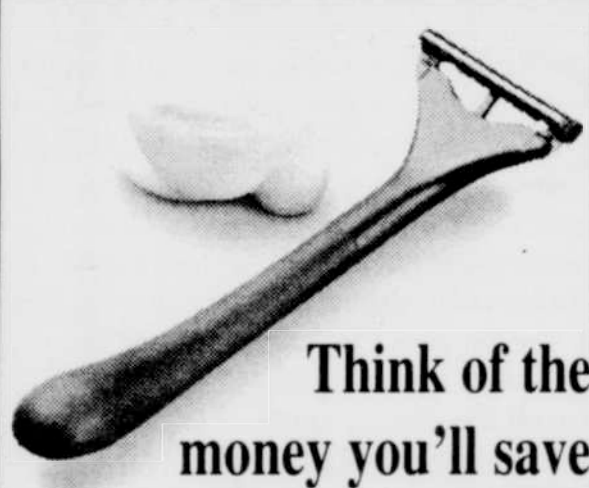


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Help form a GALA Mixed Chorus
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Gay, lesbian, bi, trans, and allies invited to sing each Sunday afternoon, 3-5pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, 5090 Center St. NE.
For Information call 541-754-4144, or e-mail UUTUNES@AOL.COM=

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CULTURE

Book 'em, Tam

Portland woman creates her own perfect career

BY ORIANA GREEN



Let's say you're putting on Pride 2000 in Dubuque or Des Moines and you need a lesbian headliner for your bash—who ya gonna call? Only one answer: the Queen of A-list lesbian entertainment, Tam Martin. Where ya gonna call her? At her Beachfront Productions office in Portland. As the name of her company hints, it didn't start out 60 miles from the sea but a whole lot closer—in Long Beach, Calif., to be exact.

Martin's life began far from the sea as well—in Spokane, Wash., which she fled for California as a young adult. Her first job out of college was a plum: booking artist tours for Olivia Records, the women's music pioneer. "Olivia was a little grassroots company, and they made it up as they went along—and they got really good at it," Martin explains over a recent alfresco lunch. "Out of that, all kinds of women's businesses grew—distributors, managers, producers, festivals."

Martin and her position at Olivia evolved together as she took on more and more publicity and booking duties. "The highlight for me was getting to know the performers and working with them," she says.

But by 1987, she'd outgrown the job and hungered to be her own boss. At the time she started Beachfront Productions, most of Olivia's performers had no agent or manager, so it seemed natural for Martin to be the one to offer those services.

She initially had just a few clients, including Cris Williamson and Tret Fure. Through the years she added many more, until she was booking most of the touring lesbian musicians.

It rankles Martin a bit when she reads in the national media what an innovative idea Lilith Fair was, or even the recent Ladyfest, because she ran her own music festival for five years in the early '90s: the Pacific Northwest Women's Music and Cultural Jamboree. That mouthful came to be known as "Tam's Jam."

Martin had to work really long hours during the first three years running Beachfront and had eight full-time clients on her list last year, which caused her to work harder than she really wanted to at this point in her life. So she's scaled back to four full-time clients: Williamson, Holly Near, Ferron and Suzanne Westenhoefer.

For that stellar quartet, Martin acts as agent, which involves doing the deals for all their gigs, making travel arrangements, snagging interviews and so on. That adds up to 100 dates a year for Westenhoefer and about half that number for the rest.

As with most kinds of agents, Martin earns a percentage of whatever her clients earn. But

Still smilin' after all these years: (from left) Tret Fure, Tam Martin, Cris Williamson

what's unusual is she's never had a contract with her performers; all her agreements with them are oral.

"In 20 years, I've never had a problem—we just do it. We believe in each other, we're all friends, and we're good for our word."

Martin also produces some events, especially fund-raisers. She brought Westenhoefer to Portland earlier this year as a benefit for Equity Foundation.

"I love doing it," she enthuses, "but it's more lucrative for me to book than to produce because there's no risk." (The producer rents the hall, pays for advertising plus other upfront costs and, if tickets sales are sluggish, could lose money on the deal.)

Although Martin jokes that her job is to "Sell, sell, sell—Do I have a show for you!"—the amazing fact is, about half of the gigs she books for her clients are fund-raisers for such causes as AIDS, breast cancer, Greenpeace, No on 9 and so forth. That means both she and her performers work for reduced fees.

"As long as audiences keep coming, I'll keep doing it," she says, not ready to retire her dialing finger anytime soon.

Martin has also worked with Robin Tyler on both the Marches on Washington, D.C., for gay and lesbian rights. Another fun thing she has done for the past decade is book artists on all the Olivia cruises.

Then, gee, someone has to take the cruise to act as stage manager for the performances, so Martin often wears that hat, too, which has taken her to some far-flung places. In fact, she just returned from Greece, Egypt and Turkey. Nice work, and she can get it!

"My passion is traveling all over the world," she admits, eyes gleaming with visions of a future trip to Thailand.

Martin organizes her day so she has free time to pursue her latest hobby, French lessons. "Mornings are hustley," she says, "but I love having control of my time."

Her main rule is: If it's not fun, stop doing it! Good words to live by.

One gets the sense Tam Martin has figured out how to have plenty of fun in her life. She and her partner of nine years recently celebrated their anniversary in Paris.

Does it getting any better than that? Well, maybe—they're already planning their 10th for Australia.

"I love what I do, and my clients truly are my friends," Martin reiterates. "We're a team and we have fun and we do work for good causes that we all believe in. I feel so lucky, because I just made this job up!"

We all should be so lucky! 