

# NORTHWEST news

## best lesbian places to live in the u.s.

10 fabulous towns to relocate to

by jenny weiss  
illustrations by barbara poliak



**W**hen it comes to the best lesbian places to live in the U.S., the list is long and varied. From the bustling city of Portland to the quiet town of Burlington, Vermont, there are many options. Each town offers its own unique blend of community, culture, and amenities. For example, Portland is known for its vibrant LGBTQ+ scene and diverse neighborhoods, while Burlington is praised for its scenic beauty and progressive values. The list also includes cities like San Francisco, San Jose, and Boulder, each offering different advantages for lesbian residents.

### 2. portland, oregon

Third year in the top three, not yet a bris-  
sive. In an unusual feat of town planning and progres-  
sive, it got a huge parking garage and put up a  
pedestrian plaza. When it rains, which is often,  
you can take refuge in the Egyptian Club or in  
Other Words women's bookstore, cycling the  
amazey across the room and gathering your  
strength to hit the hills when the sun comes out.  
A full complement of favorable laws (despite the  
worst efforts of Lon Mabon's dread Oregon  
Citizens Alliance) and the inspiring statue of  
Portlandia will remind you that you're wanted  
here. Just Out newspaper keeps tabs on local legal  
battles as well as events and entertainment.

population: 480,824  
violent crimes: 1,604.4 per 100,000 pop.  
3-bedroom house: \$155,000  
cost of living index: 107.3  
unemployment: 4.2%  
average high in July: 79.0°  
average low in January: 32.5°  
sodomy laws: none  
employment nondiscrimination laws:  
public and private  
gay and lesbian businesses/orgs: 90

piña colodas, listened to reggae music and decorated his last Christmas tree.

The men delivered the tree and walked away with something of their own. Chavis remembered thinking, "This is what it is all about."

To order a tree, call 503-281-2841 before Dec. 16.

"A full complement of favorable laws (despite the worst efforts of Lon Mabon's dread Oregon Citizens Alliance) and the inspiring statue of Portlandia will remind you that you're wanted here," assistant editor Jenny Weiss wrote. "Just Out newspaper keeps tabs on local legal battles as well as events and entertainment."

The top town is Burlington, Vt., according to *Girlfriends*. The city leaped seven notches up the list in one year partly because of the state's civil union legislation—not to mention the Ben & Jerry's headquarters.

"OK, it does get a little cool in the winter," the article read. "But any town whose local economy is supported in large part by gay weddings and ice cream sounds like a lesbian fairy tale."

The rest of the top 10, in descending order: Madison, Wis.; Boulder, Colo.; Providence, R.I.; Seattle; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Albany, N.Y.; and Charlottesville, Va. Foreign cities cited were Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Montreal; and Rennes, France.

## COMMUNITY'S FRIEND FALLS ILL

Ann Shepherd, one of the area's longtime champions of sexual minority rights, suffered a stroke Thanksgiving morning. It left her speech, vision and ability to stand severely affected.

However, her daughter Susie said that her mother's mental function is fully intact and that she is encouraged by the cards, flowers and e-mails sent by well-wishers. Susie said even Mayor Vera Katz has sent flowers to her ailing mother.

But the condition for this lively and warm woman who has spoken out and organized on behalf of local gays for years is grave. "A full recovery would require a real miracle," Susie wrote in an e-mail to a long list of concerned friends.

Shepherd is in an intensive rehabilitation unit at Providence Hospital, where she is receiving several hours of therapy every day. She is expected to remain there for several days but eventually will return home, where she likely will be in a wheelchair and have 24-hour care.

To contact the Shepherds, write to Providence Hospital, 4805 NE Glisan St., Room 4K-34, Portland, OR 97213.



Ann Shepherd

## PORTLAND TOPS LESBIAN LIST—ALMOST

*Girlfriends* magazine has ranked Portland as the second-best lesbian place to live in the United States.

The December issue lists 10 cities based on factors such as queer bars, restaurants, hot lines, spiritual groups, gyms, bookstores and newspapers. In addition, legal rankings took domestic partner registries and benefits, hate crimes laws and anti-discrimination ordinances into consideration.

This is the third year in the top three for the City of Roses, but it never has reached No. 1. The article gave special mention to Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Egyptian Club, In Other Words Women's Books & Resources and even Portland's favorite biweekly.

Compiled by Just Out staff



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