

CULTURE

Turn the Beat around

Catching the new spin on Gina and Rebecca

BY LYNN THOMAS



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

When Gina Micciulla first heard that the radio station where she and her partner, Rebecca Marshall, had built a loyal following was unceremoniously changing its format and firing all of the on-air staff, she was stunned. "It's the nature of the business to follow the bottom line, but it was unusual to change the format so quickly."

Within 15 minutes, at high noon June 2, KBBT-FM had become KVMX-FM. The morning show trio that had been so involved in the Portland community—including riding on a float and serving as hosts during this year's gay pride parade—was history.

The outpouring of support for The Beat's Gina, Cort and Rebecca was amazing. "We got over 1,000 e-mails from all sorts of people—doctors, lawyers, construction workers, men, women—all upset that we were fired. But that doesn't matter at the corporate level," Gina quips. "We won the popular vote, but corporate won the Electoral College."

Many people wondered whether the relationship between Rebecca and Gina contributed to the firing. "No," Gina says. "It was a decision made in New York; the local management was behind us."

She says she has no resentment or anger because it happens all the time in radio. In fact, they even immediately were offered a job in another city but turned it down.

Gina calls it a "quality of life" decision. They just love Portland.

She's moved almost every two years since she's been in radio. "The biggest difference this time is the fact that I am so involved in this community."

And she is. She, Cort and Rebecca have served as the hosts of tons of charity events and still are doing so.

Their future was already uncertain at this year's pride parade in Portland

But her great passion, as many listeners know, is pets. Gina even was written up in the *Wall Street Journal* for being instrumental in organizing the first-ever dog blood drive in the country. "Portland has more pets per capita than any other city in the U.S.," she says.

She actually looks at being fired from the radio station as a lucky opportunity to make a real difference in the pet community. Lucky for Portland pets and their people.

Gina actively has been looking to create the first indoor/outdoor dog park in the city. "I've found the perfect place; what we need now are sponsors."

She hopes to create a place where dogs can

run and play and where their people can socialize, too. She envisions a park where, even in bad weather, folks can come and exercise their dogs, meet each other and maybe learn a little something about pet care.

She has her own Internet site, www.ginaspets.com, a fabulous resource where people can go to find out all sorts of cool things like where to adopt pets, educational training opportunities, pet health information and the like. There are even links to help lost, injured or displaced animals.

This is a valuable service because it's a 24-hour lost-and-found pet site. You can go there any time of the day or night and post informa-

tion. It is in partnership with the *Dog Nose News*, a publication for Portland pets and people and coincidentally another new lesbian-owned business.

And Gina's entrepreneurial spirit doesn't end there. For the past several months she has followed her heart and started her own dog-walking business. Now, she is expanding even that.

She recently sealed a deal with Pups and Cups Dog Wash and Cafe, located at 4516 N.E. 42nd Ave. She will be managing that business and opening her own dog day care service in the same building early next year. She will continue to walk dogs while all this is going on.

"Pups and Cups is owned by my friends Lita Monaghan and Eric Bergson," Gina says. "I actually told them about the idea when I was planning to do it myself last year, so they took the idea, with my blessing, and opened Pups and Cups."

"I have been involved since the beginning, but now it's official. I am very excited and can't wait for our listeners who have become our friends to come and hang out with me, drink some coffee and wash their dogs. We offer self- and full-service dog washes."

"This is the same place that we have obedience classes on Monday nights. We will be doing some exciting things at Pups and Cups, like movie night, where you can bring your dog in and hang out, drink, eat and watch movies."

Meanwhile, Rebecca is back on radio and has been doing the news for KXL-AM with co-host Brian Calvert. So despite the short-lived radio silence, the Beat goes on for Gina and Rebecca. **jn**

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