



## BRO names new director

Roey Thorpe brings a  
New York state of mind  
to the Pacific Northwest

BY JIM RADOSTA

**R**oey Thorpe's first memory as Basic Rights Oregon's new executive director is one she won't soon forget.

After a late flight almost caused her to miss her shining moment in the spotlight, she received a rousing welcome from a room packed full of Portland's prominent politicians and businesspeople. The announcement was made during the eighth annual Oregonians Against Discrimination Luncheon on April 18 at the Hilton.

"It was very exciting," the 38-year-old New Yorker said after the event, which raised almost \$10,000 for the state's largest gay rights organization. "It felt like a real privilege to have the opportunity to meet so many people...who are committed to the struggle against discrimination, all in this one room. The energy level there was just incredible."

Her first day on the job will be June 1. She replaces Jaime Balboa, who resigned March 1, citing personal health reasons.

Thorpe was born in South Carolina and later moved with her family to Ohio, where she attended high school and college. She earned a bachelor's degree in music from Bowling Green State University and a master's in U.S. history from Binghamton.

She went on to begin doctoral research exploring the effects of race and class on lesbian life in Detroit during the 1940s, '50s and '60s. It was during her college years that she became a political activist.

In 1994, Thorpe became an alderperson on the Ithaca City Council, making her the first openly gay elected official in Tompkins County. In 1996 and 1997, she served as acting mayor, an office appointed by her colleagues.

"It was a difficult campaign, because I was definitely the dark horse," she said. "What I discovered is that people were willing to reconsider their opinion about whether or not an open lesbian could represent them."

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# LIVING ON THE EDGE

## Portland's invisible homeless youth

by Natalie Shapiro

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