

just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

FOUNDED 1983 • JAY BROWN AND RENÉE LACHANCE
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FEATURE

READ ME: *Just Out* introduces you to three queer Portland writers and tells you what to read this summer
p 26

NEWS

NORTHWEST • Kulongoski campaign returns contribution; second annual *Just Out* amateur photography contest winners
pp 7-17, 24

NATIONAL • University of Washington study reveals grim statistics about queer runaways; New Jersey couples demand the right to marry
pp 19-21

WORLD • Namibia president can't make up his mind
pp 23, 25

CULTURE

CULTURE • Peacock in the Park rakes in the dough while having a great time
p 37

PEOPLE • Slam poet Alix Olson invites you to join her in Cunt Cuntry
p 41

DIVERSIONS • A midsummer night's dance; toga!; golf for charity; eat for charity; a Bowie/Moby concert event; new cable dyke; Ellen plays a fish
p 42

WHAT'S POPPIN'? • *Circuit* sucks
p 43

MUSIC • Imperial Teen grows up
p 45

THEATER • Cirque du Soleil showcases cute gay men; triangle productions! gives good Hed in its best production to date
pp 46-47

COLUMNS

MS. BEHAVIOR • Tired of hearing about her rolls; tired of losing to the lesbians
p 39

LIVING OUT • Anniversary of obsessive-compulsive behavior
p 48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC • His BIGGEST column ever!
p 49

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COMMENTARY

Let freedom ring

The 2002 election should worry you. A lot.

Happy post-Independence Day holiday. As this supposed celebration of independence and freedom vies for the title of white-trashiest holiday ever, let's stop and consider where the past few hundred years of independence have brought us to in Oregon.

With the primary election behind us, summer is the calm before the storm as we await a barrage of post-Labor Day campaigning for the general election in November. While looking ahead to the election, please consider the following points:

- It's 2002, and Oregonians have nominated Kevin Mannix as the Republican candidate for governor. Presumably there are people out there who actually want and expect him to win. This should worry you. A lot.

- It's 2002, and Oregonians have a third-party candidate running for U.S. Senate. This candidate is Lon Mabon. While I can't imagine that there's anyone anywhere who thinks he actually might win, again, do not overlook the simple fact that there are people out there who want him to. This, too, should worry you. A lot.

- Ted Kulongoski, the Democratic candidate for governor, recently returned \$15,000 in campaign money because it was linked to gay pornography. My concern here, and it's lessened by the knowledge that most will have long forgotten by November, is that there might be a reactionary movement to punish Kulongoski by not voting for him in November. Don't do it. Voting against one candidate is no different than voting for his opponent. This is how Portlanders came to elect Bud Clark mayor one day. They weren't voting for Clark; they were voting against the incumbent. Stop and think about the idea of Governor Mannix—kinda sticks in your throat, doesn't it?

- What if a candidate for U.S. senator called a meeting and nobody came? Well, it pretty much happened June 28. Bill Bradbury called together leaders of the sexual minorities community to discuss campaign concerns and—guess what?—the meeting was attended by three representatives from Basic Rights Oregon and two from Just Out. Excuse me, but what kind of a message did we send to this candidate that day? "Hey, Smith will do just fine as senator, no problem, we don't need you, you don't need us. Please don't bother with us anymore." Good grief.

Setting politics aside, let's move on to photos, specifically the second annual Just Out amateur photography contest. The winners can be found on Page 24. Thanks to all who entered. (Please note: I wasn't a judge.)

And now take off those lens caps, and let's get started on entries for next year's contest. You see, there seems to be a movement afloat to drop the "gay" from "Gay Pride."

I don't much like this idea, and so the contest theme for 2003 is simply "Gay Pride." Let's visually celebrate all the glorious, colorful, humorous, touching and truthful moments of the most absolute gayness that can be found.

And next June for Gay Pride we'll have a wonderful display of gay, gay, gay. Don't send in the photos yet; we'll talk about this again in April.

Stop and think about the idea of Governor Mannix—kinda sticks in your throat, doesn't it?

My friend and partner in anti-tobacco work, Catherine Cushing, takes exception to the photos on the cover of our June 21 issue. (Read her letter to the editor on Page 5.) I understand her concerns, and they crossed my mind as that cover was being prepared.

But my decision to use the photos was based on the belief that you don't solve a problem by hiding from the reality of it. It is my duty to present the community as it is—not to manipulate it to make it appear the way we'd like it to be.

It's an undeniable truth; our community smokes too much. And smoking kills people.

How do we bridge the gap between these two truths? With all due respect, not by denying that it is happening or by "prettying up" the actuality of the situation. Smoking is a killer. Hiding it from view is not the solution.

Never has the evidence of a smoking epidemic been more obvious than at this year's Peacock in the Park. Everywhere I looked, people were smoking. And aside from the stench, the disease and the death associated with this lovely habit, the culture of filth and littering is mind-boggling.

I so appreciated the messages from Poison Waters as she implored the crowd to clean up after themselves. I regret I didn't stay long enough to capture that truth on film—the truth of the incredible messes that smokers mindlessly leave behind, with the expectation that someone else will come along and clean up after them.

Events like Peacock in the Park are the fun and easy parts of my job. Damn it, though, the job comes with hard parts, too. I think the hardest of all is saying goodbye to valued and cherished employees when it's time for them to move on.

Now it seems it's time to say goodbye to Melissa Saylor. She has been trying to back out the door for several months now, and the time finally has come to let her go.

Not unlike Buck in Call of the Wild, I've got to let her be free to run with the wolves—well, OK, there's not actual wolves involved; she simply wants to start her own house-painting business—but now I need some new folks here. So while lucky Portlanders shall flourish and shine with beautiful homes, Just Out is left with not one but two job openings. You know you've had a valuable employee when it takes two others to replace her. Please glance over to our "help wanted" ad on Page 2 and join us if you can.

And finally, in closing, a thanks to the Portland Fire, who you'll note in the photo below acknowledged Just Out and Pride Northwest at their June 20 game. While I generally am about as spiritual as a garden hose, attending this year's Fire games has left me with a heightened perspective of the value of simple blessing. You see, no matter how hard my day, no matter how pissy the phone calls, at the end of each day I get to leave work with all my teeth firmly intact. Count the simple things. ☐

PUBLISHER AND MANAGING EDITOR • Marty Davis
NEWS EDITOR • Jim Radosta
CULTURE EDITOR • Lisa Bradshaw
CONTRIBUTORS • Marc Acito, Meryl Cohn, Els Debbaut, Karen Kudej, Sarah Leimert, Christopher McQuain, Gary Morris, TJ Norris, Bob Roehr, Emma Rood, Sally Sheklow, Floyd Sklaver, Tom Stevenson, Jack Turteltaub, Rex Wockner
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR • Larry Lewis
ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE • Markie Acevedo
NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE • Rivendell Marketing Company Inc., 212-242-6863
GRAPHIC DIRECTOR • Kevin Moore
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT • Melissa Saylor
OFFICE MANAGER • Erin Sexton
INTERNS • Nadia Cannon
DISTRIBUTION • Ed Carder, Ian Drake, Ron Geer, Lisa Katona, Kelly Keigwin, Becky Sawyer, Merid Schwartz, Melissa Weigand

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