



The Little Antique Mall has grown from a small antique store into a nationally known business

that much easier to be an out and proud gay male living in a community that I would have never considered growing up in."

Hull is also proud to note the considerable success of the mall. "They have definitely helped to put Lincoln City on the map as an antiquing destination on the Oregon coast."

The impact of the award has far exceeded the night of the ceremony, according to Beck. People still are "coming in to say, 'We read your story and had to come in to meet you.' It has been an incredibly affirming process."

The couple are especially pleased that their community is engaged in a conversation about gay and lesbian issues.

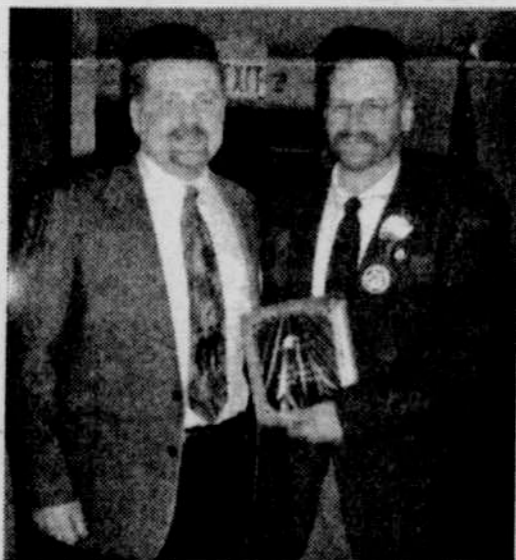
"It is astonishing when you think about it—a gay couple honored for what they have done for their community, without hesitation and with pride, and this is in rural Oregon," Brissette says. "We've come a very long way."

Aside from a small number of angry letters to the editor printed in the *News Guard*, the community has been enthusiastically supportive. Beck and Brissette are aware of a "virulent layer" of homophobia in Lincoln City, but they generally feel comfortable and safe there.

Through the years Lincoln County has defeated the Oregon Citizens Alliance's ballot measures by a wider margin than most other regions of the state. "I think we experience more negativity around being Democrats than for being gay," Beck laughs.

Citizens take top honors for Community Days

MODEL CITIZENS — Diandra Reynolds, the volunteer coordinator for Biltwood Public Library, and Bill Leffroy, co-manager of the Lincoln City Food Pantry, above, were named Lincoln City's Man and Woman of the Year during Saturday's 2002 Community Days Banquet held at St. John's. Rick Brissette and Dan Beck, below, were named The News Guard's Couple of the Year for their work with Coastal AIDS Network, the local Democratic committee and their highly successful business, The Little Antique Mall. For more winners and their photos, please see page A13 of today's *News Guard*.



The Couple of the Year are quick to note that their success is attributed in part to the people who have lent a hand along the way. "What people think was an overnight success for us was actually 7 1/2 years of hard work and hungry times in the little shop, with many wonderful people pulling for us," Brissette says. "And we're thankful we were able to just keep going on."

They are confident that the momentous award will help others live openly and honestly on the coast. "Lincoln City is a great town," Brissette says, "filled with wonderful, loving and affirming individuals who have demonstrated courage

and compassion over and over again. I know it has made some folks feel a lot more positive about themselves." □

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TOY SOLDIER

For Phyllis McBride, giving is better than receiving

by Patricia L. MacAodha

Phyllis McBride was surprised and pleased when she received two nominations and an enthusiastic majority of votes selecting her as St. Johns Community Citizen of the Year for 2002.

An out lesbian who has been involved in neighborhood activism for 22 years, she was recognized for her work on the St. Johns Christmas Market, which she rescued after a two-year absence and has coordinated for the past five years. She also has served on the neighborhood foot patrol, as an assistant to shut-in residents and as a mentor for the Big Sister Program at the North Portland Youth Service Center.

She normally is involved with the St. Johns Parade Committee as well, but this spring her second spinal surgery curtailed her participation. Still, very little holds this intrepid woman back—and not for long.

According to McBride, very few people in St. Johns reacted badly to a lesbian being so honored; many more have expressed enthusiasm about her selection. She thinks the detractors are in the minority.

"There was an objection to my getting the award, but I think it was mostly just talk. Nothing came of it," she says. "For the most part, people who live here are pretty wonderful. They work hard and let things be."

One of the Christmas Market vendors contacted *Just Out* about McBride and the award, expressing deep appreciation of her commitment to the community. Eve Morgan cited her work to reopen the market, which had been a popular wintertime venue in the neighborhood to generate social activity during the holiday season.

Disability activist Laura Woodruff lives in St. Johns and was one of the nominators. She says McBride "accepted me for how I am, who I am."

Woodruff observes this is the way her fellow community leader deals with everyone, adding



Santa finds out who's been nice at the St. Johns Christmas Market

she "doesn't like to ask for help." Both fans agree there seems no end to her willingness to help others and are proud to have her working for the neighborhood.

McBride grew up in Zanesville, Ohio, which was "difficult from a gay person's point of view," she says. "I guess I always knew that I was gay, but I would not admit it to myself or others because there was a lot of heckling

Continued on Page 26

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