



It's a living: Reed makes money reviewing naughty videos, books, magazines, calendars, products and "all manner of merchandise" for *Adult Video News* magazine

PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

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Oregon House candidate Theresa "Darklady" Reed fights for freedom

by Jim Radosta

Theresa "Darklady" Reed, a Portland writer who makes a living spicing up the sex lives of readers nationwide, is adding some kink to an otherwise dull race for the Oregon Legislature. The Libertarian candidate is running for House District 42, a socially liberal area that is a shoo-in for incumbent Democrat Diane Rosenbaum. Reed never intended to throw her hat in the ring. In July she attended the Libertarian convention to learn about the political process—how nominations are made and policy is determined—when she was approached by gubernatorial candidate Tom Cox and his campaign manager. They just wanted to get Reed's name on the ballot to raise visibility, so she agreed. "I made a lit-

tle speech, and the crowd went wild." She then sent out a press release, and before she knew it money was rolling in from queer and kinky people across the country. "I decided if people were going to take me that seriously, then I needed to take myself that seriously," she said. Besides, Reed admits, she never does anything half-ass. "If I'm going to do it, I'm gonna do it all the way."



A pistol-packin' Reed takes aim at the Oregon Legislature

Reed started out as a Democrat because of the party's open mind on social issues such as gay equality and women's rights. She switched to Libertarian last year.

"I became increasingly uncomfortable with the economic policies of the Democrats," she said. "It seemed like I could never be paying enough taxes, and no one was ever accounting for where the money was going.... The Democrats want to take care of me like I'm a child, and the Republicans want to throw me in jail. With the Libertarians we can do what we need to do to make a living and we can love the people that we want to love and we've got money left over to support our families with."

Reed's previous political experience includes a stint as secretary for the Oregon Business Alliance, which helped defeat zoning and free-speech measures targeted at adult-oriented companies during the mid-1990s. Her platform embraces a mixture of views that might seem contradictory at first: safeguarding the First Amendment, staunchly supporting of the right to own firearms, fighting the tax system, opposing the growing government surveillance of ordinary citizens, acknowledging the failure of the war on drugs and taking a stand for the fair treatment of sex workers, queer citizens, B/D/S/M practitioners and those who live nonmonogamous lives.

"My slogan is 'Diversity, Dignity and Responsibility'...diversity of opinion, diversity of sexuality, of religion, of race," she says.

"All those things are wonderful, and they're part of what makes this country and this state so important.

"That includes the voices of queer people—



Reed cheers on gubernatorial candidate Tom Cox before the "Jabbin' at the Aladdin" debate Oct. 14

whether they be lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, kinky, polyamorous, swingers and other folks who are involved in mutually consensual adult forms of sexuality and love. We have as valid a right to speak our minds and to live our lives as anyone else does.... With the Bush administration using the war on terror and now the war on Iraq as an excuse to clamp down on our civil liberties, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, I think it's especially important for queer voices to be heard and to be involved in the whole process."

Born in Jackson, Mich., Reed grew up throughout Oregon—Central Point, Pendleton, Grants Pass—and in Burbank, Calif. She settled in Portland in 1973.

The 40-year-old, who identifies as bisexual/pansexual, first got involved with another woman five years ago but had been aware of her orientation for years. "I was never in the closet; I just hadn't affixed a label to myself."

Reed holds bachelor's degrees in history and anthropology from Portland State University. In her spare time she serves as the director of communication and outreach for Portland Pink Pistols, a recently formed queer gun group.

"I've had a few people absolutely go sideways on me when they find out where I stand on the issue," she said. "I am definitely a very pacifistic person; however, I believe in the right of self-defense, and I think that queer people especially need to be aware that there are a wide variety of opportunities and options available to them, including the use of firearms.... The question is often asked, 'What if Matthew Shepard had had a gun?'"

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