

# OUT OF THIS WORLD

**Gay globetrotter goes on an international adventure**  
by Tom Stevenson

**B**efore you read this story, take a breath—a deep, deep breath. Because after you learn about Brian Westbrook, it's almost a guarantee you will be exhausted.

This 25-year-old gay Portlander is, in all respects, a man on the go. If you need a cliché to judge him by, think of the Energizer Bunny, double the action, and you might come close.

Westbrook has spent the past year roaring through queer festivals worldwide. He has celebrated in the midst of tens of thousands of gay men and lesbians at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.; served as a key party man at Portland's own Pride event; checked out the newest, hottest and best clubs in Washington, D.C.; and whooped it up with the throngs in London, Paris and Italy.

It all started in May with his trip to Orlando for Gay Days 2002. He describes the event as a "fun-filled weekend of circuit parties, Disney magic and plenty of hot shirtless gay boys.... I think I was the only one not on drugs, which made it even more fun."

Westbrook says Portland Pride 2002 in June gave him a chance to see the other side of the celebrations. He volunteered his time by running errands, coordinating various aspects of the event and dealing with the media.

"I enjoyed Portland's Pride because it was local and because it's a great chance to hang with all my friends here in town," he says. "I most enjoyed the festival and working with all the volunteers. I worked long, exhausting days, but it was a great sense of pride when it was all done."

Less than a week later, Westbrook was off to Washington, D.C., to celebrate his father's retirement after 30 years in the Air Force. He transformed it into yet another special adventure. "It was Dad's retirement turned Brian's weekend out in D.C.," he says with a chuckle.

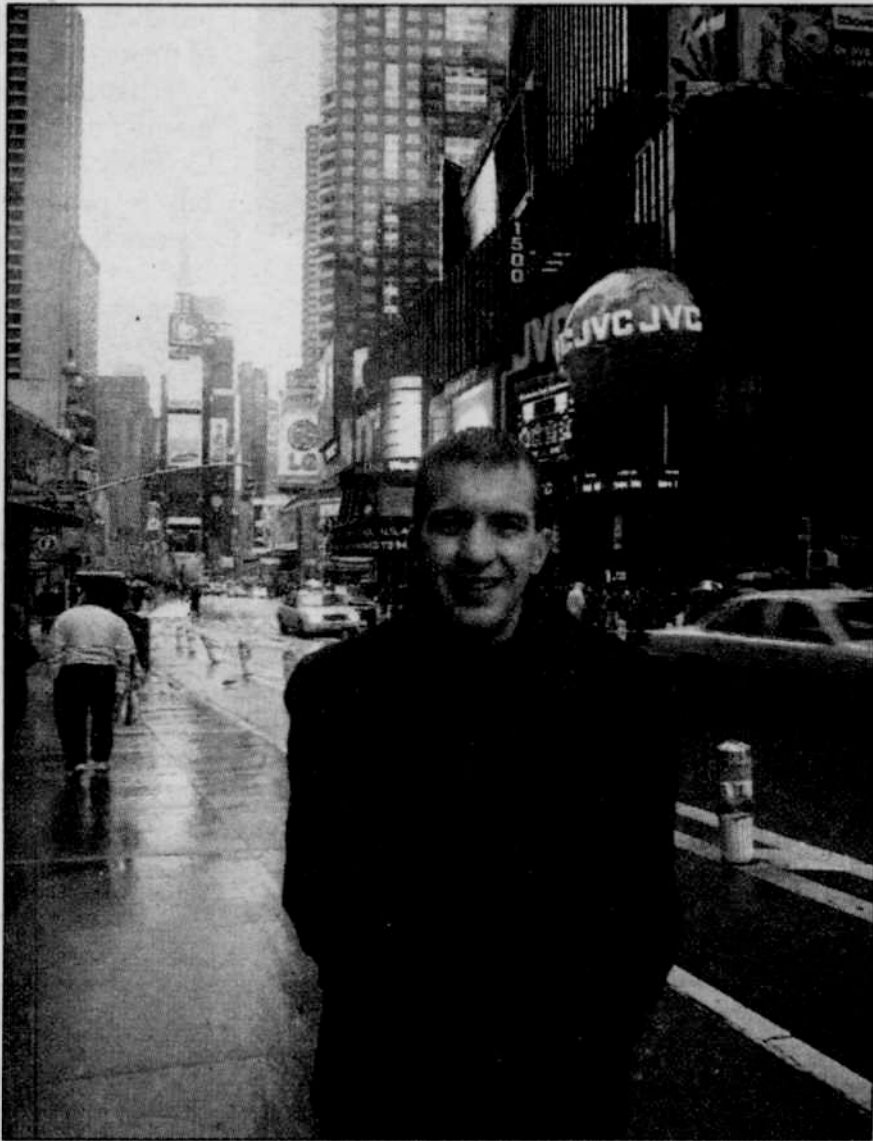
After another long flight home, he left just three days later for Paris and London. He is no stranger to Europe and has friends in both cities.

Westbrook arrived in Paris on a Saturday, celebrated Pride, then fulfilled a longtime dream by traveling via the Eurostar high-speed train to London. He arrived in time to "do some clubbing" and to enjoy that city's gay Mardi Gras festival.

Since then he's taken trips to San Francisco for September's Folsom Street Fair; Anaheim, Calif., for October's Gay Days 2 at Disneyland; St. Louis to visit friends; and New York City on business. He also just spent Thanksgiving in Italy, and he'll be ringing in the new year in Europe.

Westbrook, who says he is single but accepting applications, has made his home for the past year in the West Hills of Portland. He grew up in Vancouver and Kent, Wash., as well as Southern California.

He has been out to himself since age 18 or 19 but came out to his parents, friends and co-workers two years ago. "Now I take a very laid-



Brian Westbrook in Times Square

back, 'those who need to know, know' approach," he says.

Westbrook works as the Internet developer for the Portland Trail Blazers and its affiliates: the Portland Fire, the Rose Quarter, Jammin 95.5 FM, NewsRadio 750 KXL and some cable networks. He also has done on-the-air work for the radio stations, reporting on "mostly techie-type stories." He enjoys both facets of his job.

"I am responsible for 18 Web sites," he says. "It's challenging and rewarding, but most of all it's a lot of fun. I'm fortunate to work for a supportive company, and I really enjoy the people I work with. I'm out to most of my co-workers, and nobody really seems to be bothered by it.... Working in radio has proven to be a dynamic industry...lots of changes and plenty of interesting people to work with."

On top of all his travels, Westbrook served as co-host of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show Party" in October at Boxxes. He and Portland drag queen Misha Rockefeller put on the wild event, which featured water guns, a costume contest and "lots of lingerie."

Considering his vast experience exploring the "gayborhoods" of so many cities, Westbrook has been able to formulate a few observations about how Portland stacks up. He says some queer districts are obvious, with rainbow flags and same-sex couples holding hands; in other places, people have to know where they're going.

His advice for the Rose City? "Portland's 'gayborhood' needs an identity," he says. "There's no recognition, and even those in the community itself don't even know what that means. I know there's an initiative to officially recognize the neighborhood...but a true 'gayborhood' like the Castro in San Francisco or the Dupont area of D.C. are more defined, where people live and play...not just where a few bars and clubs happen to be located together." □

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