



PHOTO COURTESY OF WRITE AROUND PORTLAND

Liza Halley and Ben Moorad founded Write Around Portland in 1998

of the queer community. This fall, in addition to nine other locations, WRAP offered workshops at the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center and through Cascade AIDS Project.

SMYRC provides a safe place for queer and questioning youth to hang out. In addition to socializing, computer use, structured activities and support groups, it also provides counseling, job and health resources, and mentoring in a drug-, alcohol- and violence-free environment. CAP is Oregon and Southwest Washington's largest community-based provider of HIV services, housing, education and advocacy.

Individuals served by these organizations were among the 50 readers who stood up in front of the crowd at December's WRAP event to share their work. Some were reading in public for the first time. For others, it was old hat. But for all, the WRAP experience was powerful.

One of the readers was Jeff Sullivan, who has lived with AIDS for almost 17 years. He moved to Portland from Southern California in 2002 and participated in his first WRAP workshop in the fall of that year. "I decided to take the workshop because I was new here and isolated," he explains. "I felt the need to relate to others living with HIV."

The WRAP workshop did help him make new friends, but that's not all he gained. "I've learned that I have something of value to contribute. I have discovered that if a person doesn't continue to try and say what it is burning in their heart for them to say, they often forget that they have something to give that others will appreciate."

He adds: "Most important of all, though, is that I must continue not for the appreciation of others, but for the sense of self-worth that comes from this process. The self-respect and sense of achievement that I get from it are well worth the time and effort."

A community investment

That sense of self-respect and self-worth is exactly what WRAP hopes to promote. Its mission statement gets at the heart of this unique social service/arts program approach: "It is the belief of all of us at WRAP that writing can transform people's lives, giving them a sense of ownership over their experience and pride in their ability to articulate their hopes, fears, desires and needs. Bringing people together to help each other find their individual voices gives those people a real sense of belonging to a community that values them. WRAP sees that those who could use the powers of community writing the most are often the ones most excluded from both mainstream cultural and educational systems."

Once people know about WRAP, they often want to continue their involvement with it. "The more opportunities you provide, the more people want to participate," Halley says. "If you put out the effort, people will participate. It's a community investment."

Many WRAP participants have taken three to four workshops. Some have taken as many as eight. Individual voice is the

Continued on Page 26

An excerpt from "Spider on the Windshield"

I looked ahead, only to realize that I hadn't noticed the curve in the road, or the tree trunk that was now directly in front of me, lit up like a phantom in the glare of my headlights. I saw it brightly lit before being swallowed in darkness as my headlights shattered, scattering pieces of glass. The windshield cracked into a mosaic of a hundred fragments.

The impact launched my body forward, slamming it into the steering column. I heard the booming explosion of smashed metal and breaking glass, as well as the loud and distinct crack of breaking bones that resonated through my body. My face and rib cage hit the steering wheel with immense force. It felt like I'd dived off a high dive platform into concrete.

For a second, I just sat there, wondering how I'd just managed to hit the tree. Then the pain came, like an overwhelming wave of sick, bitter helplessness, and I moaned and cried out, and slumped over in the front seat. Though the pain was incredible, I still focused on other things. I lay there, looking up at the moon in the pre-dawn sky, through the cracks in the windshield. I got the sensation that the whole sky was rolling out of sight. It would start to roll away, like the moon was suddenly sinking down and out of sight, and then it would come back to the center of my vision. I felt I was watching the vertical go haywire on a television. Despite this, the moon was unusually stark and clear.

—Jeff Sullivan (CAP)



Refinance Now!

Call me for a free consultation
First time buyers
 0 and low down payment options
 Lowest refinance rates in years!

Russell Leggroan • 503-249-0843 • Lrussell5@msnc.com
 Mortgage Galeria (FKA Northstar Mortgage) • 3151 N.E. Sandy, Suite A

Your local farm & garden store

LINNTON FEED & SEED. NOT THE MALL.



We carry multi-pure water systems
 10920 NW St. Helens Rd
 Portland, OR 97231
 Phone: 503.286.1291



LANDSCAPE ROCK OREGON DECORATIVE ROCK CO.

All About Rock Since 1976
 Largest Selection of Natural Stone in the Northwest
 SEASONALLY OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK • 8:30AM—5PM

BEAVERTON 11050 SW DENNEY 503-646-9232
PORTLAND 1716 NE COLUMBIA 503-289-7407

Mention this ad for **10% OFF!**

VILLAGE BARBER SALON

A LOOK YOU'LL BE PROUD OF—FROM SOMEONE SPECIALIZING IN MEN.

100 SW MURRAY BLVD. (503) 250-3388
 (ONE BLK SOUTH OF HWY 26)

FLEXIBLE APPTS. AVAIL.
 1/2 OFF FIRST HAIRCUT—\$14.00 THEREAFTER.
 AND—EVERY 10TH HAIRCUT IS FREE—WOW!

