

DIVERSIONS



The way things should be

Well, the time has come for your favorite queer columnist to bid adieu. What do you mean is Byron Beck leaving?! I meant ME.

As previously announced, I'm off to Belgium with my sweetie to live in her native country. I thought I'd leave you with a few words of (ahem) wisdom gained in my almost three years as Arts and Culture Editor of *Just Out*. To wit, the following is my list of my recommendations for a bigger and better queer Portland.

1. **Christopher Stowell should come out and then speak out against Ballot Measure 36.** The cute, articulate director of Oregon Ballet Theatre would follow most perfectly in the footsteps of his predecessor, James Canfield, if only he felt comfortable enough. I desperately tried to out him at a City Club meeting once by grilling him about his family, but all he would mention were his cats. He's a sly one, that Stowell.

But I'm cutting him some slack. He's newish in town and just needs a little encouragement. Send a few nice letters to his office, OK? Nice now.

2. **Portland author Chuck Palahniuk should also come out (publicly, in his own words) and splash his face on the cover of *Just Out*.** Wouldn't you like to read about the complexities of homoerotic male bonding in the straight world by Mr. *Fight Club* himself? Not to mention what he knows about Brad Pitt.

Can you imagine a full-page No on 36 ad in *The Oregonian* with Stowell and Palahniuk? I get shivers.

3. **Silverado should give C.C. Slaughters back its URL.** A few years ago, C.C. apparently allowed its Web address to expire. Silverado snatched it up, and now if you type in www.ccslaughters.com, you get the Silverado Web site. That might have been good for a laugh for a few weeks, but c'mon, game's over.

In fact, the gay bar owners of this town could lighten up a little about each other all the way around. For instance, a gay bar in the downtown area that shall remain nameless once fired a long-time employee for working temp at another gay bar in the downtown area for one night. That's cheap, and wild horses couldn't have kept me from suing, but, fortunately, gay bar workers appear to have a semblance of maturity some of the owners could stand to soak up.

4. ***Just Out* should do an annual "Person of the Year" issue, and the first honoree should be Portland Institute of Contemporary Art founder and director Kristy Edmunds.** The woman (who's out, mind you) has led the charge to bring Portland into the 21st century modern art world. This little Time-Based Art Festival of hers has put us on the map and brought unforgettable acts we've never seen nor probably would have. Exquisite New York performance artist Diamanda Galás thanked her during her Sept. 12 concert by saying Edmunds had the courage to present her as an artist rather than a freak. That's what she's had the courage to do for Portland, too. Thanks, Kristy.

S'long now, y'all be good. (I'm really looking forward to saying "y'all" in Belgium.)

What in Tarnation?

When the No on 36 campaign phoned John Cameron Mitchell and said they wanted to do a benefit with him, the writer, director and star of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* didn't hesitate.

"The very first political benefit I ever organized was No on 9," says Mitchell via cell phone. "We did a fund-raiser here in New York for that. Something about Oregon, I don't know."

"It's a hotbed?" I suggest.

"It's a hotbed," he replies.

Yes, Mitchell loves Oregon. "If I wasn't living here," notes the New Yorker, "I'd live there."

The modern-day queer icon will be living here for a few days for the Sept. 25 screening of the new documentary *Tarnation*, which he co-produced along with Portland's own queer filmmaker Gus Van Sant.

The No on 36 benefit includes a VIP preshow hobnob with Mitchell and Van Sant at Aura Restaurant & Lounge, the U.S. premiere of the final version of the film at the Guild Theatre and an after-party at Holocene, at which Mitchell will DJ and sing.

Mitchell discovered *Tarnation* when its creator, Jonathan Caouette, sent him pieces of it as an audition tape for Mitchell's new film *Shortbus*. "The most arresting [scene] was him as an 11-year-old boy performing a monologue as a battered wife. I was stunned; it was incredible footage," relates Mitchell.

He got in touch with the 20-something Caouette. "He told me about...how he'd been documenting his life since he was 11 in Houston with his mentally ill mother and growing up gay and a sort of goth, punk-rock drama queen."

Eventually Van Sant also caught a look at *Tarnation* and agreed to sign on as another co-producer "to help us get the film noticed more," Mitchell adds. A slightly rougher, earlier version of the reportedly brilliant, if somewhat disturbing, movie won accolades earlier this year at Sundance.

According to a No on 36 spokesperson, Caouette may also attend the event. Tickets are \$250 for the complete VIP package, \$100 for film and after-party and \$25 for after-party only from 971-244-1399 or events@noon36.com.

Portland Taiko a bunch of gays

Like a Japanese dinner bell, the booming voice of the Taiko has been calling communities together for centuries.

Queers have certainly responded to the call of Portland Taiko, the rousing drumming and performance group that celebrates its 10th anniversary with its fall concert, *On the Shoulders of Giants*, Sept. 24 to 26 at Newmark Theatre.

"I'm not really sure what it is about Taiko that attracts queer folks," muses member Rachel Ebor. "Could it be the power of making loud sounds with big sticks? The commitment to community and expression of identity? The pretty costumes? Any of these...probably rate pretty high."

Eight of the 19 members of Portland Taiko are queer, she confirms. "If I have my math right, that's 42.1 percent!"

A few years ago, Ebor and other members



Portland Taiko rides the shoulders of giants in its new concert Sept. 24 to 26 at Newmark Theatre

spearheaded a forum they call *Curly Noodle* for queer drummers at the North American Taiko Conference, which they repeated at the international event this year. The forum provides a safe space to discuss the intersections of queer identity, Asian heritage and Taiko performance.

"In 2001, most of the forum attendees were Portland Taiko members.... The second time, though, we had a lot of new faces show



New indie film splash *Tarnation* enjoys a Portland premiere Sept. 25

up, and it showed how successful we were in going past the first hurdle of just even acknowledging that there are a lot of us in the Taiko community."

The anniversary show will honor "our artistic giants who guided and mentored us through the years," says Ebor. The concert, which will be rich with the group's signature

heart-pounding drumming mixed with violin, voice and bamboo flute, also features distinctive new works and guest artists such as celebrated Portland queer dancer and choreographer Minh Tran.

On Sept. 25, Portland Taiko will also present a special matinee program for kids, *Little Giants*.

"Portland Taiko is proud to be the city's only nationally recognized...Asian American arts organization," says Ebor. "We are equally proud of the...commitment to the LGBTQ community that our members provide."

Tickets to the concert are \$18.50-\$25 or \$8.50-\$13 for *Little Giants* from the box office or TicketsWest.

Tear a ticket, see a queer film

Ah, fall is in the air. Time for sweaters, cider and...Sensory Perceptions.

Portland's eighth annual Gay and Lesbian Film Festival is Oct. 22 to 31, and they need YOUR help. If you possess finesse at tearing tickets, punching passes, counting attendance and helping VIPs find their very important seats, you should attend the **Volunteer Orientation Brunch** 2 p.m. Oct. 3 at Vitis Enoteca, 535 N.W. 16th Ave.

Bring your calendar and sign up for shifts on a first-come, first-served basis. Volunteers get all kinds of fringe benefits, says outreach director Debbie

Casleton, like "a cool T-shirt [and] a celebration after the festival is over." (And new friends and, perhaps most importantly, one free movie voucher for every shift you work.)

For more information, contact volunteer coordinator Topher Wallace at 866-206-2315 or topher@sensoryperceptions.org.

Locke up your daughters

Her Pride performance not being enough for Aussie musician Martine Locke, the beguiling singer and guitarist is back this month.

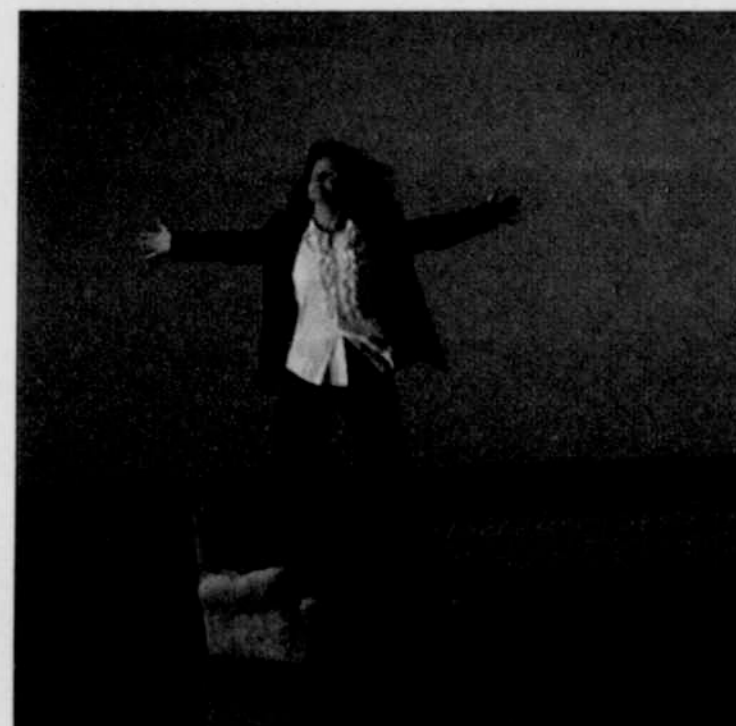
Having previously opened for the likes of Ani DiFranco, Cowboy Junkies and Arlo Guthrie, she's now on her own tour and makes two stops in Oregon: Sept. 25 at Sam Bonds Garage in Eugene and Sept. 26 at Mississippi Pizza Pub in Portland.

Locke, whose style is somewhere in the folk-rock category with a bit of urban grit mixed in, is known for a witty, interactive nature with her audience. "My shows are as much about the energy of the people who turn up...as they are about [me]," she affirms.

Originally from the lovely city of Perth, Locke recently relocated to San Francisco after she "fell in love with a native." She is at work on her second CD, *On the Verge*, due out in early 2005.

"I sing and speak honestly about being passionately in love with a woman and what that has done to change my life," Locke says. "And how everyone should try it!"

Compiled by LISA BRADSHAW and MEG DALY



"What more could a girl ask for?" Martine Locke says of perfect Portland