

# It was the worst of times...

...but 2004 was also a year of wonderful success stories and individual celebrations

And another year comes to a close. This was a tough one, this 2004. Hard losses on the political home front, statewide and nationally, and hard losses on the battlegrounds of Iraq. In Oregon and across the country, same-sex marriage dominated the headlines and the airwaves. Everyone was talking, and everyone, it seems, was voting. With the dawn of Nov. 3 came the image of a strange, new, unfamiliar and foreboding red nation, emerging victorious.

In the wake of the re-election of President Bush, of the passage of Ballot Measure 36, of the national glut of approved Defense of Marriage Acts, it could be easy to focus on loss and defeat. That, in and of itself, would be a defeat. Remember all the uncomfortable and awkward jokes that appeared in the wake of 9/11, after months of too many terrorist warnings, "If we give in to fear, the terrorists have won"? Well, same concept still applies. If we give in to defeat, the damn conservatives have won. Let's not give them anymore victories than what they already have.

So, enough about defeat and loss. I happen to think that there were also wonderful success stories and individual celebrations to be acknowledged this past year. Here are just a few. Apologies to those I've missed.

- Our trio of **Local Boys Make Good**: Wade McCollum, Thomas Lauderdale and Marc Acito. 2004 brought to play their impact and achievements in theater, music and writing. Look for these fellas to continue on in 2005 and beyond with even more successful endeavors. And we can all say, "We knew them when...."

- My vote for **Most Improved Performer** goes to Kevin Cook aka Poison Waters. The role of Miss Texas in the Triangle Productions presentation of *Pageant* was delightfully entertaining and shows real promise and growth into news arenas of entertainment. Perhaps even those not involving a horse.

- My **Friends, Allies and Supporter** award goes to Patricia Keeney and Joyce Liljeholm. These seemingly tireless women are everywhere. The hours and hours of volunteer time that they donate to our community and our causes deserves far more thanks than I can offer here. When it's time for Spirit of Pride Award nominations, let's not forget those who toiled for us.

- Again, in 2004, my vote for **Most Comfortable Place to Hang Out** goes to Harriet and Andy and all the staff at Hobo's. I love the place. OK, the service is slow sometimes, but you know, we all need to chill out and relax more anyway. I love the brick walls, the tablecloths, the piano, the music and the fact that everyone can mingle there comfortably. And, year after year, their holiday decorations bring an added,

and needed, touch of elegance and class to an evening out.

- **Most Touching Moment of the 2004 General Election?** OK, only touching moment: Sam Adams and his utter and sincere befuddlement upon being told, repeatedly, that he had actually been declared winner of the race for Portland City Council. He was as hard to convince as an undecided voter.

- **Best Candidate Deserving to Be Elected to the Portland City Council—Next Time?** Nick Fish. Go for the third run, Nick. It will be your turn. You will serve the city well, and we look forward to working with you.

- For **Graciousness While Giving Up a Dream**, the nod goes to Mark and Wally at Radiance, Rick at Gai-Pied and Steve and Larry at Wild Life. All three of these gay-owned businesses succumbed to economic doldrums and didn't survive the year. I encourage everyone to support all our gay, lesbian, bi and trans business owners. They bring enormous value to our community, and each time we lose another one, we lose a little bit of ourselves.

- And, to the **Question Most Frequently Asked of Just Out in 2004?** Yes, the planning committee for the gay, lesbian, bi and trans community center is alive and living and will be coming back to the pages of *Just Out* soon. Sam Adams will be returning in a leadership role, and the project will be moving ahead to the point of identifying physical sites for possible location. There was some down time as energies were diverted to political matters, and the sudden and unexpected death of co-chairwoman Kaelin Bowers had a strong impact. Not all of our losses were political in 2004. Some were very personal and deeply felt by many in the community.

For my own moment of compassionate conservatism for 2004, I wish to acknowledge the deep loss felt by U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith after the suicide of his son, Garrett Lee. I laud his efforts this past year in championing legislation to help with the problems of teen depression and suicide. As the senator comes to terms with his grief, I hope he finds it in himself to view with deeper care and understanding the struggles of young gay, lesbian, bi, trans and questioning youth who have a disproportionately higher suicide rate than their "straight-identified" peers. I fear that the struggles of our youth are destined to be compounded in coming times as the nation is led deeper and deeper into the stranglehold of Republican social repression. Senator, you're on the right track. Please work to save other families from the pain you feel. Please work to save all our youth.

*Just Out* will be on vacation the week of Dec. 20. We return to work Dec. 27 and will have the first issue of 2005 ready for you Jan. 7. Best wishes to each and all of you for the coming new year. j

## REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in *just out*... Vol. 12 No. 4, Dec. 16, 1994

- A total of 62 gay and lesbian Canadians have brought their foreign lovers to live in Canada since the government's 1993 decision that same-sex partners could be processed for landed-immigrant status on "humanitarian and compassionate grounds," reported London's *Capital Gay*.

- In Alabama, Sonia Putstein, lesbian lead singer of the rock group disappear fear, walked off the stage during a concert at Samford University to protest college officials' censorship of her songs. Putstein and sister Cindy Frank were under contract to avoid certain words or clothing that would hint at lesbianism.

- Elizabeth Birch will become the next executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund. She was chosen by the board of directors at its meeting Nov. 19 and 20 in Washington, D.C.

- "I think our position should be toleration [of gays]," said Georgia Republican Newt Gingrich, the next speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. "It should not be promotion and it should not be condemnation. I don't want to see police in the men's room, which we had when I was a child, and I don't want to see trying to educate kindergartners in



understanding gay couples. I think both approaches are fundamentally wrong."

- Sue Hobart, senior features editor for *The Oregonian*, says her paper does not print same-sex wedding announcements because those relationships are not legal.

- Backers of Hopewell Apartments, a planned residence catering to those with a combination of HIV and mental illness, are calling it a "one of a kind" facility. "We're talking about people who may have had a pre-existing mental illness and contracted HIV, or folks with HIV who became increasingly mentally incapacitated as their disease progresses. There are facilities that cater to one population or the other, but not a population affected by both mental illness and HIV."

- Oregon is going to Sundance. More precisely, an 80-minute documentary highlighting the state's volatile struggle two years ago concerning Ballot Measure 9 has been tapped to show next month at the renowned Sundance Film Festival—the nation's premier showcase for independent films.

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### FEATURE

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2004: Celebration, Struggle, Courage

### NEWS

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Measure 36 update; domestic violence affects queer communities; Salem youth benefit from BRO's road tour; Bridgetown Real Estate celebrates 25 years in business

#### 12-17 NATIONAL

Servicemembers sue to dismantle "don't ask, don't tell"; gay pioneer journalist Leroy Arons dies

#### 18-19 WORLD

South African Supreme Court OKs same-sex marriage; Nigerian couple may be stoned for allegations of homosexual activity; Brighton bans anti-gay dancehall music

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