

March madness

Just Out celebrates Marriage Equality Month

March, the mercurial month of many moods, has arrived. For college hoops fans, it's "March Madness" time. For weather-watching aficionados, March is the month that comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.

And here in Multnomah County, we'll now proudly celebrate March as Marriage Equality Month. As such, our community will be having many celebrations, gatherings and reunions in the coming days and weeks. In the March 18 issue of *Just Out* we'll recap the faces, activities and commemorations of the past year as we first look back and then ahead to the future in our continuation of a community's historic journey toward marriage equality.

If you've got a marriage or anniversary story to tell, a tearful, joyful memory to share or perhaps even a bone to pick, now is the time to get in touch with us. What have gotten lost in the past year are the voices of those who choose not to make marriage equality their fight. For some, it's simply not their battle. If this is you, please know we value your story, your opinion and your viewpoint. Remember, though, that once achieved, the right to marriage will be for us, as for the heterosexual community, a choice and not a requirement. If you choose not to get married, you simply don't. But everyone deserves the right to have that choice available and to make it for themselves.

As a rule I am not a greeting card person. Don't do much, if anything, to support this industry and its overdone, manufactured holidays. I'll happily call you on your birthday and stop by to wish you a happy holiday, but it's a rare day that will find me shopping for a greeting card.

That said, now and then a moment comes along wherein only a store-bought sentiment will do. And that's why I'm headed off to find the perfect "Get Well Soon" card for the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court. This is because ISRC is an organization feeling deep, troublesome aches and pains.

Symptoms of the internalized ailment include grumbling and griping, tarnished relationships, open wounds and seemingly endless bouts of accusations and attacks. The situation has gotten so serious that the organization's recent 2004 Report and Annual Meeting Notice found it necessary to acknowledge the existence of possible financial discrepancies, failed payments to charities, inappropriate financial reporting, conflicts of interest among board members and inadequate record keeping.

But there's also good news. New bylaws have been written, approved and filed with the state. Documentation required by the Department of Justice in order to comply with state laws is almost completed, and ISRC is nearing completion on acquiring 501(c)3 status, thus allowing contributors to make tax deductions.

ISRC donates thousands of dollars annually to organizations such as Camp Starlight, Our House of Portland, the Friends of People with AIDS Foundation and the Pride of the Rose and Audria M. Edwards

scholarship funds. ISRC has a rich history of service, tradition and dedication to our community. I do sincerely wish it a "speedy recovery" as it grapples with its organizational ailments.

Below this column you'll find "Reflections," spotlighting what was in *Just Out* 10 years ago. It was reported, "Data from an ongoing study involving 1,600 Portland men who identify as gay or bisexual show up to 30 percent are engaging in extremely high-risk sex on a regular basis—this despite the millions of dollars that have been poured into safe-sex education campaigns that clearly tell them if they have unprotected sex, they and their partners could die."

Ten years ago? The exact same item could easily be found in the current issue of *Just Out*, or any other paper in the city. But at the same time, if you pick up the current issue of the national magazine *POZ*, stating "We're all over AIDS," you'll find mixed media messages in the pharmaceutical ads. From these ads one could get the impression that AIDS is merely a manageable inconvenience. One high-tech electronic ad, when opened, replicates a cell phone call with the message, "Hey, we're at the beach, catch you later." Now I myself do not have HIV/AIDS, but from everything I've seen, read, heard and deeply believe to be true, living with this disease is simply not a day at the beach.

In the Feb. 28 issue of *The Oregonian*, columnist Jonathan Nicholas penned a harsh review of Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams and his performance at the recent Portland Roast Festival, "Hacks vs. Flacks." He went so far as to refer to an observer who believed that Adams had destroyed any future ambitions that he might harbor for statewide office.

Was there actual or perceived breaching of boundaries by Adams? Did he cross the line—at an event known for having none? I can't tell you one way or the other. But I can speak to you of voter trust and loyalty and can say that if Adams did blunder or make an error in judgment, then I know that he will take counsel and heed advice from others. He will learn, grow and be even stronger as he continues his political career. One rookie error, two months into a first term, does not derail a career. It will instead become a mark of strength for the person who rises above it. As for me, I'm holding onto my campaign button—you know, the one that says, "I'm with Sam."

Finally, the deadline approaches for the *Just Out* Amateur Photo Contest. We await your last-minute entries, and we want you to win. This is your chance at one of several prizes and the opportunity to be recognized in the pages of *Just Out*. And please note: This is an amateur contest. We're not looking for the person most skilled in Photoshop or the one most technically adept; rather, we're looking for photos that bring a smile, show heart and grab at our feelings. I know you've got one. Send it in today. Details can be found on Page 10. 

REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in *Just Out*... Vol. 12 No. 9, March 3, 1995

• John L. Adams III, the owner of popular gay-oriented establishments in Portland and Seattle, died of complications from cancer Jan. 22. Friends and family of the 52-year-old founder of the restaurant and nightclub C.C. Slaughters say he leaves a legacy to the gay community.

• The gay community has lost one of its most beloved and respected men. Paul Monette succumbed to AIDS, the disease that transformed his life and work, Feb. 10. He was 49.

• The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force plans to deal with the United States' swing to the right by emphasizing grassroots organizing and by strengthening coalitions with other groups adversely affected by the GOP agenda.

• State Rep. George Eighmey, D-Portland, plans to introduce legislation this session that could make it easier for unmarried people who are both terminally ill and parents of minor children to designate a standby guardian if the parent becomes mentally or physically incapacitated or dies.

• Portland attorney Lisa Maxfield and Realtor Fred Ross have been named the newest co-chairs of Right to Privacy, Oregon's oldest and largest gay and lesbian rights advocacy organization.



• Two Portland business owners are being recognized for their work on behalf of people with HIV/AIDS. Rip Rupinski, owner of Travel Agents International, and Debbie Peters, owner of Pet Set, recently received Appreciation Awards from the Friends of People with AIDS Foundation. The awards are presented to people in the community "who have gone above and beyond the call of service."

• Data from an ongoing study involving 1,600 Portland men who identify as gay or bisexual show up to 30 percent are engaging in extremely high-risk sex on a regular basis—this despite the millions of dollars that have been poured into safe-sex education campaigns that clearly tell them if they have unprotected sex, they and their partners could die.

• JoAnn Loulan performs her personal brand of standup comedy and sex education at the Northwest Service Center. Her lectures are full of laughter, dramatic dialogue and surprises.

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FEATURE

24 ROCKET SHAPED LOVE

The incredibly queer adventures of SpykeGrrl and Misster Scratch (in which a binational queer couple invent a virtual love nest)

NEWS

6-17 NORTHWEST

Basic Rights Oregon's Day of Action; BRO to celebrate "Wedding Anniversary Re-Union"; lesbians race to raise money for cancer research; Portland PFLAG to celebrate wedding anniversaries; online Pride; Sister Paula in critical condition; Multnomah County commissioners collecting photos, written memories of same-sex marriages for display, archives; Oregon Democrats to honor Barbara Roberts

18-21 NATIONAL

Virginia Legislature deals harsh blow to same-sex couples; "don't ask" discharges down; State Department challenged on discrimination

22-23 WORLD

Brazil grants gay divorce; Anglicans punish Americans, Canadians; Swiss to vote on partnership law; Czech Republic rejects partnership bill; Spanish support same-sex marriage

ARTS AND CULTURE

34-35 MUSIC

Portland Gay Men's Chorus celebrates 25 years

37-39 BOOKS

Graphic novels incorporate poignant queer storylines; gay author Christopher Rice sees the Light

41 TELEVISION

Sexy serials *Prisoner Cell Block H* and *Oz* on DVD

43 FILM

Callas Forever reunites legendary director, opera diva

45 DIVERSIONS

Lezz Fest; *The Facts of Life* and *Mommie Dearest*; Oregon Ballet Theatre's *Body, Mind, Spirit*; Antony & the Johnsons

COLUMNS

33 MS. BEHAVIOR

The G spot

40 EPIQUEERIAN

Eating down south

46 JIM'S CLOSET

Mix it up

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