

Buying for Equality

Shop locally, shop frequently, and shop wisely

It's early December in the Pacific Northwest—one of my favorite times of the year. Days grow short and gray, and it's now acceptable to plan activities that don't involve hiking or sweating. Television weather forecasters tease us with flirtatious hints of snow, and the nights become chillier than a Multnomah County Commission meeting. Yes, the season is clearly changing, but not from fall to winter, as one might expect. No, not yet. First we pause and tarry in the newly contrived fifth season, the "Season of Giving."

Yes, the holidays are upon us, accompanied as always by mumbling and grumbling from those who purport to hate anything and everything to do with this time of year. You hear it everywhere: "I hate the commercialism," "I can't stand the crowds," "I hate shopping, I hate this, I hate that." Many of you, perhaps, should just go off to the movies and come back in January, hopefully to return more relaxed and in better humor. For the rest of you, I offer the suggestion that the holidays are for everyone to make of them what they will. And for those who might like to shop, if you enjoy purchasing gifts for friends, family and loved ones, then go about it with gusto. Shop locally, shop frequently, and shop wisely.

To help the gay, lesbian, bi and trans community make responsible and fair-minded seasonal and year-round shopping decisions, the Washington, D.C.-based Human Rights Campaign has released its buyers guide, *Buying for Equality*. This publication highlights corporate policies on equality and empowers consumers to make decisions based on a company's score on the HRC Foundation's nationally respected Corporate Equality Index. Using a color-coded format, the publication, available at www.hrc.org/buyersguide, clearly delineates between "good" and "bad" companies. National companies with outlets in Portland that rate high on the index include Best Buy, Sears, Walgreens and Staples. Companies that score low on the index include Circuit City, Kmart, Radio Shack and Rite-Aid. With Walgreens and Rite-Aid taking footholds on competing corners throughout Portland, it's important for us to use our buying power wisely and reward those companies that treat their employees and customers with respect, regard and equality.


If you're traveling for the holidays, American Airlines and US Airways score 100 each, while Southwest Airlines pulls in a dismal 64. Kimpton Hotels, parent of Vintage Plaza Hotel and Fifth Avenue Suites, scores a perfect 100. Most of the larger hotel chains have scores of 85 or better, reflecting perhaps acknowledgment that our community travels well and travels often. Our buying power is not to be taken lightly.

For those shopping and gifting locally, *Just Out* provides with this issue a sampling of local merchants and the goods and wares that they present to you. As always, we encourage you to shop with our advertisers and our local merchants. Thanks to the advertisers who support the paper, and thanks to the readers who support the advertisers.

While keeping a keen eye on our dollars and where we spend them, we must also not lose track of the tremendous power that we hold as voters, both as individuals and as a unified bloc. With the 2006 primary still (or, for some, only) six months away, it's important to start focusing on the election. Throughout the coming months *Just Out* will profile candidates for state and local offices. These articles do not constitute endorsements and are presented to help voters become informed and familiar with issues. Endorsements will appear in late spring.

Already noted is the probability of contentiousness in some races. Gay and lesbian voters could play decisive roles with their votes. Multnomah County Commission chair looks to be the race with most potential for pitting voter against voter. Sides are forming, and key people are stepping up to show support for the candidate of their choice. Activists and community leaders are questioning the merit of being viewed as a single-issue constituency. Incumbents for all offices must be judged on their overall efficiency and leadership qualities. All Oregonians are affected by issues such as economic growth, funding for social services, cuts in education, taxes, affordable housing, public safety and, yes, opening up jail beds in Multnomah County. Same-sex marriage and the battle for full civil rights is of utmost importance and urgency to many. Should it be the overriding factor in how you'll cast your vote?

Finally, an article in the Nov. 11 issue of *Seattle Gay News* reports that the Seattle Pride Committee has made the decision to move its annual Pride festivities from the traditional Capitol Hill location to the much larger and grander Seattle Center. The need to move the event is based on the amazing growth of the festival.

Meanwhile, as reported in this issue of *Just Out*, the president of Pride Northwest has resigned, leaving behind a skeletal board of two members. What happens now to this organization and the annual Pride event it oversees? If the community doesn't step up with volunteer time and energy, the event simply might not happen in 2006. What would this mean to our community? What would this mean to you? 

ON THE COVER

Sissyboy wishes you happy holidays and an offensive new year! The radical drag troupe presents *A Bush Family Christmas* 8 p.m. Dec. 15 and midnight Dec. 16 at Clinton Street Theater, 2522 S.E. Clinton St. The show will be repeated during Sissyboy's regular monthly dance party 11 p.m. Dec. 21 at Holocene, 1001 S.E. Morrison St. Tickets are \$7 at the door or \$5 in advance.



Sissyboy also will perform during the ninth annual Hat Party 10 p.m. Dec. 19 at gay-owned Chameleon Restaurant & Bar, 2000 N.E. 40th Ave. The minimum donation is \$5. Proceeds benefit the Hollywood Senior Center.

FEATURE

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Gifts, charities and events on the *Just Out* list

NEWS

8-16 NORTHWEST

Jean DeMaster works for community; Ted Wheeler throws his hat into the ring; Q Center update; Trans Clinic now open at Outside In; smoking rates for Oregon's queers shockingly high

17-19 NATIONAL

First-ever conference on African-American women and AIDS; U.S. bishops interpret newly released Vatican document

20-21 WORLD

Iran reportedly hangs more gays; 2010 Gay Games go to Cologne



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reflections

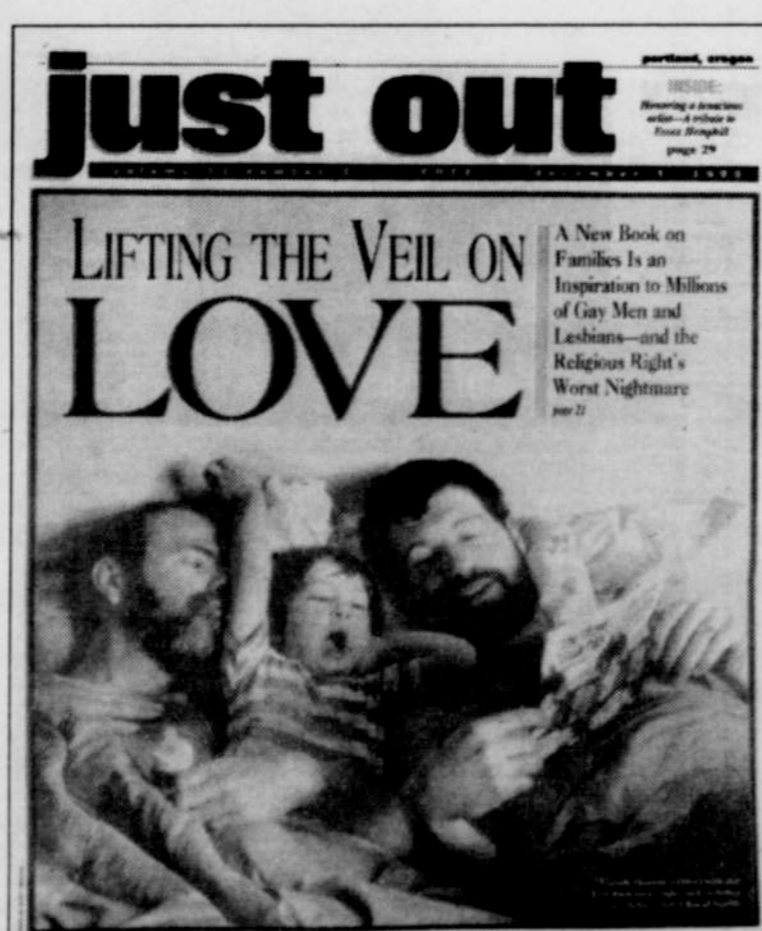
10 Years Ago in *Just Out*...
volume 13 number 3, december 1, 1995

- Portland actor Rob Buckmaster, best known for his portrayal of the title character in Triangle Productions' version of Paul Rudnick's *Jeffrey*, died Nov. 2 at the age of 31. The cause was AIDS-related lymphoma.

- Transsexual rights advocates say they want Right to Privacy PAC, Oregon's largest sexual minority rights organization, to change the name of its flagship fund-raiser and push for statewide legislation that protects not only gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from discrimination, but transsexuals as well.

- Openly gay Vancouver Councilor-elect Jim Moeller muses on the rigors of campaigning.... The 40-year-old chemical dependency counselor won his bid in November for a seat on the Vancouver City Council, making him the city's first openly gay elected official.

- An estimated 265 people turned out for the sixth Harvey Milk Awards Dinner, sponsored by After 8, a Corvallis-based educational and advocacy group that promotes gay, lesbian and bisexual visibility and rights.



- Join LesbOS (Lesbians of Size) for brunch and a movie at locations where the seating comfortably accommodates large women.

- Love Makes a Family facilitates a community forum on same-sex marriage, featuring a panel discussion and screening of two videos. Petitions being circulated by the Oregon Citizens Alliance include a prohibition against same-sex marriages in Oregon. Join the local effort to fight marriage discrimination.

- It's Nuts and Bolts Night at City Nightclub. Get your free nut or bolt at the door, find the person whose colored nut matches your bolt, and win a fabulous prize.

- Cris Williamson and Tret Fure bring their concert tour "Snow Angel—Songs for a Winter Evening" to the Spiritual Awareness Community Center in Bend for their only Oregon performance. A fund-raising reception for Beyond the Closet follows the concert.

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Rising ballet star shows wisdom beyond his 15 years

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Despite its flaws, *Rent* is the gayest Hollywood drama since *Philadelphia*

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SisterSpirit celebrates diversity of traditions

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Kiki & Herb tear down the house with their infamous cabaret act

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