northwest

Introducing Jean Ann Van Krevelen

New director brings experience and passion to Cascade AIDS Project

by Jaymee R. Cuti

Cascade AIDS Project's new executive director, Jean Ann Van Krevelen, brings decades of nonprofit organization experience, a passion for working with people with AIDS and a personal goal to build community with Oregon's sexual minority population. Van Krevelen comes directly from Oklahoma's Regional AIDS Intercommunity Network (RAIN), where she served as chief executive officer.

At 37, Van Krevelen is in a long-term relationship with a woman and looks forward to baking cakes and gardening in her new Northeast Portland home.

She joins CAP at a time of expansion. The agency is poised to launch several ambitious endeavors, including a corporate rebranding, the opening of a Men's Wellness Center and the beginning of MissionWise, a two-year business planning project based on a national entrepreneurial model.

On the job for less than a week, Van Krevelen spoke with *Just Out* about her new position, goals for the agency and excitement about living in the Pacific Northwest.

Jaymee R. Cuti: How did you stand out to the hiring committee while interviewing for the position of executive director?

Jean Ann Van Krevelen: I have a pretty engaging personality. I love communicating with people and building relationships. The board is looking to strengthen community ties and reach out to new constituents. I fit into what they are already doing.

One of the main objectives I have is strengthening relationships with the gay community because in Oregon, they are still disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

JRC: How will you meet that objective?

JAVK: I will go out with the outreach team, and there are circles and groups of people I would love to get referred to. I will be visible in the community and available to the community.

JRC: What attracted you to this position?

JAVK: I have always been in nonprofit work, working with the severely and persistently mentally ill, youth and families. I have a passion for working with people with AIDS because I had a relative that was HIV-positive that passed away. We never talked about it in my family that he died of AIDS. I never wanted somebody to go through the stigma and loneliness of dying this way. I look forward to being in a more liberal and responsive environment [than Oklahoma]. One of the other benefits of being here is the beauty of the state.

JRC: What observations can you make about CAP from an outsider's perspective?

JAVK: The staff here is phenomenal. They're so committed to this cause and so dedicated. They are definitely the agency's best resource. They want to grow with the needs of the people that we serve. The Men's Wellness Center is a direct response to feedback.

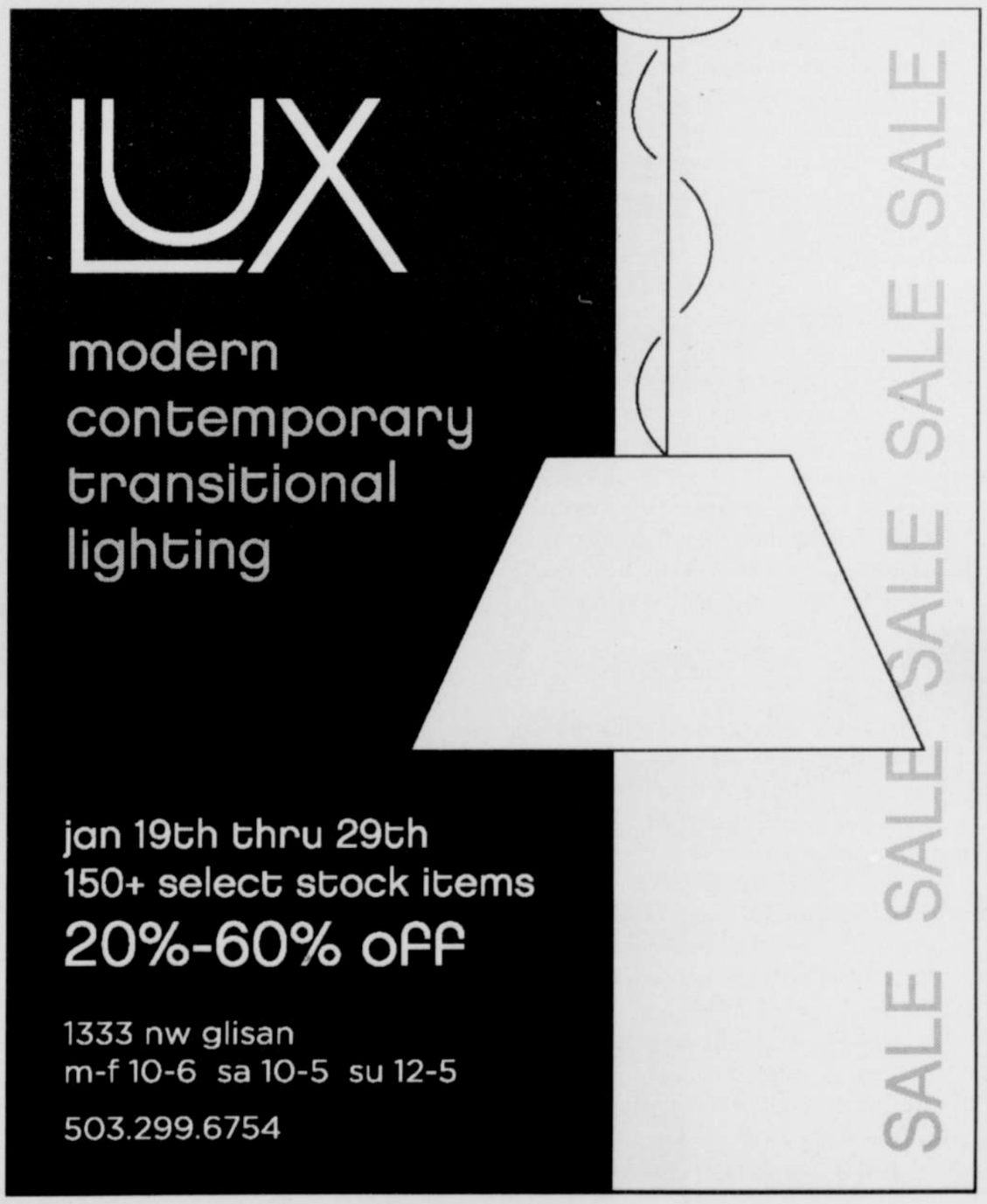
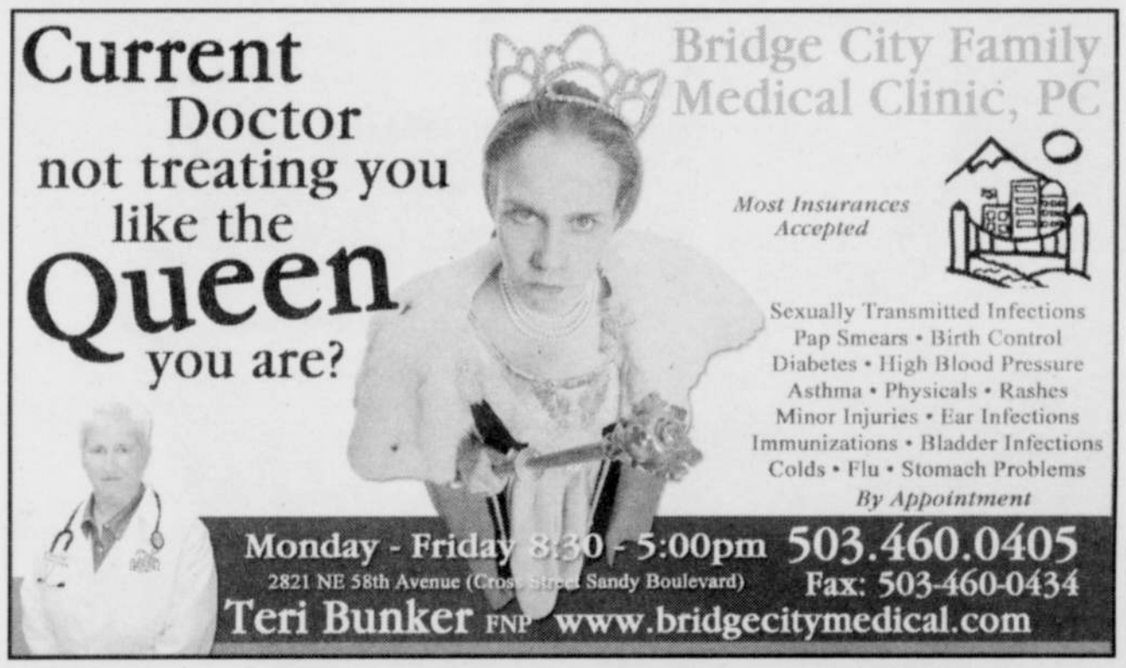
JRC: What changes do you foresee making at CAP?

JAVK: I think it's premature for me to decide I'm going to make any radical changes. I want to strengthen relationships with our constituents and focus on building our family within CAP.

Jean Ann Van Krevelen replaces Thomas Bruner as CAP's new executive director.

JRC: What do you consider your greatest accomplishments and greatest regrets in your previous job with RAIN?

JAVK: My greatest achievement was keeping RAIN open. The agency was literally within days of closing when I raised more than a year's worth of operating costs in less than six months. My second-greatest achievement was merging what was a small volunteer organization with a traditional AIDS care provider so we could provide housing, case management, homeless outreach prevention, substance abuse prevention, mental health care, testing and counseling all in one location with one provider.

I would have liked to see the substance abuse and mental health care develop further.

CASCADE AIDS PROJECT *is hosting an open house from 4 to 6 p.m. Feb. 23 in Suite 300 at 620 S.W. Fifth Ave. to give the community an opportunity to meet and welcome Jean Ann Van Krevelen. For more information call 503-223-5907 or visit www.cascadeaids.org.*