

outstanding

Joe D'Alessandro Creates a Welcoming City

Joe D'Alessandro's corner office on the top floor of the Broadway Building offers dizzying views of downtown and majestic sights of the mountains beyond. From his desk he can practically peer across town into the window of his partner, David Jones, working in the US Bank Tower, and keep an eye on his West Hills home. Such perspective allows D'Alessandro, president of the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, to market the city as a desirable place to visit and conduct business.

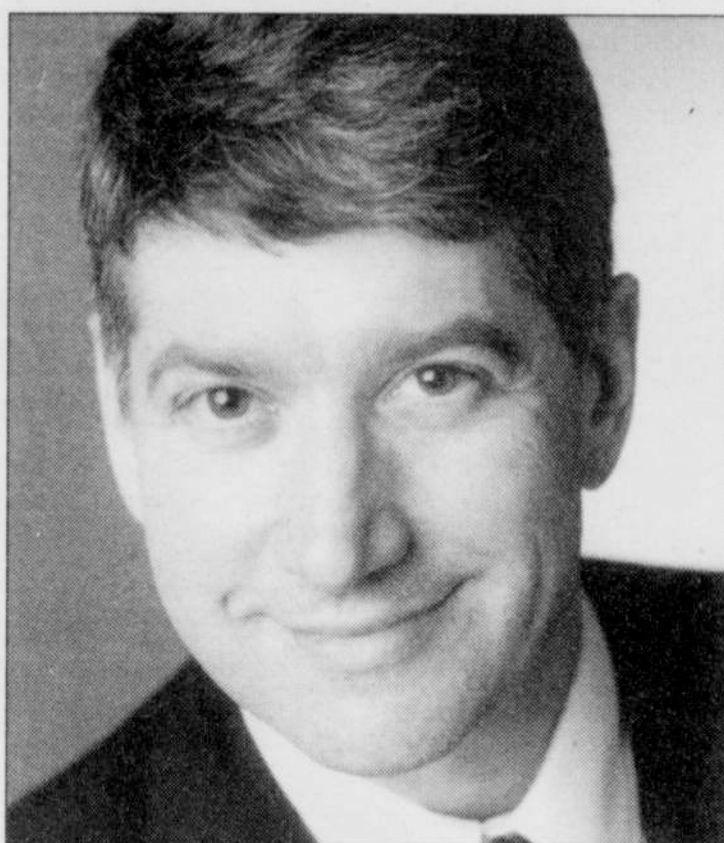
When he came out as gay three years ago, some wondered if he had been responsible for POVA's reputation for being open and welcoming to queers. Yet according to D'Alessandro, acceptance of all communities is the cornerstone of the hospitality industry.

"Gays and lesbians are a very lucrative market," he said. "In our industry, to be successful, we have to be welcoming."

POVA has an active gay and lesbian marketing department to draw more queers to the region.

"Tourism is good for Portland. Visitors tend to support things we love about Oregon," he said. "When a visitor comes, they'll go to the bookstores, coffee shops and theaters that we enjoy. If it weren't for visitor dollars, those things wouldn't be here for us."

D'Alessandro has worked in the hospitality



Joe D'Alessandro of POVA says the hospitality industry is inherently welcoming.

business for 25 years. Prior to joining POVA in 1996, he served as executive director of the Oregon Tourism Commission and as international program manager for the California Office of Tourism.

A lot of D'Alessandro and Jones' free time is spent working the gala and banquet circuit as a corporate power couple about town, but he says they value family time the most. D'Alessandro has two children, and Jones has four.

—Jaymee R. Cuti **jo**

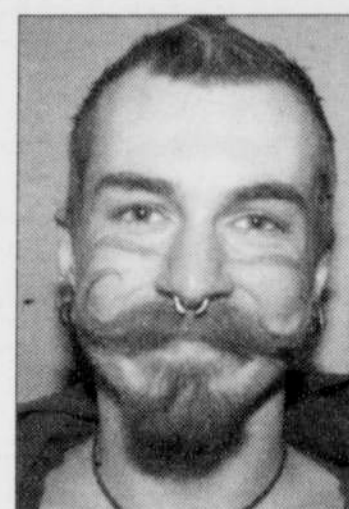
just asking

Considering this season's relentless rain and threats of snow, *Just Out* asked readers: How do you exercise in the winter?



SUZY KNUTSON
Knitting mentor

"We make our annual trek to Oaks Park for skating, and that should cover us for eight months."



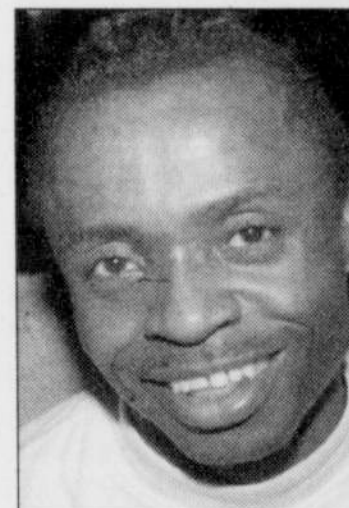
AREGO HARRISON
Artist, entrepreneur

"Sex. It's the best thing to do in the winter. You stay warm and get to be with someone special or not so special."



SARA DAHL
Personal trainer

"I'm a trainer, so I work out at the gym."



FREDERICK BIRD
Law student

"I'm a local figure skater. I was the first black figure skating coach in the state of Oregon."



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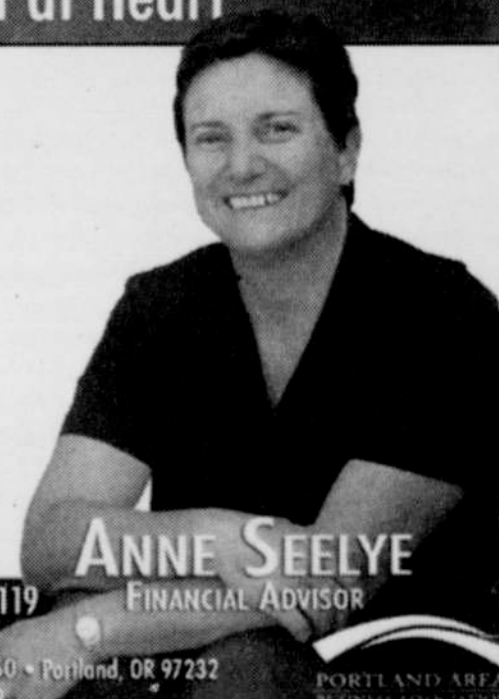
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