

northwest

Ladies Set Sail

You're a queer woman and you want to go on a cruise with other lesbians, but the all-women cruise ships aren't going where you want to sail. Thanks to a travel service called Lez Cruise, now you can find out when and where other women like you will be cruising, so to speak.

"We want to be useful to the community," said Mary Delamater, who started the online service with her partner, Lis Baccigaluppi. She explained that the main purpose of Lez Cruise is to provide an alternative to pricey all-women cruises by helping gay women connect online before they book their travel arrangements. The site also serves as a travel agency. "You don't have to be affiliated with our travel service in any way to use [the site]," Delamater explained.

To use the service, women simply go to www.lezcruise.com and mark the cruise they are interested in booking or have already booked. They can then see how many other women are booked on the same trip. The site also offers cruise reviews, a blog and a discussion forum, where women are encouraged to arrange meetups before setting sail.

The burgeoning business, which launched at Portland Pride 2006, is working with a number of major cruise lines. "Every cruise line that we've talked to about it has said that's a great idea," said Baccigaluppi. "They are all excited about having more gay and lesbian guests on the ships."

Lez Cruise works with the women who use the

Web site to secure discounted group rates, which may include extras like a bottle of wine, a massage or room on the ship for another passenger.

"We want to offer lesbians a cruise without the markup of an [all-women] cruise," said Baccigaluppi. "We can't book the Indigo Girls like they can, but we can offer a more affordable cruise experience."

business watch

Pampering for Pets

When your pooch is muddy, nappy and smelly, you can take him to the oldest dog and cat grooming and self-wash shop in Portland: Beauty for the Beast.

Dogs actually look forward to their baths in this bright and colorful facility, where the staff of animal-people pamper your pet or let you do the scrubbing yourself.

Not only does Beauty for the Beast offer comfortable tubs that are ideal for aging canines, but it sells a wide variety of pet food and supplies, making it a one-stop shop for all your fur-related errands.

"I've been told by several of my vendors that we have the best leash wall in town," said Michael Shapiro, owner of Beauty for the Beast's two stores in North and Northeast Portland. "We try to carry unique products. We have some really fun toys."

Shapiro, who is gay, broke into the doggie groom and wash biz after a bout of corporate life. He worked for 15 years as a commercial interior designer.

His shop at 3832 N.E. Sandy Blvd. has been open

since 1993. His NoPo shop, at 5215 N. Lombard St., just opened last month.

Response has been positive to the new store, according to Shapiro.

"I'd been looking around for a long time for a second location, and North Portland seemed to be a spot in need of a good pet supply and wash. It's a growing area; I have a lot of friends there. I saw the need," he said.

Shapiro says his store is staffed by other gay and lesbian animal lovers, who are among some of the best groomers and animal handlers in town.

When Shapiro is not at his shop, you can catch him performing with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus.

For more information about Beauty for the Beast, call 503-288-5280 in Northeast or 503-283-0919 in North Portland.

So Long, Madame

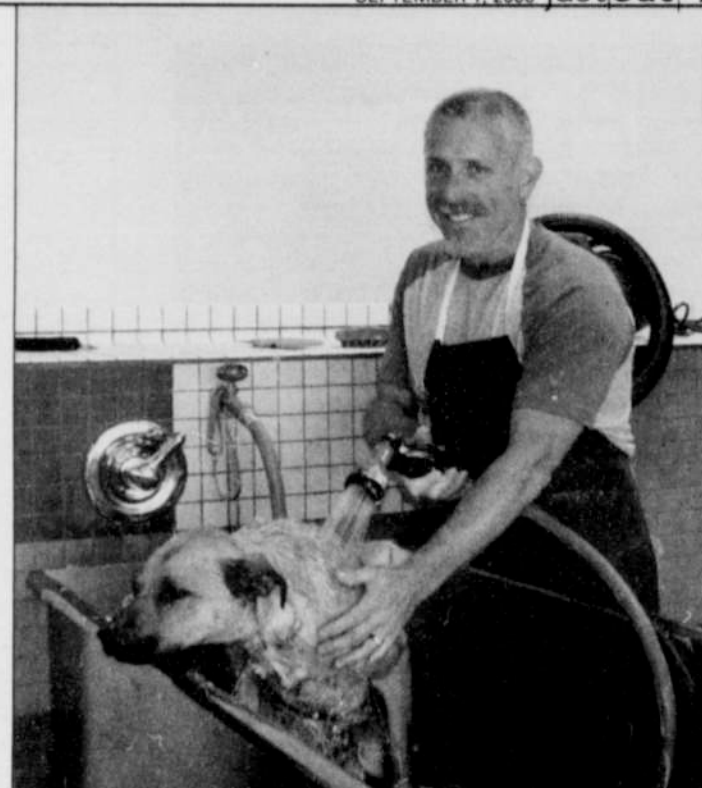
Madame Bouffant, the community's favorite wig shop for the past three years, is closing its doors Sept. 30. Through the end of the month, everything over \$20 is 50 percent off! Head there now to pick up your wigs, jewelry, accessories and purses, plus everything you'll need for Halloween, because Madame B is exiting stage left.

"What originally started out as a drunken compliment from someone—'Damn, Stef...you have the coolest wigs, you should totally open up a

wig store!'—has actually materialized into an important icon in the GBLT community and the city itself," says Madame Bouffant owner Stefanie Pinniger. "I believe Madame Bouffant has allowed me to cultivate my inner 'gay mamma.'" Her clientele consists of "everyone from trannies to drag queens to bachelorettes to thespians to bridge-and-tunnelers and everything else in between."

Some of her favorite customers are the members of the Portland radical drag troupe Sissyboy. "I've learned so many things from them, most of which

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Michael Shapiro, owner of Beauty for the Beast, hoses down a dog at his new North Portland shop.

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Willamette Financial Group, LLC

Floreid Walker
Senior Financial Planner
floreid@wfgadvisors.com

Greg Look
Senior Financial Specialist
greg@wfgadvisors.com

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