

Snowshoes for All

Adventure Group gets Portland gays out and active

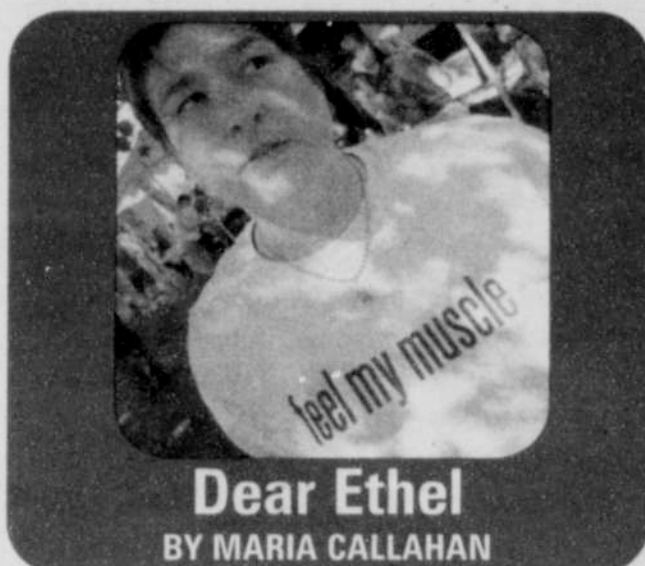
Winter weather is always a bit of a puzzle for me. I'd actually rather drive than walk in the snow, and as for winter sports, many people have told me that ice skating is easy, but these are the same people that said that skateboarding was easy. It wasn't. I'll drive the Zamboni.

And then there's skiing....

When I was a kid, my mother told me a story that has, most unfortunately, stuck with me my entire life. During a Girl Scout outing, her troop went skiing in Snoqualmie, Wash. The last in line, she watched as each girl successfully skied down the gentle slope. Thinking it looked easy, she descended and, about halfway down, started to relax and have fun.

Then it happened. She lost her balance, fell and fractured her leg—no safety devices in those days.

Many years later, on the morning my grade school was gearing up for a winter trip to Mount Hood, my mother bundled me up tightly in my coat, looked me in the eye and said sternly, "Remember, we don't ski." Through the years I continued to opt for an inner tube and bunny slope, and I've never felt like I was missing much. I am reminded regularly that I come from a family of big people and that we fall hard. Strapping two sharp sticks to my feet and careening down a hill continues to sound like a mean joke I'd play on my little brother.



an activity I'm new at, there are lots of people who can show me what to do. I've also learned that if it's on the calendar, people are more likely to do it," Boone said.

Although the activities vary from evening walks to rock climbing, the emphasis is on getting outside. "Oregon is really beautiful in the winter, and if you haven't been out in the winter, you really haven't seen it," Boone said.

The activities are only limited by a lack of leaders to coordinate and guide the group. Boone estimates that the group is only 5 percent women, but he said, "When we have women leaders, we have women participating."

Many of the events happen on weekends, with the exception of regular Thursday evening walks.

Sometimes those walks are urban-based, and sometimes they offer lots of variety in terrain. Boone personally recommends a newly published book called *Portland Hill Walks: Twenty Explorations in Parks and Neighborhoods* by Laura Foster.

Groups can vary in size, with as few as one or two in the winter and as many as 18 in the summer. The hikes and other activities tend to start out easier during the start of their respective seasons, but Boone says, "We don't profess to be experts at anything; we're just here to have a good time."

Annual membership for The Adventure Group is \$20 to \$30, which covers all activities.

A snowshoeing group will likely go to Trillium Lake near Thanksgiving, depending on interest. The group carools, and gas costs about \$6 a person. The carpool stops at a rental site on the way for those who don't own equipment, and rental cost is \$12.

"Trillium Lake is an easy snowshoe because the snow is packed," said Boone. When asked about difficulty, he added, "If you're in good hiking shape, you can snowshoe, but the stance is a little wider, and it really works your inner thighs."

I'm looking forward to snowshoeing this year—I hope to see all of you there! 10

For more information about THE ADVENTURE GROUP visit www.adventuregroup.org.

MARIA CALLAHAN is a clinical exercise specialist and certified personal trainer. To contact her visit www.mariacallahan.net. Information in this column should not be used in place of advice from a licensed health care professional.



From left, adventurers John Tuohy, Evan Boone and Jerome Guillen get physical while enjoying the Oregon winter.

Snowshoeing, on the other hand, has always looked interesting. I'm sure in part because it looks like you could whip one snowshoe off and spontaneously play lacrosse.

Since 1986, Portland's queer Adventure Group has been dedicated to keeping our community busy in the outdoors—regardless of the season.

The Adventure Group was founded by Jamail McKinney, who, according to event coordinator Evan Boone, was "a guy who really liked hiking." Lore has it that McKinney would leave phone messages for friends, informing them of his upcoming plans to hike. McKinney "retired," and those friends eventually became their own entity, thus The Adventure Group was born. Boone became involved with the group five years ago while training for a 50th birthday hike of the Grand Teton Mountains. Although Boone didn't make the intended climb, he enjoyed the group so much that he's stuck with it.

"It's a great way to get out in nature, and if it's

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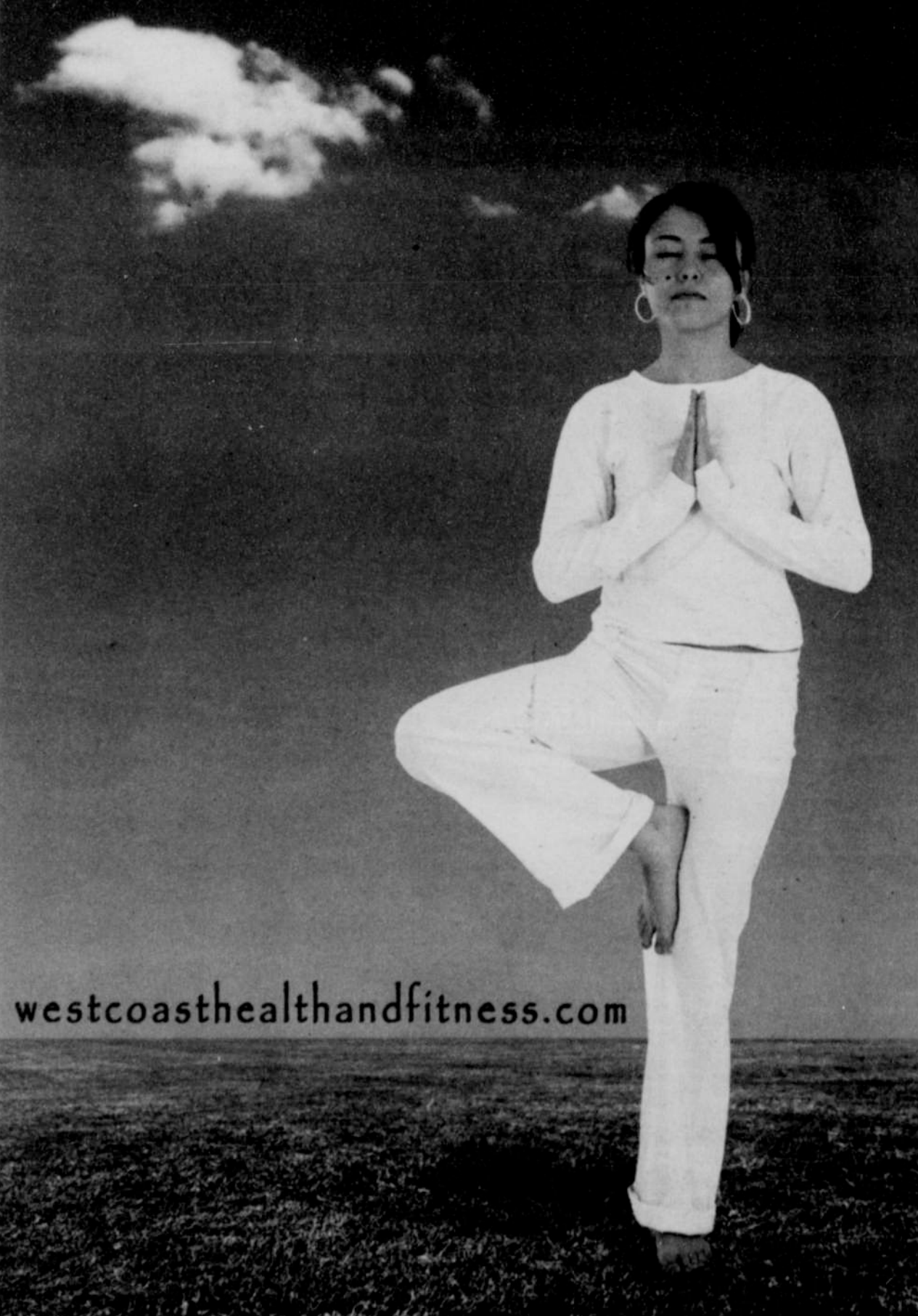
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