

It's About Time

Just Out turns 24 as we celebrate the long-awaited arrival of domestic partnerships

Have you ever looked at a newspaper cover and wondered what the numbering in the title is all about? Well, let me tell you. If you look at the front of this issue of *Just Out*, you'll see that it reads Volume 25, Number 2. And you know what? That's kind of a big deal. Volume references the sequential year published, and number is the amount of issues published so far within the year noted. So, in this case, *Just Out* is now in its 25th year of publishing, and we're on the second of the 24 issues that we write and print on an annual basis.

In a year from now, October 2008, we will have arrived at Volume 25, Number 24, and this will mean celebrate! This will mark a major milestone; newspapers serving the gay, lesbian, bi and trans community for this many years are few and far between. This accomplishment will call for a celebration of community and partnership—a partnership of *Just Out*, our readers, our advertisers, our supporters...and you.

It is very fitting that we enter our 25th year with a feature story celebrating the long-awaited arrival of domestic partnerships in Oregon. This legislation, along with nondiscrimination, was so long in the making that its process and history predate even this paper. For more than three decades, gay and lesbian activists, leaders and supporters toiled for civil rights, for equal rights, for gay and lesbians. It took until 2007 to achieve these goals. The next 25 years of *Just Out* will continue the telling of the achievement of full equality and full marriage for same-sex couples in Oregon.

As *Just Out* approaches our silver anniversary, we note changes and we note sameness. Twenty-five years ago, AIDS was on its destructive path through the community, leaving devastation, confusion and turmoil in its wake. Today, as noted also 10 years ago by the Rev. Roy Cole at Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, "AIDS is not over." It has simply widened its path and broadened its area of destruction. Once the "gay disease," AIDS now includes in its toll heterosexuals, minority women and entire African countries. Dec. 1 marks World AIDS Day, and the emphasis is now truly on the world. AIDS is not over.

Ten years ago the staff of *Just Out*—including myself, then a rookie salesperson—held a first-of-a-kind community forum to address questions and concerns from the community about the contents and direction of the paper. We heard from folks then much of what we still hear today. Readers want a reflection of themselves and their lives in *their* community paper. One thing that we can count on is that readers will step up and let us know when we are not meeting their expectations.

At the risk of appearing defensive or reactionary, let me give tell you a few things about *Just Out* that perhaps you've not previously considered. *Just Out* has a full-time staff of 11. There's myself, three people in editorial, five in sales and administration and two in arts and graphics. Our editorial team is supplemented with an outstanding group of freelancers and an occasional intern. With the exception of the world newsbriefs, "Ms. Behavior" and "Dykes to Watch Out For," every bit of *Just Out* is original material written expressly for our readership and the area that we serve. This is, I suspect, somewhat taken for granted by our readership, who might not have familiarity with gay papers in other cities from which to make a comparison. I see many other papers from small and large cities, and I can tell you that often the contents don't even give a clue as to what

city the paper represents. Why is this? Because many, if not most, gay papers are understaffed, underbudgeted and maintained by volunteers who rely heavily on syndicated materials to fill their pages. You can go from state to state, pick up the gay paper and read the same articles over and over.

In *Just Out* you will read about, yes, drag queens and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Also our local bars and clubs, theater, business owners, activists, leaders and politicians. We write about softball and bowling and hiking, all local, all your friends and neighbors and acquaintances. *Just Out* provides a level of excellence that is found in only a handful of papers nationwide. If you don't believe me, ask someone who has just moved here from another city.

Just Out proudly supports local community with thousands of dollars annually in sponsorships and donations. *Just Out* maintains a scholarship fund, organizes food and toy drives, sponsors Gay Skate and provides an excellent free online dating service for our readers. We value our place in the community and take it seriously.

To those who express dissatisfaction with our contents, we thank you for your concerns and assure you that we listen. The day that we stop hearing from you will be the day that we know we're in trouble, because by then you will have stopped caring.

I've told you what we provide to our readership; now here's what we need from you. We need information and notification about your events and your activities. We can't write about what you're doing if we don't know about it. We've got phones, faxes, e-mails and people attending events all over town. Talk to us. Siren Nation received a cover story because organizers spent a year in advance of their event sending out press packets, asking for sponsorship and making themselves available. The event that we failed to cover, Beartown, didn't send so much as a calendar listing. This was in was June, we were focused on Pride coverage, it was busy, and we missed Beartown. Are we sorry? Of course. Will it happen again? Hell no—I'll track those bears down and wrestle them to the ground if I have to. We will get our story.

The point of all this is that 11 people are dedicated to making our readers happy. Trust me, we're not in this for the big bucks. Everyone here, myself included, could make far more money working elsewhere. We're here because we love what we do, and we strive to do the best job possible.

I hear that some, perhaps many, gay men feel disenfranchised and left out of the pages of *Just Out*. I'm constantly aware of the need for gender balance and finding and creating opportunities to reach to "the center."

As part of that I'm putting out again a call for columnists to cover areas in which we could use shoring up. I'd love a local political pundit, someone with a keen awareness of gay issues as they are affected by the broader picture. A male humorist would be a great addition. Again, though, I don't want a syndicated writer. I want a local person sharing experiences of gay life in Portland, Oregon and Southwest Washington.

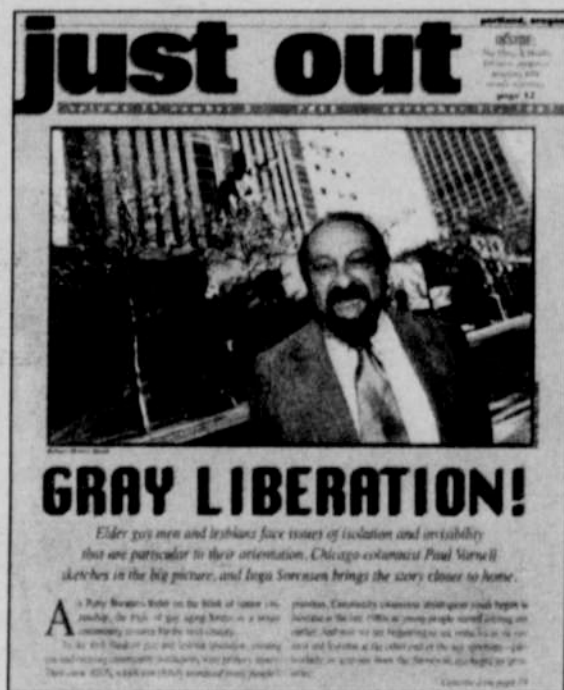
And that's where we are 24 years after we started. In some ways the same, different in others, always striving to improve and be the best. We'll be on vacation for Thanksgiving week, except for Gay Skate Night on Nov. 19. When we return I'll ask for your help to brighten the holidays with your canned food donations for Esther's Pantry. Finally, don't forget to check us out daily at www.justout.com. If we missed you in the paper, we'll get you on the blog. 19

reflections

10 Years Ago in *Just Out*... volume 15 number 2, november 21, 1997

- "I'm delighted to be here." With that simple phrase Bill Clinton became the first sitting president to attend a gay and lesbian event. The symbolism far outweighed the words he spoke, and the audience roared back its appreciation. A capacity crowd of 1,500 tuxedoed and gowned supporters of the Human Rights Campaign paid \$250 to gather at the Grand Hyatt a half dozen blocks from the White House for the Nov. 8 gala dinner.
- Federal workers may one day have domestic partner benefits, thanks to a bill recently introduced by Barney Frank, an openly gay Democratic congressman from Massachusetts.
- The Rev. Roy Cole, pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, wants people to

- remember this: "despite what you hear, AIDS is not over. Huge numbers of people in this country and worldwide continue to contract HIV and die of AIDS. This is a reality."
- The Lesbian Community Project hosts a dance following tonight's Portland Power game. The team has been invited.
- A panel of judges, including *Just Out's* Inga Sorensen, chose Moira Bowman, 29, as best femme, and her real-life partner, Jaé Larsen, 31, as best butch during the first Evening of Divine Decadence: The Naming of Portland's Best Butch and Fabulous Femme! Contest, held Oct. 26 at Darcelle XV in Old Town.



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The comprehensive guide to Oregon's domestic partnerships

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Trans-free ENDA passes House; Alabama inmates gain rights; California gays coupled elected royalty; victory for gay sergeant; gay witch hunt continues; Westboro to pay \$11M; official declares New Jersey civil unions a failure

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Church of Sweden to marry gays; Ireland to fix trans birth certificates; Vilnius mayor blocks rally; gays picket Saudi embassy in London; Singapore MPs keep gay sex ban

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Gay German photographer taps into our subconscious

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