

JUSTOUT at 25

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master's degree and begin his own practice for drug addiction.

"I knew I always wanted to empower and create positive self-esteem in our community," Kallioinen said. "Being a public figure and participating in numerous fund-raisers and organizations was a way for me to raise awareness with love and laughter."

WALT CURTIS

Portland's peckneck poet

Claim to Fame: Author of the chapbook *Mala Noche*, the inspiration for Gus Van Sant's first feature film.

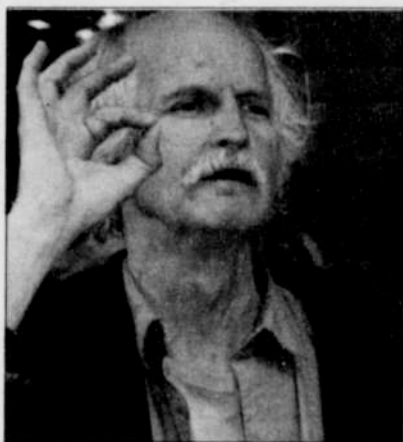
So They Say: "I'm the 'outsider,' a gay one, who lived *Mala Noche*, loved the Mexican boys, wrote vividly and well about the relationship—and also about racism which is directed toward Mexicans.... I did this in 1977, exposing myself to aspersions and criticisms from all quarters. It seems somewhat bizarre, bitchy and inexplicable that my effort wouldn't be recognized in a 'gay' community newspaper published in Portland." (February 1990 letter to the editor)

Walt Curtis is digging for magic. In his inner Southeast Portland basement hovel, he zips from

bookcase to corner to desk, unearthing Stumptown queer history artifacts like some possessed archaeologist.

Curtis digs out some old papers and magazines from the 1970s, with titles like *Willamette Bridge* and *Portland Scribe*, taking care to point out an article on early gay liberation, and shows off some of his early poetry in the long-forgotten poetry mag *Mississippi Mud*. Then he offers up rare finds from his book-scouting adventures, plucks the strings of a bizarre instrument inspired by Harry Partch and points overhead to an elegant Calder-like mobile made by an old friend named "Ghost."

"I wish that people would talk a little bit about



my intellectuality" instead of fixating on his fame with *Mala Noche*, he says. As proof, he points to his 35 years on KBOO-FM co-hosting *The Talking Earth*, a program about words and ideas. Indeed, Curtis has been a Portland poetry legend almost, it seems, as long as he's been in town (he arrived to the Rose City from Oregon City in 1959), publishing, reading and ranting his voluminous words with the zeal of a pulpit-pounding preacher.

WALTER COLE

Doyenne of Portland drag



Claim to Fame: Reigning producer of the eponymous Darcelle XV drag club.

So They Say: "It worked out for the best—15 is a much better number than 14." (Oct. 3, on how Darcelle landed her title as Rose Empress XV)

Who's Next: Kendall Clawson of Q Center and Michael Kaplan of Cascade AIDS Project.

Ask Walter Cole to rattle off 40 years of Portland drag history while he's sewing 20 yards of chiffon. Then sit down and let the dazzling show begin. Cole can spin out an oral history of Portland gay nightlife with the same type of bravura flourish he brings onstage to an Ethel Merman showtune. And just like Merman, he's all guts, brass and balls—and some kind of larger-than-life Portland legend.

The septuagenarian Portland native, proprietor of the longest continually running drag showcase in the United States, shrugs off the "legend" status with a wink. "I do what I do. I suppose if you live long enough you become a legend, an icon and those sorts of things—an institution."

But an institution he is: a ubiquitous presence at most major gay events, especially Portland's Imperial Sovereign Rose Court; an indefatigable entertainer still MCing four nights a week of live shows at his Old Town club; and, as suggested in

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