



Let's hear it for the heroes of the 21st century GLBT community—the small business owners.

While we are quick to acknowledge, salute and hold up as leaders our political and arts activists, often lost in the story are those very folks who are the foundation of our community—the small business owners.

Not celebrated enough are the individuals who provide local jobs and pay city, county and state taxes. Not honored enough are the local citizens whose profits, albeit often meager, stay in our communities. Not championed enough are the same ones who struggle to provide health care for their employees while having to compete with the pricing and services of larger corporate competitors. Yes, let's hear it for the small business owner.

Small businesses, especially gay-owned and gay-friendly, are the ones most often asked to contribute financially

to the political and cultural and social aspects of our community. Time and time again the phone will ring with requests for donations and dollars for auctions and fundraising events; time and time again the small business owner digs deep and contributes to ensure the ongoing cohesiveness of our community. Again, let's hear it for the small business owner.

Following are profiles of a sampling of entrepreneurs in our community. There are many others just like them, providing the services and products needed to make our lives the way we all want them to be. As a consumer in a down economy, your spending dollar is powerful. Individually, you can impact the success of a local business; collectively, you can sustain it. On behalf of the gay business owners featured here, we respectfully ask you to shop local, shop gay and shop often.

— MARTY DAVIS

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Area GLBT Boutiques, Eateries and Services Weather the Financial Climate – and Connect with Consumers

HEALTHY PETS NORTHWEST

Owners: Julie Cantonwine, Barb Cantonwine, Laura Amiton, Michael Carroll

Years in Business: 9 years at Hawthorne location. 5 years at Alberta. 3 years on SW Capitol Highway

Addresses: 1402-A SE 39th Ave., 2224 NE Alberta St., 7642 SW Capitol Hwy.

Web: www.healthypetsnw.com

About 10 years ago, Julie Cantonwine was on the prowl for a natural ear mite medication for her cat—something that didn't contain pesticides or other nasty chemicals. But when she came across a Portland independent pet supply store and found only products that contained warnings of what to do should the substance land on *her* skin, she was understandably careful not to apply it to her cat.

"I was walking with a friend of mine and said, 'Wouldn't it be great to have a store like Whole Foods for pet stuff where you didn't have to look at the label?' Where it was just a natural pet food store so you could make sure that you were feeding them foods that didn't



Healthy Pets Northwest's Julie Cantonwine had a "Whole Foods for pets" in mind

have by-products, you were buying products that didn't have pesticides, that kind of stuff," says Cantonwine.

Cantonwine began assembling those thoughts for the business plan that would eventually become Healthy Pets Northwest, a store now boasting three locations and focusing on natural alternatives to pet food supplies.

The market for alternative and natural pet food and supplies has seen an explosion in

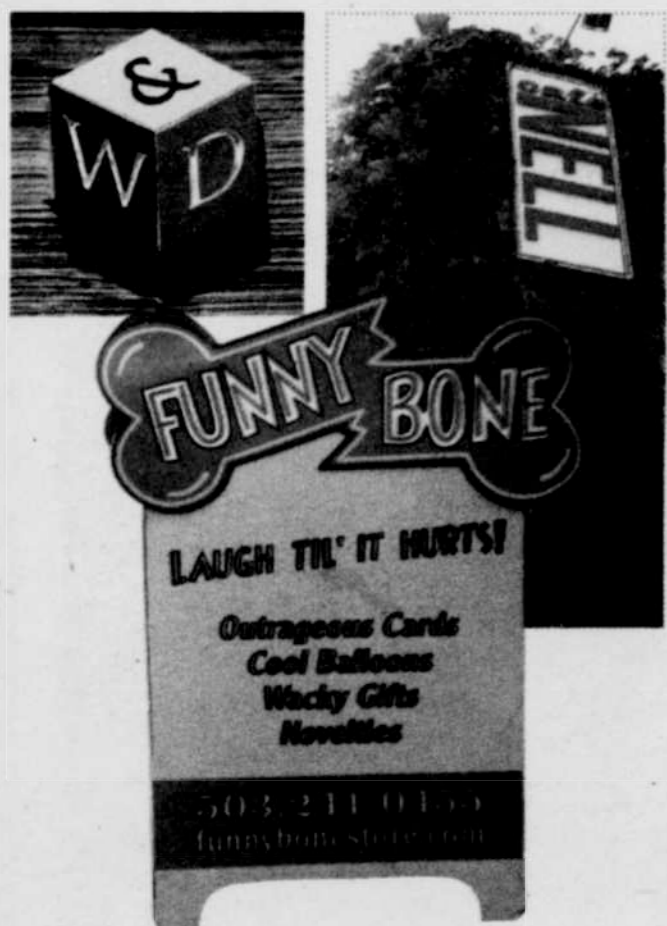
popularity over the last nine years, explains Cantonwine, who adds that when the pet food recall came down a couple of years ago, owners began paying close attention to what they were feeding their animals. The pet health trend seems to have since echoed the human health trend.

"We have all these people practicing natural medicine in this town and eating organic food for themselves, but they're going to the grocery store and buying a bag of Purina or Beneful," says Cantonwine. "So just getting the word out there and getting the education pieces in place has been important."

Equally important is Healthy Pets Northwest's connection and visibility within Portland's gay, lesbian, bi and trans community. The business was a major sponsor during this year's Pride festival, among other sponsorships.

"We're not Petco," states Cantonwine. "But people keep coming back because they know that the final sell isn't our whole goal; our goal is to be part of the community, to give back, to give information and tools you need to raise your animals in a chemical-free environment."

— RYAN J. PRADO



Hala J. Gores, Attorney

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