

Looking Forward, To 2012

Second verse, same as the first?



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BY MARTY DAVIS

Well, here we are again, the beginning and the end—the one and the same? We arrive at the start of another new year—while bidding farewell to one that looks and feels a lot like the one before it. In the classic words of the not-yet-immortal Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits, "Second verse, same as the first."

Backwards, forwards, in and out, there are a few thoughts that I'd like to put to paper at this sharing time of the year. **Looking forward** to 2012, I'm happy to be able to tell you of a partnership that *Just Out* is entering into with innovative local business Portland Pedal Power. Starting with our January issue, *Just Out* print copies will be delivered to distribution spots in the downtown Portland core area by bicycle. Yup, bicycle. This will mean one less car, one less frazzled driver going "round and round" looking for parking spots while desperately trying to not become bus kibble. We're going to start out with 30-40 stops in the area somewhat defined by the transit mall and Portland State University. If all goes like it should, we'll soon expand to include the north-of-Burnside zones. Bike delivery is cost-effective, it's logical and it's ever so Portland. I'm proud to be partnering with Jenn Dederich and her Portland Pedal Power crew on this project. This is one of the more significant "win-win for everyone" proposals that has crossed my desk in some time. I'm also proud that I made this announcement without using the words "green" and "sustainable," because seriously, these are among the **most overused words of 2011**.

We close 2011 with the first look at what will be defined as the top story of 2012—local and national elections. While the candidates for the Republican Party presidential nomination are going to be in the brightest spotlight seemingly forever, the focus of *Just Out* is turning toward local candidates. In April we will make endorsements for several local races. Our endorsement process will have several components, not the least of which is a lot of "listen and learn." Between now and

then, we will provide you with "introductions" to key candidates. We start in this issue with Portland mayoral candidate Charlie Hales. We'll continue introducing you to candidates right up until election month.

The Portland mayoral race will be important, very important, even though it lacks the rainbow-hued spark of 2008 when Portland had the opportunity to elect the first openly gay mayor of a major U.S. city. That race ignited, and later divided, Portland's LGBTQ community. **Looking forward**, we—we collectively—have the opportunity to present ourselves as a strong voting bloc. I tend to think that Portland's gay community could be a deciding factor in the selection of the next mayor and city commissioners. My vision of our unity is not shared, however, by Portland's "other" alternative paper, *Willamette Week*. In a recent issue, it identified six groups that could play powerful roles in the coming elections: "organized labor," the "power lunchers," "The Kremlin" (inner east side Portland), "the red and the gray," "the young and the restless," and "the rest of us." I suppose it could be said that the gays fall into the "rest of us" category, but that simply isn't good enough for me. I think we, the gays, indeed have the potential to be stronger, more active and more powerful in determining who next fills the seats in Salem and in Portland. *Willamette Week*, for those of you with a memory shorter than mine, was chosen in 2011 by Pride Northwest to publish that organization's Pride Guide. At that time its publisher admitted, in print, that his paper didn't have a good record of covering our community's issues. I think that this latest slight shows a continued trend of underestimating LGBTQ votes, dollars and determination to elect progressive candidates and support ballot measures that push forward with LGBTQ equality issues. United we have enormous potential. If we need another openly gay elected official to sit in a position of power and keep us on track, then let's find the appropriately skilled and qualified person and get them elected, **Tim Joyce?**

The last couple of years saw me selecting a "Person of the Year" for this final column of the calendar. At first I didn't think I'd do it this year, due simply to the fact that I can no longer clearly tell when one year has ended and another has started, leaving me prone to get people and their accomplishments all mixed up. But in the last few days, about '30 in fact, a story among stories has been in the telling in Portland. As a follower of the daily Facebook postings detailing this wondrous story of love, dedication and selflessness, I would be completely remiss if I did not acknowledge the tremendous efforts of **Diane Young** as she has spent the last month caring for her hospitalized partner, **Michelle Lagos**. Michelle's illness was sudden and unexpected, catching her partner, family and friends completely by surprise. Diane, in a relationship still relatively new, even in lesbian time, stepped up and took on the role of her partner's advocate and caretaker. Now, there might be those among you, the more cynical among us who'd say that she did what any partner would do—should do. And you would be right; it is the role of partners to care for each other. But in this time of marriage equality battles and issues—with a community of people trying to show the world, to educate the world on the value, the merit, the love, the normalcy of our relationships—no one could possibly put a better face to the image of marriage equality, to love equality than Diane Young has done this past month. For this reason, Diane Young, you, representing the best that we all have to offer each other, are my personal hero and **Person of the Year**.

Another component of Diane and Michelle's story is to acknowledge the progress made by LGBTQ rights organizations in advocating for patient's rights and equality with same-sex couples facing health care situations. From the accounts presented, it seems that Providence Hospital has been simply stellar in their acceptance and understanding of the relationship between Michelle and her same-sex partner. This progress didn't happen overnight and it didn't happen on its own. While there are some who decry what they see as a glacial pace in the movement toward marriage equality, let's not lose sight of other accomplishments.

Goodbye, 2011. You were a lot like 2010—the best about which could be said was that it wasn't 2009. Welcome, 2012. Be gentle with us, please. JO

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To start the conversation please email Marty Davis at marty@justout.com

Join us in making 2012 a Happy and **PROSPEROUS** new year for all.