

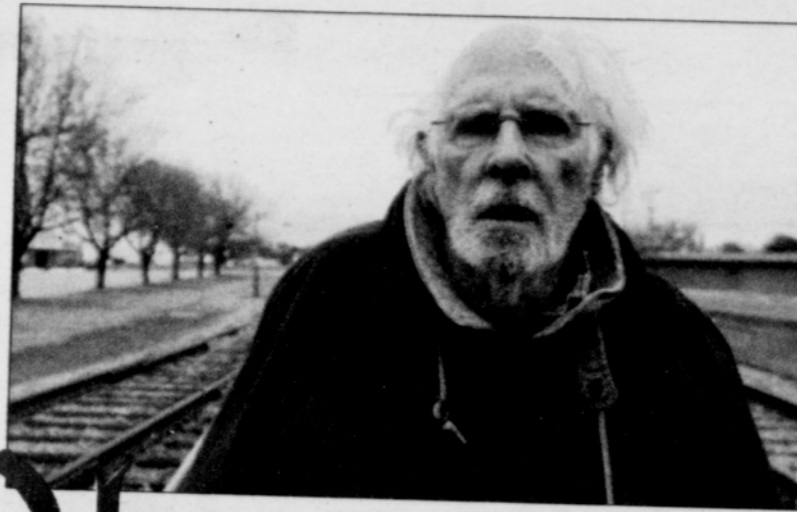
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Expected to Last

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NURSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTLAND COMMUNITY MEDIA

To the general public, the nursing profession can often be looked at as a second fiddle to doctors. Portland multimedia entrepreneur and longtime nurse Sonya Justice has created a show entitled 'Reel Nurses Talk Show' in an effort to shine light on the important role people in her medical profession play.

Program aims to dismantle myths of nursing field

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

What do you picture when you think of a nurse? Sonya Justice's theory is that if you're like a lot of people she's encountered during her 15 years as a registered nurse in an Intensive Care Unit, you equate her profession somewhat to a second-rate role to doctors, a notion she is trying to destroy with her new television program Reel Nurses Talk Show.

"Modern 21st century nurses don't take orders blindly, and we don't really consider them orders," says Justice, the nurse and producer of the show on Portland Community Media.

Doctors simply relaying commands and nurses unquestionably following them was never really how the job worked, Justice says.

Nurses are expected to function as collaborators in

the delivery of medical care. For example, when physicians write a prescription for a patient, it is actually part of protocol for the nurses to review it, and give the doctor the green light. Justice says it's also up to nurses to raise a red flag if they think the doctor could be making a mistake in treatment, and though it can cause friction of egos sometimes, says her own questioning of a doctor's decision in the past has led to better outcomes for patients.

"Now admittedly our training is not as in-depth as theirs to do a medical diagnosis and the treatment, but we have to have an idea of what they are doing or else it would not be safe for the patients or for us and our licenses," she says.

People looking to become nurses like her, in fact, must be able to competently diagnose a range of ailments that range from neurological to circulatory

problems in order to even receive their licensing. Facts like these, Justice, a graduate of a nursing school in Pittsburgh, says has become lost on the public in large part because of popular medical dramas that are meant to entertain and not necessarily inform. And though she says she regularly enjoys some of these shows herself, it can be frustrating to watch the nursing field be demeaned so often through the media.

Fueled by so many other misconceptions about her job, Justice created her TV program to educate the public on the real functions of nurses; fittingly she has titled it, Reel Nurses Talk Show.

The broadcasts balance two of her passions, media and nursing. For three years now she also has owned and published an award-winning magazine, Fabulous

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