

OBITUARIES

John Preston

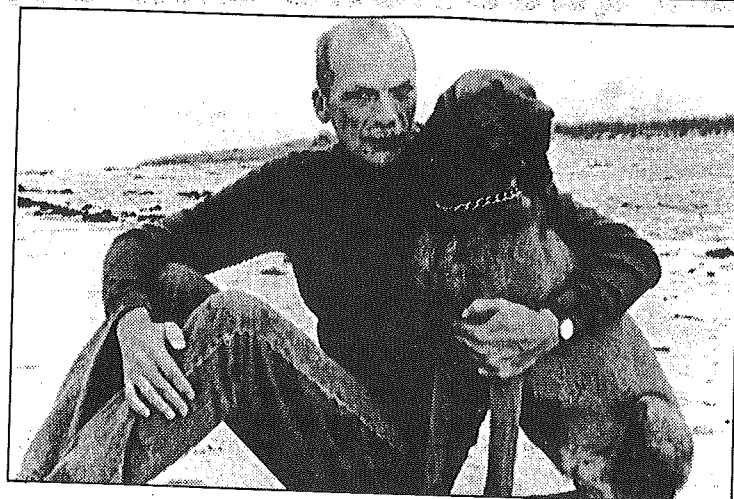
BY THOM DOORHY
Special to PGN

John Preston, writer/columnist/editor, front-runner of the gay community, died of complications from AIDS April 27 at his Portland home. He was 48.

Those who are familiar with Preston are often somehow affiliated with the art and business of writing. This is not to say there aren't many who simply enjoy his writing; his erotic stories, *Hometowns: Gay Men Write About Where They Belong*, *The Big Gay Book* or countless others are all top-notch works. He was more than author/editor, he pioneered for our community. Preston was a pacesetter who contributed to the goodwill and well-being of our culture and spirit.

His career propagated from pornographic essays and escalated into virtually any other genre he pursued. When the time warranted a need, he wrote one of the first guides of its type: *Safer Sex: The Ultimate Erotica*.

His fine reputation as editor brought him notoriety within the field and his knowl-



edge of the nuances of writing as a business empowered him. My first experience with Preston's work was his erotic series and I later became somehow interested in whatever his current project was. Anyone whose photograph (which I had seen somewhere) could get my attention that quickly, deserved another reader.

As we often do, celebrating the impact people have had upon the current of the gay community becomes our tribute to him or her. Preston's endeavors writing pornography were paradigmatic of his life and work. Widely known was his leather background. The stories he wrote craved a certain attention and huh... whatever, perhaps better than any Honcho ever could. What was special about Mr. Preston was not only his prolific porno

but the impression of what it's like to write erotica. In *Flesh and the Word* he explains why he thinks erotica is simply well-packaged pornography. It's all a matter of how the work is presented.

Preston's dedication to writers, particularly gay writers, was immeasurable. In a letter to me, he explained that the apparent "circle of gay writers is a construct created by those outside the circle." His monthly column in the Lambda Book Report typified his loyalty to his sexuality and profession.

Co-founding Gay House, Inc., and actively supporting or starting other gay-related groups and organizations, Preston subtly affected all of our lives with ingenuity and tenacity. I'll miss him and put his work on any reading list.

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