

Club's policy protects safe environment

Lanny Swerdlow

It never ceases to amaze me how irate heterosexuals, such as columnist Primo Fontana (*ODE*, April 12), can become when they are not allowed to show everyone how straight they can be. The slightest restriction on their heterosexual rights and they indignantly yell foul.

If he got so upset over being asked not to kiss his girlfriend at The City Nightclub, imagine what he would do if he got fired from his job or kicked out of his home for being heterosexual. I certainly hope Congress doesn't rescind the ban on assault weapons.

Columnist Fontana is not the first person to object to our "no overt heterosexual behavior" policy and in the hope I can successfully explain the rationale behind it, I will respond to his anguish.

Reasons for the "No Overt Heterosexual Behavior" rule at The City Nightclub:

- Imagine if everywhere you went, all you ever saw was, homosexuality, homosexuality, homosexuality! You would be climbing the wall. The City Nightclub is one of the few places of refuge for gays and lesbians and the only one in the entire Pacific Northwest for gays and lesbians under 21, where they can get away from the constant presence of heterosexuality everywhere else in their lives — work, school, family, television and the *Oregon Daily Emerald*.

If straight people coming into The City cannot understand gays and lesbians need at least one place where they can get away from it all, then those straights do not have the compassion, intelligence or understanding to appreciate the uniqueness of The City Nightclub and should just stay away.

- A number of very fancy

restaurants (the kind that only employ male waiters in tuxedos) have dress codes, requiring men to wear suits and ties. The reason, of course, is if their patrons came in wearing jeans and tank tops, the entire piss elegant atmosphere would be destroyed.

The same with The City Nightclub. If you come into the club and there are horny heterosexuals all over the place making out, the gay atmosphere of the club is destroyed — and it was to experience that gay environment that brought you to the club in the first place. It is important to protect and conserve The City's environment.

- In Fontana's column he mentioned the club "is relatively safe." One of the reasons very, very few problems ever occur at The City is because it is a gay club. The fact we don't allow heterosexuals to make out at the club keeps out those who feel they must be pawing all over their respective opposite sex partner all the time.

It has been my experience these insecure representatives of the heterosexual community cause most of the problems at my club. Since they can't show everyone how straight they are at The City, they don't come, and hence we have very few problems.

I do not intend to let The City go the way of so many other gay clubs that become inundated by such a large number of straights

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that the gay and lesbian customers don't feel it is their club anymore.

The City is a very popular club, but I could make it even more popular (and make lots more money) by doing what Mr. Fontana suggests, only the club would no longer be fun, safe or gay.

When gays and lesbians no longer have to worry about losing their jobs, their homes or their lives by being open about who they are, when our state and national legislatures stop telling homosexuals they can't be in the military, get married, become foster parents or adopt children and when national newspaper columnists stop going ballistic over some minor irritation to their heterosexual status, then and only then will I drop the No Overt Heterosexual Behavior policy at The City Nightclub. Until then, Mr. Fontana, get over it!

Lanny Swerdlow is the owner of The City Nightclub in Portland.

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