

Praise for Shepherd story

To the Editor:

JUST OUT has a following of readers. Admittedly, I am not one of them.

Last night at the Dirty Duck I picked up a copy of the December issue. Your cover story featured two of my most favorite people in Portland.

Your cover story "Bill & Ann Shepherd, Pro Family/Pro Gay" by Rodger Larson & Andy Simon was superb.

It was very professionally written and researched. The fact that one can be "pro family" and "pro gay" was made beautifully.

My compliments to you and to Larson & Simon. You did good! Real good!

Sincerely,
Paula Neilsen

P.S.: The overall layout of *JUST OUT* was excellent, except for the small print of the articles. Older people would have to strain to read it.

However, I am sure that you find that necessary for economic reasons, which is understandable.

Be real, Ronnie

Just Out received a copy of the following letter. It is addressed to Ronald Reagan.

I am writing to you concerning your speeches and your subsequent remarks and writings on the subject of abortion.

You have compared abortion rights to the evil institution of slavery, and you have said that we cannot survive as a free nation unless the constitutional right to abortion is overturned.

While we believe that you have every right to your personal beliefs, these opinions do not reflect the beliefs of the majority of Americans. Poll after poll has consistently shown that most of our citizens support a woman's right to make a private decision about abortion.

Further, you have called for a constitutional amendment outlawing abortion. This is just the kind of governmental interference in the private lives of Americans which you have deplored so often.

The constitutional history of our nation makes clear that our founding fathers intended that amendments to the Constitution should enlarge the rights of our citizens — not restrict

their rights or impose federal intervention in the most personal aspects of their lives.

I respectfully ask you, Mr. President, to support the majority opinion of American citizens who favor the constitutional right to make decisions about their child-bearing without government interference.

Faye Wattleton, President
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
New York, N.Y.

Roseburg PWA seeks pen pals

To the Editor:

I have been waiting for some great inspiration to write something down that would convey how I feel. I was stricken in July with this disease called AIDS. I say stricken because it happened so fast, and because it cut me down so completely.

I woke up in the hospital with my head shaved, a hole in the side of it, down to 135 from 155 pounds, and everyone telling me how great I looked. But what else could they say?

I won't go into all the details of my hospital stay and recovery, but without my friends and relatives to support me, I doubt if I would have made it.

So now I am back home in Roseburg with my lover, Jeff; my hair has all grown back and I'm feeling stronger all the time. My lover is great; my friends are all still there to support me. Everything is just peachy, right?

Wrong. Since all this has happened, except for a short conversation with a man from the Cascade AIDS Project, I have not spoken to another person with AIDS. I feel like I am on an island here in Roseburg. I just wish I had someone to write to, or better yet, to talk to, who really understands what is happening to me.

No matter what medical terms you use, you can't know what this disease is like until you experience it. So if anyone with AIDS will drop me a line, I'll do my best to answer and say, "Hi." I'm 35 and have had toxoplasmosis and pneumocystis.

Love to all,
J. Smirl
1243 NE Klamath
Roseburg, OR 97470

"Sexism" clarified

I am writing in response to your item about Barbara Wilson's reading at A Woman's Place, headed "When is sexism OK?" Since I was present, I would like to correct your report that, "Wilson stopped reading and asked a man in the audience to leave." I am disturbed that you apparently made no attempt to verify the facts. Wilson read at the scheduled time of 7 p.m.

to an audience of about fifteen women. After the reading was over, she invited discussion on some of the issues raised by her book. A smaller group talked about prostitution, which eventually led to informal discussion of female sexuality, during which some women began to express quite personal feelings.

At this point — about 8:30 p.m. — a man wandered up to the small circle of women (which was clearly not a reading) and sat down. Wilson very politely explained that she did not feel comfortable continuing the discussion with him joining the group at that stage. He left without comment and the discussion continued.

This man clearly had no intention of attending Wilson's public reading, since he arrived an hour and a half late. The request that he not join a sensitive discussion which was well under way, was entirely reasonable: it in no conceivable way "denied him access to feminist books," as you reported. There is a bookstore full of feminist books at his disposal; there are public readings by feminist authors he can attend, the times of which are clearly advertised. He would have been welcome at Wilson's reading and could also have participated in discussion afterwards.

Nearly every week I read a newspaper article by some white man about "reverse discrimination," accusing women and people of color of discriminating against him. "Sexism" and "racism," in this context, of course, lose their true meaning. This public whining is a part of the current backlash against feminism which seems so absurd as to hardly bear comment. Yet it is eagerly perpetuated by the media — including *Just Out* it seems, judging by your headline: "sexism" is *not* the polite request by a woman that a man respect and support us — sometimes by taking a back seat. Sexism is, rather, the anger or other complaints with which some men (and even sometimes some women, acting on men's "behalf") respond to such requests.

Sincerely,
Judith Barrington

Lesbian and Gay Pride '87 planning begins

To the Editor:

This is an open letter to the lesbian, gay and gay-supportive community of Portland concerning Lesbian and Gay Pride '87. In this community we have come to expect bigger and better Lesbian and Gay Pride celebrations each year. So far, this expectation has been recognized and met. LGP is at a turning point as currently there are three committed participants in the process of incorporation and planning for LGP in '87. Obviously, there is a great need for organizations and individuals to participate. Your energy, input and expertise is crucial in the goal of a satisfying Lesbian and Gay Pride '87. Please plan to attend the LGP Community Forum on Wednesday, January 14. See this issue's calendar for time and place. For more information, call 236-4386.

Sincerely,
Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc.

Barbie Research continues

Dear *Just Out* Readers:

Thank you for responding to my request for feedback on Barbie and other fashion dolls as part of a photographic/writing project I have undertaken. Although your letters have been helpful, I can always use additional comment on the effect fashion dolls have had on the lives of children and adults (yourself included). Please feel free to write to me at P.O. Box 1774, Pawtucket, RI 02862. Once again, thank you for your help and I hope to keep hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Linda R. Collette

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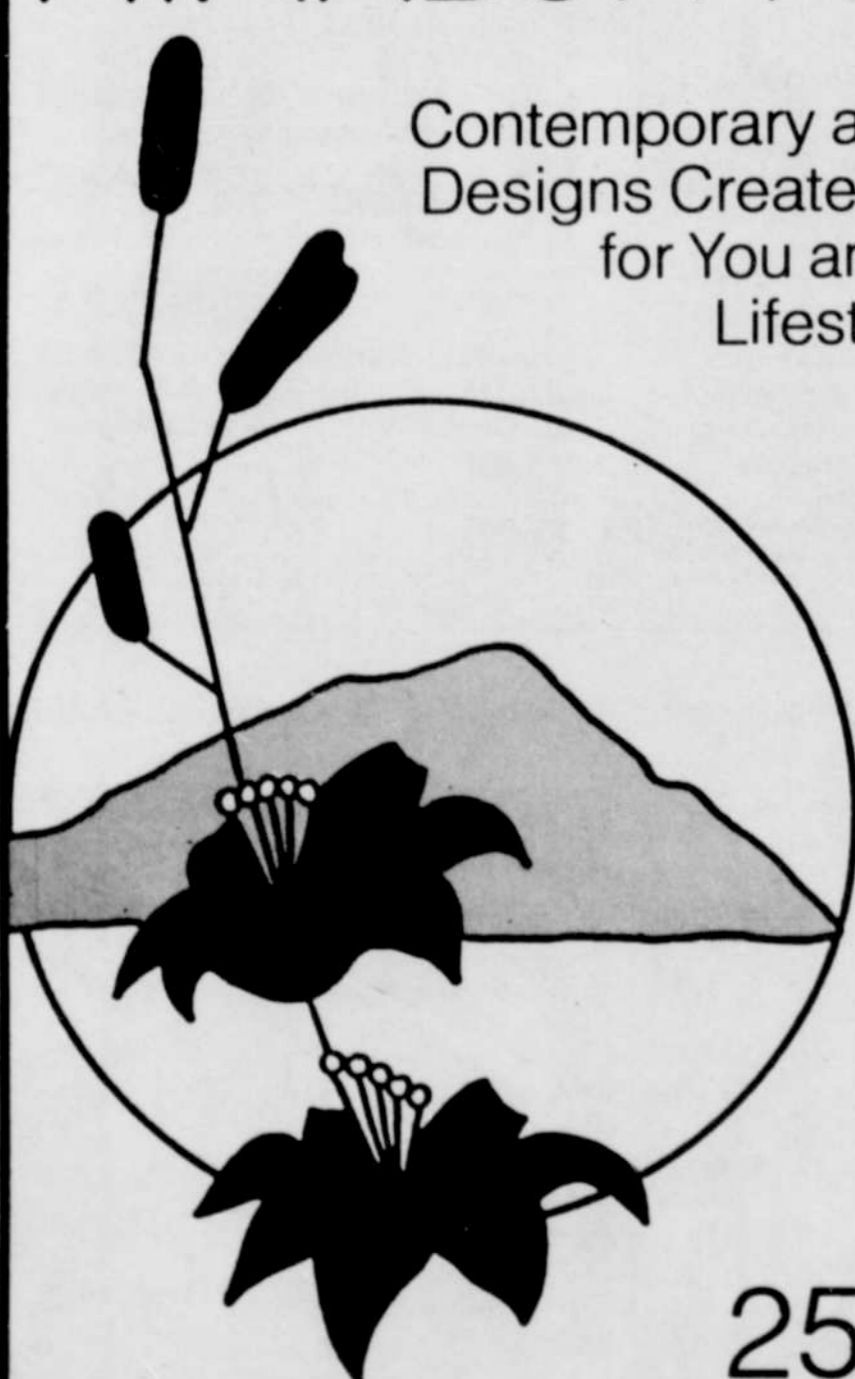
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