

### "Oregonian" review prompts rebuttal

The following is a copy of a letter to the editor of The Oregonian:

To the Editor

Upon reading the negative review of the April 9 premiere of *Young Caesar*, I reflected upon the cited inadequacies, concluding that my overall reaction was quite different from

that of the reviewer. The opera's gestalt was not devoid of emotional impact, and its scenes had seemed purposely sketchy rather than totally lackluster.

The play drew heavily on audience willingness to "buy into" a fresh idiom of art form. Not only was the music such that nobody left the theater humming a descript aria — Puccini it was not! — but the costuming and scenery made no pretense to being actual, using archetypes and symbols to convey a series of emotional impressions. One experienced a certain credibility as to how the love affair between a

high Roman soldier and a king might have both logically and psychologically transpired.

The reviewer, in a transitory-I-hope attack of Cecil B. deMille-itis, demanded more "dancing bears" here and there in the play. To suggest, rather than to depict, reaches an extreme in Oriental opera, where the entire setting and props may be left to the imagination. Clobbering an audience with pomp would have seemed puerile: hasn't there been enough of the "two great nations" bit from Hollywood? While "full of life and sound" may titillate the thrill-seekers, in this play the emphasis was on suggestion and imagination, rather than bulldozingly graphic situations. Indeed, the entire play preferred imagery that was more psychologically than graphically thick; I felt that major alteration of this would have been aesthetically intrusive.

To me, the real meat of *Young Caesar* lies in its social-psychological impact as a distinctively gay production dealing with universally gay issues: coming of age in a society where one's integrity becomes established through succumbing to institutionalized social pressures; integrating one's natural deviations, rather than totally compromising them — even in the absence of a socially accredited support system; and fulfilling one's destiny in spite of deep personal pain that increases one's psychological aloneness. As such, *Young Caesar* left its mark on those sensitive to the current existential realities facing gay youth everywhere. The attire and role of the Portland Gay Men's Chorus members took the form of a Greek chorus, supporting an existential tragedy in which its closest human expressions are still hidden from audience view. More dancing bears would have been totally inconsistent with the psychosocial confrontations that the play reflected.

Years ago, as a youth in New York City, I saw the off-Broadway production of *Caligula*. It too was rich in psychological issues, and it failed miserably with the popular mentality of the time. Then Hollywood got ahold of it, transforming it through pageantry into a bastardization primarily known today for its offensiveness. I hope that *Young Caesar* is not similarly stabbed in the marketplace.

As for the unfortunate problem of David York losing his voice at the end of the opera, I tend to be as forgiving as I am to normally sensitive reviewers who make occasional poorly-thought-through, eleventh-hour squeaks under the pressure of meeting press deadlines. I would rather attribute the sense of audience frustration to the banality of a few of the lines as being unsupportive of more poignant dramatic forces interfaced with moments of comic relief — hardly making a play of many strengths into a dreary failure, but rather an unfortunately diffuse success.

Carl H. Berggren  
Seaside

ongoing. For information and updates, call 236-0399. Meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays at 6:30 pm, 3029 SE 21st Ave. We will be gearing up for the Treaty Conference in June as well as other ongoing work.

Northwest Big Mountain Support Group  
Portland

### "Patti Rocks" redux

To the Editor:

I think Caroline Gage should get her Birkenstocks out of the blender, and wake up and smell the *espresso*. I'm a lesbian feminist and I am a little disturbed about women who think that other women should only write certain things that they think fall into their idea of what is politically correct.

Please don't speak for me. One of the greatest things about the women's movement is that we can do or act any way we want and come together to fight for what's important and not worry about what books she has in her bookcase.

I like *Just Out* the way it is. And I'm glad Eleanor Malin doesn't buckle down to Caroline's narrow lavender belt.

I love Bullwinkle and Rocky, even though I'm not sure of their political views.

J. Sanders  
Portland

### Bishop Morris Care Center appreciates outing

To the Editor:

The staff and residents of Bishop Morris Care Center, at 2430 NW Marshall St., Portland, would like to publicly thank Syd Dorn, of Syd Dorn Chevrolet, 8150 N Lombard St., St. Johns, for the donation he generously made to BMCC to sponsor an outing for some of our residents. Our zoo trip outing will take place on May 9. Without the generosity and kindness shown by Mr. Dorn, our outing would not have taken place.

Mr. Dorn, with much appreciation, a sincere "thank you" for being such a warm and caring human being, thinking of others and allowing others to still enjoy a small part of life.

The staff and residents  
Bishop Morris Care Center

### Choice means a right to privacy

To the Editor:

I would like to thank *Just Out* for the recent article regarding the *Roe v. Wade* 15th anniversary on January 22, 1988.

As most of us recognize, those persons who are against the right to choose abortion are, more often than not, also opposed to lesbian and gay rights. The connection should be clear. What should also be clear is that reproductive rights include the right to choose not to reproduce, or the right to create alternatives in insemination, childbirth and child-rearing. As more lesbians and gay men choose to include children in their families, we can less afford to think of choice as a heterosexual issue.

Organizations such as the National Abortion Rights Action League are working to ensure the right of choice for all women and all citizens. I would like to encourage lesbians and gay men to work with organizations like NARAL because some issues are integrally related to the right to privacy and reproductive choice.

Genna M. Southworth  
Portland

### Time To Get Moving!

Buyers! Our new computer lets you "preview" our inventory without getting wet!

Sellers! Try my "custom" services and hard work, designed to get "top dollar" results!

Transferees! Use our contacts nationwide to "smooth the transition" from here to there!



SUSAN J. WILL  
Sales Associate  
635-6211



...the REALTOR you tell your friends about"

### LADY AND THE TRAMP

Deluxe Pet Grooming



NO JOB TOO LARGE!

Groomings starting at \$8.00  
Now carrying Nutro Dog Food  
and Show Results Dog Food

FREE M-F 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
SAMPLE Sat. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
of dog  
or cat  
food with  
this coupon. 235-2627  
1721 SE HAWTHORNE

Receptive  
OPEN HANDS SALON  
236-1607

### FIGHT INJUSTICE, BIGOTRY & HOMOPHOBIA

HUNDREDS OF HOURS  
OF LEGAL TIME  
HAVE BEEN SPENT IN  
THIS BATTLE  
(TIM SHUCK VS.  
PRISCILLA MARTIN).

THOUSANDS OF  
DOLLARS MAY BE  
REQUIRED TO SEE  
JUSTICE DONE.  
YOU CAN HELP  
FIGHT BACK BY  
SENDING ANY AMOUNT  
YOU CAN.

TIM SHUCK  
c/o HOEVET & SNYDER  
1400 STANDARD INS. CTR.  
900 SW 5TH AVE.  
PORTLAND, OR 97204