

L E T T E R S

Name calling?

To the Editor:

I would like to challenge Jay Brown's abuse of fundamentalists in "What's going on here?" in the June issue. The piece, like others I have seen in *Just Out*, blocks and defies any conciliation with those that do not agree with homosexuality, and will bring about no change in attitudes or tolerance because it maintains the same old camps of Us and Them.

I am not a fundamentalist but I know many, and while they can be a little overbearing they are basically decent and loving people. They are sincere Christians; of the dozens I have encountered none has been abusive, but rather concerned, a concern arising from their beliefs based upon the Bible.

Brown's calling the fundamentalists assholes lacked any maturity and was basically condescending. When he encounters an opinion which differs from his, should he resort to name-calling, especially toward people whose morality prevents them from defending themselves? If they are so petty as to be deemed "assholes," why not ignore them?

What is important is that we realize that in essence we are all human beings and all behave according to certain formulas: we act on our beliefs, try to push legislation favorable to those beliefs, and try to mold society in accord with our beliefs. Fundamentalists and gay activists are no different except that fundamentalists do not curse their "enemies" out of frustration. Also, the end the "assholes" work for is not the "legitimization of homophobia." Homophobia is the fear of gays and gay-related issues. Fundamentalists are *not* afraid of us or our

lifestyle; they believe that it is morally wrong and are trying to bring about morality-based change. They are acting on their beliefs. Brown, however, is very afraid of fundamentalists.

Opinions are like assholes — everybody's got one. Maybe we should fear our opinions more than fundamentalists.

Andrew Shaffer
Philomath

Editor's response:

Name calling?

Homosexuals have been called heretics — and burned at the stake — because of the benighted morality Mr. Shaffer says is "beliefs based upon the Bible."

My own family calls me "an abomination" and refuses to accept my right to exist because of that same system of belief.

It is only because of fundamentalists' fear of homosexuality — in many cases their own internalized homophobia, as Gordon Shadburne illustrated — that keeps this debate alive.

Organized political campaigns by fundamentalist front groups such as Concerned Women of America, Oregon Citizens Alliance and the Saltshakers force gays and lesbians to spend money and time in defense of human rights. These quasi-religious groups — which use tax-exempt religious facilities and affiliations to further their causes — established and continue to maintain "the same old camps of Us and Them."

Mr. Shaffer might do himself a favor and read *Living in Sin?*, a new book by John Shelby

Spong, Bishop of Newark, The Episcopal Church.

Gay sex not always anal

To the Editor:

I regularly have the chance to see your paper and I like it a lot. It is very interesting to learn what is going on in the Pacific Northwest.

I write to you particularly regarding Michael Avance's letter and your response (June 1988 issue, *Just Out*).

Mr. Avance seriously underestimates the popularity of anal sex in his own heterosexual community; studies almost universally show that it is far from a rare practice among heterosexuals.

However, Mr. Avance is perfectly justified in deeming anal sex "gross and revolting" if his perception is solely from personal appetite and opinion. I am a gay man, and I find anal sex gross and repulsive myself. I would no sooner participate in anal sex than have sex with a woman. Personally both are equally distasteful to me. And I know *quite* a few other gay men, both here and elsewhere, who have the same personal convictions. It would be interesting to see statistics on the percentage of gay men who share enthusiasm for anal sex. Bet it's not as high a percentage as many think.

On the other hand, tastes differ. And each person has a right to his or her own taste, prefer-

ences, likes and dislikes — so long as they do not interfere with other people's rights to their own tastes.

Mr. Avance does sound like a convinced hetero. Imagine *anyone* believing that a female sex organ somehow enhances men's sexual involvements. Perhaps Mr. Avance is a homophobe — it is clear he doesn't understand what makes us tick, sees us as deficient (lacking the right atmosphere in sexual activities), and is just a little too stuck on his own ideas.

Well, anyway, thanks for a great publication. Keep up the good work. Hope to be able to read you for many more years.

Joe Blow
Columbus, Ohio

Women's Rape Museum

To the Editor:

Thank you so much for doing a story on the Women's Rape Museum.

Your article said that I was an active member and one of the founders of the Portland chapter of NOW [National Organization for Women]. I am on the Founding Committee for the Rape Museum, but I was *not* one of the founders of Portland NOW.

Thank you again for your interest and support in the project. The publicity from your article will be a big help.

Carolyn Gage
Portland

To My Lesbian Sisters and Gay Brothers in Oregon: A Message from Lenora B. Fulani, Independent Candidate for President of the United States

Thank you for your support on June 18, when 556 voters attended the nominating convention in Portland to put my name on the November ballot. We failed to bring out the 1,000 people needed, *but we were not defeated!*

We can ensure that on November 8 the people of Oregon will have the opportunity to vote for an independent, militantly pro-gay Black woman who stands for people instead of profits, peace instead of war, and the inclusive social vision of the Rainbow—by gathering the 36,000 petition signatures required to place an independent Presidential candidate on the ballot here. Hundreds have already pledged to collect over 10,000 signatures!

If you can help with a donation or with petitioning, please call my Committee for Fair Elections in Portland at (503) 234-4174 or 234-3972.



Dr. Lenora B. Fulani.

Paid for by Lenora B. Fulani's Committee for Fair Elections.