

Hobo's necking policy questioned, explained

To the Editor:

On April 28, my lover and I had been enjoying a romantic evening out and decided to top it off with a drink at Hobo's, where, for the past eight years we felt we could be ourselves. We were sitting close together, holding hands, whispering into each other's ears, and kissing (The *closed-mouth* type). Imagine our surprise when one of the owners approached us and said, "Excuse me, gals, we want Hobo's to be a place where *everyone* feels comfortable." He then told us to stop what we were doing!

His attitude was harsh and disrespectful. He simply dropped his bomb and walked away, giving us no chance to respond. We were *stunned* — was this really Hobo's?

Because it is difficult to feel safe in the straight world, we have treasured the safety at Hobo's. But that illusion has been destroyed. We feel like trusted friends have turned their backs on us and that makes us very sad. The new Hobo's seems to be a place where lesbians and gays are welcome to spend our money — as long as we are not overt.

My lover and I have decided to stop patronizing Hobo's. We encourage others to do the same. The owners need to realize who pays most of their bills and who has supported Hobo's over the years.

If you do continue going to Hobo's we urge you not to be fearful of showing affection with a same-sex partner. If you feel ambivalent about this, think of the words of poet Pat Parker:

"Every time we heard, 'I don't mind gays, but why must they be blatant?' and said nothing, it was an act of perversion.

"Every time we let straights make out in our bars while we couldn't touch because of laws — it was an act of perversion."

Kelly Childress
Portland

To the Editor:

Thank you for giving Hobo's an opportunity to respond to the letter you received from Ms. Childress.

There are several points that need to be clarified for the benefit of all of Hobo's patrons: gay, straight, or anything else.

Hobo's has had a policy for *nine years*, begun by the previous owners, that simply states that we prefer our patrons — again, gay, straight, or anything else — to act in an appropriate manner. A manner that would allow other people in the club to have an enjoyable,

comfortable evening, without having to watch others "kissing excessively." This is not a new policy, but is the continuation of a reasonable belief that indeed we do want Hobo's to be a place where anyone would feel comfortable.

Many people coming into Hobo's bring their parents, spouses, children, lovers, or friends for a pleasant dining or drinking experience. A place where a gay person can be proud to come, convinced, from feedback we have received from our gay clientele that you want that tradition to continue.

There have been only two incidents in the last five months where we felt it was necessary to say something to our patrons: once on April 28 to two women, and on May 20 to two men. On both occasions I received complaints from other gay people in the club who felt that the behavior demonstrated was inappropriate and in poor taste. It then became the management's rather difficult job to say something to less than receptive ears.

As the relatively new owners of Hobo's we are doing our very best to make Hobo's the best club in Portland. We genuinely appreciate your support and patronage, and we will always continue to support the gay community and its many worthwhile causes.

Jay Saufl
Harriett Troutman
Owners

Remembering Chester Brinker

To the Editor:

On May 5, 1984 Chester Brinker lost his life to AIDS. Since that time many of our friends and loved ones have lost their lives to this disease, yet Brinker's death seems to touch the gay community in Oregon in a way that five years later still impacts us all.

Perhaps it was that Chester was one of the first well-known persons to die from the new disease. When he was first diagnosed in 1982 little was known about HIV. But as Chester learned the terrible truth about what was ahead he shared the experience and the knowledge with anyone who would listen. All the while, he never lost his special brand of humor, and, more importantly, he never stopped caring.

Chester Brinker's legacy is as a role model. The richness of knowing him is not limited to those who were with him, but by an entire generation of men and women who share his dream: the only way to battle AIDS is to fight the war with the truth. Chester's truth was education, compassion and kindness.

So, five years after the death of Chester Brinker, while all around us death continues to take its terrible toll, let his role model guide

us in the fight to survive. Let the work being done in his name multiply. And let the life of one working class drag queen inspire us. Chester Brinker lives.

Harold Moore
Colton

Religious hypocrites

To the Editor:

I was interested in your story, "Evangelist's child prostitution ring busted" (May 1989) in which you relate the story of several men from a particular evangelistic association who pled guilty to child prostitution charges.

What the story is about is not so much religious hypocrites as it is about three homosexuals, disguised as Christian ministers, molesting and pimping young boys.

As prone to denial about homosexual molesters as your paper generally is, I was surprised to see it in print (though I doubt this letter will see print).

Paul de Parrie
Portland

The Editor's reply: Thanks for the opportunity to elaborate on this subject.

The activities of Leyva and company are not, by any means, aberrant among evangelists; rather such crimes are all too common. What is exceptional is that Leyva and company were prosecuted.

The Leyvas of the world, having been maimed by a value system which inculcates fear of affection between men, reveal a self-perpetuating pattern of mental and physical abuse by religious hypocrites from generation to generation.

It is not homosexuality which produces molesters and sex abusers; the blame must be placed squarely where it belongs — in the lies and bigotry of "christian" hypocrites.

Visitor deplures unsafe sex

To the Editor:

On the afternoon of May 18, I spent three hours at the Olympic Steam Baths on SW 4th Avenue. I happen to be a visitor from Boston.

To my shock and dismay, throughout the afternoon I observed several men (more than 12) engaged in unsafe sex. No one used a condom. Even the clerk at the front desk was having sex in an unsafe manner. Many of the men were sniffing "poppers." Sex was performed in every room of the baths. One couple was having sex in the TV room. No condom was used, and when I said to them,

"Don't you think it would be wise to use a rubber before having intercourse?" I was told to mind my own "fuckin' business!"

People just don't seem to care. I hate to say this, but if they get AIDS, well, they were asking for it. And I don't feel any compassion for them. The Baths should be closed — one less AIDS breeding ground.

I know that unsafe sex goes on everywhere. Are there that many stupid gays out there who just don't care? Wake up, Portland! You're playing with a loaded gun.

Robert W. O'Brien
Boston, Massachusetts

Concerns misplaced?

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to your comments in the May issue of *Just Out* regarding ART/AIDS and the lack of the word "gay." I find it hard to believe that in 1989 people, especially gay men, want to continue to label AIDS as a "gay disease." What has happened to all of the education which has been occurring over the past eight years regarding AIDS?

It has been the concern of those of us involved with ART/AIDS to educate the community, our community, to the fact that AIDS does not happen out there to someone else but that it touches each and every one of us in various ways. Sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. It is not confined to gay men! We have made a concerned effort to reach out into the community to spread the word and to seek support.

I for one have not shied away from the fact that I am gay but that is only one aspect of me. I am also a member of a larger community and I see no reason to segregate myself and my concerns. I do not know of any gay members of the ART/AIDS steering committee who considered hiding the fact that they are gay from anyone. It is not an issue. I happen to be a person with AIDS and I spoke very openly with the press about the subject. I did not see as much interest in ART/AIDS from *Just Out*.

I think that your concerns are misplaced.


William Jamison
Portland

Editor replies: To give the gay community credit for being in the vanguard in combatting AIDS does not label it a "gay disease," but to ignore the gay community in this respect is homophobic.

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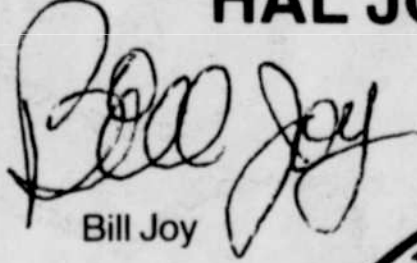
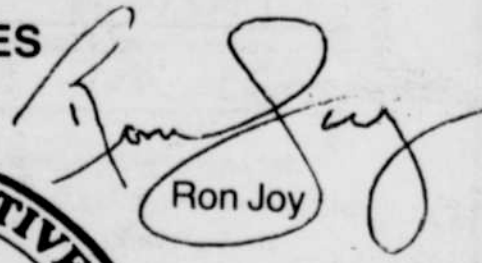


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