

Voices in the wilderness

"There are lots of AIDS ministries, but not many gay and lesbian ministries. Outreach to persons with AIDS is often a way for churches to assuage their guilt for rejecting gays. But gay men say, 'How come you are interested in us when we are dying but not interested in our lives?'"

"The Oasis is a ministry that cares about their lives."

—The Rev. Robert Williams, associate pastor at All Saints Episcopal Church in Hoboken, New Jersey, announced the opening of a ministry that accepts the sexual orientation of gays and lesbians. The Oasis will provide counseling for gays and lesbians, organize parish education programs about homosexuality and explore the role of gay people in the church. (The New York Times, June 21, 1989)



B Y J A Y B R O W N

"He's a hypocrite because he's gay and supports anti-gay politicians and causes. Closeted homophobic officials can't hide behind their right to privacy while they screw their gay and lesbian constituents. That's the focal point of our criticism."

—Catherine Smith, a spokesperson for ACT-UP/Portland, clarifies the message on a flyer accusing allegedly gay Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., of hypocrisy. The flyer was distributed at a court-house dedication in Portland in April. (Chicago Outlines, June, 1989)

"There aren't a lot of role models out there to break down the stereotypes. My coming out might help the 10 percent of the 26,400 students who are gay. They shouldn't be confused, they need to know that it's all right to be gay."

—Bob Stipicevich, President of the Fremont (California) Unified School District comes out. A board member for three years, Stipicevich, 26, recently overcame fierce opposition by the conservative Concerned Women of America to a comprehensive AIDS education program for the district's high schools. In 1987, it was defeated 4-1; after a year of hard work, Stipicevich's innovative program prevailed 5-0. (San Francisco Sentinel, May 18, 1989)

"It is highly ironic that the reprehensible tactics of the Republican National Committee in gay-baiting Rep. Thomas Foley, D-Wash., should coincide with the release of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's annual report on Anti-Gay Violence, Victimization and Defamation in 1988. The 7,248 incidents of anti-gay violence and harassment documented in 1988 attest to the existence of widespread social

prejudice against lesbians and gays. Our political leadership in both parties must redress this prejudice, rather than seek to gratuitously exploit and perpetuate it."

—Excerpt of a statement from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force demanding an apology from the Republican National Committee for its anti-gay tactics. (June 8, 1989)

Gay and lesbian forum sees leadership vacuum

If there was consensus among the 30-plus lesbians and gays who attended a recent community forum it was agreement that the gay and lesbian community suffers from a "leadership vacuum."

The brainstorming and networking sessions which dominated the forum gave all who attended a chance to meet with others on a grassroots level and discuss issues which affect most people in the community.

Coalition building, both inside and outside the community, was probably the most frequently mentioned method of furthering the community's agenda against prejudice and discrimination. Frank Dixon, a gay attorney who lives in Northwest Portland, suggested that gays and lesbians utilize their neighborhood associations to these ends. Dixon speaks from experience; he has long been active in the Northwest District Association and Neighborhoods West/Northwest.

During the networking session, people signed up to meet with others to work on specific projects. The most popular — in numbers of people signing up — was Carol Steinel's "enormous work hub," which Steinel envisions as a way of building community. The first meeting of the Hub Coordinating Group will convene on Thursday, July 6, at 7 p.m. at 214 NE 29th. Call 235-1356 for information.

Persons interested in addressing leadership development issues will meet for lunch at Ezekiel's Wheel (1201 NW 21st Avenue) on Monday, July 10, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. And persons interested in establishing a gay and lesbian community center will meet in the basement conference room at 333 SW 5th, on Thursday, July 27, at 7 p.m. Call 223-8299 for information.

Gay Comix

Which statewide newspaper in Oregon runs a comic strip featuring a gay couple?

My favorite, a 15-panel strip, begins with Akbar and Jeff sitting side by side in the middle of a couch. Five panels in, Jeff (or Akbar) says, "I got tested today."

Two panels later, they are at opposite ends of the couch where they remain until the next to last panel. They look at each other and in the last panel they are again side by side in the middle of the couch.

Matt Groening's "Life in Hell" appears in the A & E section of The Oregonian on Fridays.

Reagan redux

The Great Prevaricator keeps on wowing the rubes. In the last month alone Ronald Reagan received an honorary knighthood from Elizabeth II and was inducted into the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences as an associate member. The Academy has been described as a "think" tank. The "thinkers" were obviously out to lunch in this instance.

And isn't it about time, now that papa's out of the White House, for Ron fils to make an honest woman out of his wife and get a divorce? After all, there's certainly no reason to keep up the masquerade any more. ▼

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