

Activism necessary to retain choice

To the Editor:

The Supreme Court, in upholding Missouri's right to severely restrict women's right to abortion, has become the legal arm of the anti-abortion movement against women. This ruling caps the Court's recent razing of affirmative action and civil rights protections. It is a green light to more legislative mayhem and to terrorism. Just hours before the Court's decision, a clinic was torched in Concord, New Hampshire as if in anticipation of the Court's declaring open season on women's rights.

Portland's right wing groups, who share with each other and with the Supreme Court majority an implacable hostility to the constitutional protections of the rights of working women, people of color, gays, and the poor, will become more active. Locals will face more Operation Rescue-style blockades of local clinics, Nazi-skinheads assaulting blacks, and Oregon Citizen's Alliance's legalistic gay- and lesbian-bashing.

How can the majority defend itself against this shredding of our rights? Massive protests, including sit-ins and marches will begin to build a movement so powerful that not even anti-abortion officials can ignore it and will convince the courts and the government that we will never go back. This is how abortion was legalized.

Therefore, I was glad to attend the July 4, 1989 abortion rally organized by NARAL at which the speakers communicated their outrage with a call to activism to a responsive crowd of 2,000 people, determined not to let the clock be turned back for women.

However, NARAL presented the ballot box as the one viable strategy in this battle and abortion as the only issue we are defending. Voting for Democrats or Republicans and fighting one issue at a time has been tried in the past and is obviously not enough. The ERA is an unfortunate example of tying the women's movement to this losing strategy. Candidates elected with feminist money and work turned their backs on their

supporters once in office. This has happened time and again. If elected officials were responsive to politely-voiced majority opinion, abortion would be firmly established in the United States. If any one group could win on its own, everyone's rights would not be on the chopping block.

In order to win back and retain abortion rights we must consult as many people as possible on ideas and strategies. Without a broad-based, multi-issue movement that unites all under attack in mutual defense of each other's rights, we will all lose. We urge all organizations and individuals to form a democratic, militant movement willing to consider all strategies that will win the battle and the war.

Adrienne Weller
Radical Women
Portland

Daughters of Darkness panned

To the Editor:

I was pleased to learn of Reel Proud, but unfortunately was only able to attend one showing. A friend and I went to see the two lesbian vampire films on Sunday, June 25, in large part because the reviews on your flyer sounded great.

Both of us loved *Because the Dawn*. It was original, entertaining and erotic, and lived up to the description on the flyer. However, *Daughters of Darkness* was awful. We left the theater after the horribly violent beating scene with the two central characters — a heterosexual couple. The scene was horrifying, and I wonder how many of the women there were able to sit through the whole movie. Granted, I didn't stay to see the rest of it, but nothing I did see had any relation to what I was expecting.

The review specifically referred to it as a lesbian movie (which it certainly wasn't) with feminist themes and wit (both missing, as far as I could tell). Where did this review come from? I cannot believe any woman could have written it.

I appreciate the opportunity that Reel Proud offers, and wouldn't want it ended, but I believe there may be a need for some closer screening. There are gay and lesbian film festivals in other cities every year. Would it not be possible to obtain films which have already been viewed by gay and lesbian audiences, and therefore presumably been reviewed by the gay press? If not, perhaps special "sneak previews" could be arranged locally, especially if the movie is an older one.

I'm not saying that older movies are unable to present ideas and viewpoints familiar to audiences, nor that films made by men would be rejected by lesbian audiences — but *Daughters of Darkness* certainly was.

I'm looking forward to next year's Reel Proud, and the opportunity to view more gay and lesbian films. I just hope that next year I am not as disappointed as I was this year.

Dine Doerfler
Portland

The Editor clarifies: Yes; there are gay and lesbian film festivals in other cities every year and all the films shown at Reel Proud had been screened at many of those festivals. The film note on Daughters of Darkness was excerpted from the program of the 1987 International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in San Francisco. (The note had no byline.)

However, the following was written by a lesbian — Andrea Weiss, who included Daughters of Darkness in her list of the 10 Best Lesbian Films in The Alyson Almanac: "Providing a feminist twist on the lesbian vampire genre, this film makes heterosexuality abnormal and violent, and offers a lesbian vampire (played by Delphine Seyrig) as its most sympathetic and likeable character. A 'campy' lesbian classic." Weiss, by the way, won an Emmy for her participation in the production of Before Stonewall.

So, who can you trust?

Names and initials

To the Editor:

As a member of the Lesbian Community Project Newsletter staff, I want to respond to Anndee Hochman's commentary about the

Margins to the Mainstream Project — specifically about the use of last initials instead of last names in the LCP newsletter.

While we had discussed how to do names in the newsletter, we didn't give it top priority. At any rate, most people on the newsletter staff will be using full names. For the moment, our policy is that each person decides for herself how she wants her name in the newsletter.

Thanks for your comments.

Chris Maier
Portland

Living on the fringes wonderful

To The Editor:

I would like to commend Anndee Hochman for her wonderful commentary "Taking the image track," which appeared in Just Out last month.

Upon first seeing the Lesbian Community Project's ad appearing in Willamette Week I was taken aback to think that the lesbians pictured there were, in effect, speaking for me. I screamed to myself, "This is not what I want." To pass is not what I want. That all lesbians want to pass is what the ad's message read.

Will we never learn that to pass means that we lose our identity as lesbian women? Assimilating into the core and becoming like everyone (hetero) is a big mistake for every lesbian. Living life "on the fringes" gives us the very wonderful perspective lesbians need to make our world a better place. Lesbians of color, large lesbians, poor lesbians, lawyer lesbians and cleaning lady lesbians all need to be recognized as lesbians.

So, I say, "Thank you, Anndee." It is comforting to know that all lesbians have not sold out to the mainstream. There are still some of us who believe and rejoice in the fact that we are different from everyone and always want to be viewed and thought of that way.

Amy Sobiech
Portland



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