

L E T T E R S

of activism, ACT UP and others are willing to make sure it works. Direct action is but one of the many ways which folks can get involved in this movement. Coalition-building takes many forms. If you are tired of what you see going on around you and the pain and anger of human injustice is too much to carry alone and you have energy, ideas, time, money or just want to get a little rowdy, please give us a call at ACT UP and we will see to it that there is a place for you in this important growing movement.

Jeffrey Hart
Portland

Inner community "outing"

To the Editor:

I have just read through the June issue for the third time, and a growing sense of vague discontent has compelled me to write. In this issue I read about: the closure of A Woman's Place; a young Pacific University student being harassed and threatened; plans to bomb a gay nightclub in Seattle and ACT UP's "outing" circus. Little bits here and there about our individual and collective fear, anger, apathy. Lots of incendiary writing about the injustice and unwarranted judgement that's part of our reality as gay people.

I came out exactly one year ago. I had marched in the Starlight Parade, with the

world's biggest marching band. Later, the band retired to a hall where they partied and watched a video of the parade. I saw the gay and lesbian float on TV and shrank in horror as hundreds of fellow band members jeered, laughed and hurled beer bottles at the big-screened TV set. Later, at four o'clock in the morning, I came out to a close friend. It was the beginning of a long and painful journey through the closet door.

Many things happened in the course of a year. I got fired from one of my teaching jobs, mostly for being gay. I quit the world's largest marching band in a formal-but-honest letter. I spent five months and too much money trying to start a gay community band, only to quit when another of my jobs was threatened by the possibly wide-scale exposure. (I hear there is still a band, but haven't heard if or when they will perform in public.) I am now watching a gay co-worker being threatened with the loss of his job, due to "outing" by a jealous colleague (who is also gay). I am engaged to be married, so is someone else at my daytime job—but I cannot shout it from the rooftops in glee. When my lover and I go out, we must be ever-mindful of where we are if we want to steal a kiss or even hold hands. There are those, in her family and my circle of acquaintances who would keep us apart if they thought they could get away with it.

As if the garbage from these straight-oriented corners weren't enough, I have recently had to deal with garbage in the gay and lesbian community.

When I have to be careful in my public life as a professional and an educator the last thing I need is hyper-scrutiny and grist from the rumor-mill in the gay or lesbian community. For those of us who are more public during the day, nightclubs and other such places—not to mention activities in

people's homes—are still quite private to us. "Outing" of one's dirty laundry—and the uninvited judgment that invariably follows—is just as harmful as the kind of "outing" my co-worker may soon be subjected to, and the kind of "outing" that ACT UP is doing. In fact, I think it is even more harmful, and distasteful. This kind of "outing" comes from within our own community—remember, that place where we are all supposed to feel, well, safe?

Beth A. Hamon
Portland

Diversity, not separation

To the Editor,

At this time of year when we come together as one to show our pride and claim our rights as lesbian and gay human beings, I reflect on the year past, and am saddened by the amount of judgment, criticism and prejudice I have seen. We are a diverse group of people. Why do we separate within ourselves? We can't expect society at large to accept what we cannot. My goal for the coming year is to examine and challenge my thoughts and beliefs, and I urge you to do the same. We must come together—really come together—if we are to attain the goals which we have set. Aren't we all just looking for a place to live in which we are free to be ourselves?

Pam Morgan
Portland

Diane Wells found

To the Editor,

I wish to gratefully thank the Just Out staff and the gay community for finding my daughter Diane Wells. Thanks to everyone we soon shall be reunited.

Because of the escalating legal fees, I am finding it hard to fight the battle for Diane and am once again asking for your loving support and generosity. Any monetary support can be mailed to 1115 NE Thompson, Portland, OR 97212.

William Wells
Portland

Praise for Eskeli's views

To the Editor,

I want to thank you for having the courage to print the Page Two article in the June issue of *Just Out* by Christopher Eskeli on the ravages which alcohol and drugs are bringing to the gay and lesbian community. It was honest, which some members of our community may not want to hear, and loving which some may not be able to hear. As someone who never became addicted to alcohol or drugs, it has only been in the last few years that I have come to see the devastation it has brought to us and to understand it as an illness. His article continued my own education and hopefully that of others. Keep up the good work and honesty.

Greg Smoots
Portland



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