

Open hearts and closed minds

From new receptiveness and freedom of the press to censorship most foul

There's been a lot of publicity about the new Division of Community Policing within the Portland Police Department. It seems to be a positive step in healing the breach between minorities and local law enforcement.

As you peruse this issue, you will see one of the results of this new policy... an ad for minority recruitment. In *Just Out!* Dare we hope that this is a solid beginning to rid our area of homophobia?

Reaching out, communicating and educating, are ways to create a stronger, united front against bigotry, racism, prejudice, hatred and fear. In line with this concept, starting this month, *Just Out* will list the violent crime/gay-bashing hotlines (PPD: 248-4106 and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, MHRC: 796-5136), if or when you need it.

Another positive step taken was a Summit Meeting to find ways to combat the violence perpetrated against all minorities, including gays. Sponsored by the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (MHRC), people from all areas of society were invited to attend and actively participate. I went as a media representative and (of course), to put in my two cents. I also learned much.

We have a resurgence of hatred, bigotry, racism, intolerance, increases in random bias violence and in acts of violence by organized groups. Last year, in this area alone, there were 149 acts of violence, 79 (over half) were done by groups and 46 of that half were done by "boneheads."

These acts of violence, happening across the whole country, are usually treated as "isolated incidents." However, the disturbing patterns of hate crimes and violence are finally being noticed. We cannot bury our heads in the sand.

The July 16/23 issue of *The Nation* has an article called "The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today" by Elinor Langer (author of *Josephine Herbst*), a Portland native. It focuses on nazis, skinheads, Metzger's WAR, Ku Klux Klan, Posse Comitatus (rumored to be headquartered in Clackamas, Oregon) and Christian Identity. Most of the downtown magazine sellers keep out-of-date issues of *The Nation* on the shelf. (Thanks for the tip, Richard.)

Because of Portland's small town attitude and propensity for "whitewashing" (within our own lesbian and gay community as well), this area provides cover for terrorists. People don't want to get involved.

The MHRC "believes in the dignity and worth of all human beings. MHRC's mission is to foster mutual understanding and respect, and to protect the human right of all economic, religious, ethnic, racial, national origin, disability, age, sex and sexual orientation groups in Multnomah County."

Appears to me, they could use our help. What say, we start with ourselves first: Can we accept and support all the diversity (sex, race, way of life), amongst our own? Can we heal the wounds we've inflicted on one another? If we can, then perhaps we will be strong enough to offer our help to others.

Honest! The following is a real letter.

"Hi there!
"I have read this four times and still can't believe it!"

Halt homosexuality by banning facial hair

In the June 10 issue of Northwest magazine, the article on AIDS pictured nine homosexuals who were recovering from AIDS. Eight of these nine unfortunate people had facial hair.

In my homeland (Indonesia), homosexuality is almost unknown, and almost no one grows facial hair. Could the same mental aberration (emphasis: Mike Green) that promotes sexual perversion also create an inner desire to grow facial hair?

Perhaps your society could discourage the growth of perverse practices and the spread of this vile disease by banning the employment by all state and federal agencies of those males who have facial hair.

—Amir Mortoya, Newberg (June 26, 1990, Salem Statesman Journal)

"I contemplated shaving off my moustache to see if I craved [a woman], but decided I didn't want to know!"

"Please assist me in enlightening our community on what causes our 'mental aberration'!"

"Thanks, Mike Green (Salem)"

After I laughed at the sheer ridiculousness of Mortoya's letter, I checked with good old Webster. Under *mental*, the first definition was "of or for the mind." However, Mortoya probably meant the third one, "diseased in mind."

With *aberration*, the first and fourth definitions seemed to be what he was after: "a departure from what is right, true, correct," or "mental derangement or lapse."

The synonyms are even more fun: "insanity, delusion, divergence, mania, alienation, illusion, deviation." Take your pick.

After reading "Idiocies in general," come back to this and read it again. Then let's hear from those "experts in mental aberrations."

Where are we?

Senators Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) and Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) have added their names to the 10 cosponsors of the gay and lesbian civil rights bill. The House Bill HR 655 has 79 cosponsors, as well, including two representatives from Cleveland. Where are our representatives? Where are we?

Just Out is proud to announce the formation of a new board of directors. At a meeting on July 11, three officers were elected: Yvonne Mammarelli (president), René LaChance (vice president) and Chris Maier (secretary-treasurer). Anndee Hochman, Littlejohn Keogh and Carla Jean Looney are the other members. The board is considering three other individuals, which will bring the total to nine.

We would also like to introduce Cyd Athens, who will be writing the "Just be aware" column, a "Just Years" column by Rod Barrow,

Richard Francis our cinema and video reviewer and our new half-time staff reporter and copy editor, Rosanne King.

Idiocies in general

Patt and Whitney, the company which charged the Air Force \$999.20 for a pair of pliers, sent a refund check for \$330.20. \$669 still seems just a bit steep for pliers, but, hey, what do I know? Maybe the Air Force can cut its budget a little more now. (Sure—and maybe politicians won't be avaricious and won't lie.)

The House rejected an amendment which would cut a whole \$19.90 from the fiscal 1991 agriculture spending bill. Then—it rejected a 2 percent across-the-board cut in the bill's discretionary accounts and passed said bill to the tune of \$50.35 billion!

Who said this country is bad in math? Who said we were smart—we voted them into office.

The wonderful Polish hero and presidential candidate, Lech Walesa, has promised to "eliminate homosexuals and drug users" from Polish society, if elected. (And this man is a hero?)

"... I'm afraid he could be a kind of Polish Hitler," said Ryszard Kisiel, editor of *FILO*, Poland's gay journal.

He added, "They could change the laws. It is as possible as it was in Germany before the war. We are happy they are not talking about camps yet, but it happened in Germany. And the word he has used is 'eliminate'." (Some information from *Bay Windows*, July 12)

We don't have a monopoly on idiots—it's a world-wide disease. However, it does pop up close to home—a little more often than we'd wish.

Here's a stunning example: "Sister"hood (my quotes, but remember that name) Bookstore, in the "trendy" area of Los Angeles, has banned *On Our Backs*, a lesbian sex magazine and anything written by Pat Califia, an author of S/M fiction and a columnist for *The Advocate*.

According to Karen Dale Wolman, a *Frontiers* writer, "Sister"hood employees state that they are banning the magazine "because they don't approve of some of the sex it depicts" and Califia's writings because "her work has absolutely no redeeming value."

This comes from the store that has (or had, the last time I was there), a proud picture of a woman with one breast removed, over the office door.

Last time I looked, we were fighting narrow-minded bigots to keep good literature in the libraries. Now, I know a bookstore isn't a library, but "Sister"hood purports itself to be lesbian- and feminist-oriented. S/M dykes and lesbians not afraid of acknowledging their sexuality, still come under the term, lesbian, don't they? So how can "Sister"hood claim its title? I guess we have our own "Moral Minority." Pity.

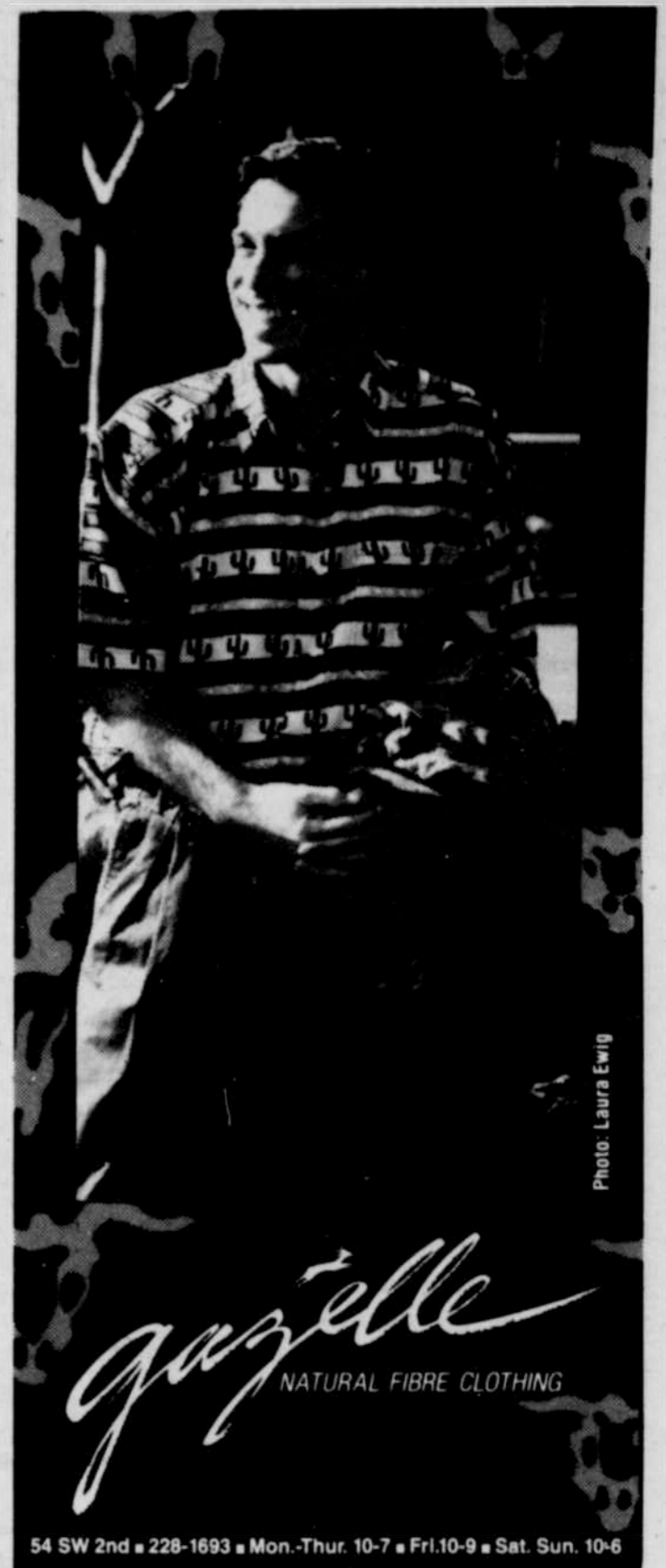


Photo: Laura Ewig

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