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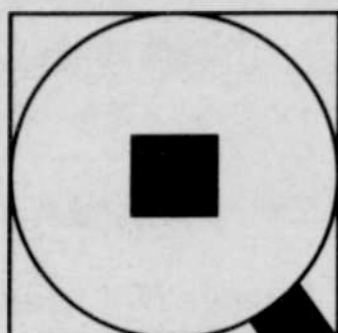
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## My Country, My Right to Serve

AUTHOR

### Mary Ann Humphrey, Ed.D

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# letters

## Far from nothing

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to ACT UP's *What About the Women?* piece in November's *Just Out*. When I read the piece, I felt like it was a statement in a vacuum. Having spent several years working to see that education and services are available and directed to women, I wanted to provide some history and information to fill that vacuum.

The article says that there are no AIDS prevention or education efforts directed at women in Oregon. Although in the past this statement would have been accurate, today it is not. In 1987, a group of women came together to form the Oregon Women's AIDS Network (OWAN). We were all drawn together as a result of the first Women and AIDS conference produced early that year by the Coalition for AIDS Education. For the first few years, OWAN worked to increase awareness about the particular issues that affect women with HIV. What we managed to do was to accomplish our very simple goal: to increase knowledge of HIV and its affects upon women, and to increase women's access to services provided by agencies. Shortly thereafter, we began the first support groups for women with HIV disease.

Just this past September, OWAN and the Coalition for AIDS Education held the second women and HIV conference. This time, it was a major regional conference called Women, Children & HIV. This conference, held right here in Portland, attracted over 250 people. ACT UP Seattle's Women's Caucus sent 10 representatives. Several new education and support programs for women have been developed across the Northwest as a result of this conference.

Meanwhile, many individual women have stretched to provide education to other women. There have been safer-sex workshops for lesbians in Bend. There have been several radio shows locally, and just recently a new show is being produced in hopes of winning public broadcasting grant money to be aired nationally. Many, many articles have been written in the women's press, and several TV shows have spotlighted the issues of HIV and women. Large coalition, or small grassroots, the fact is that education and prevention efforts toward women have been happening for years. I will be the first to say that it isn't enough. But it is far from nothing.

Like education and prevention, the history of services for HIV positive women in our state is a young one. For someone not involved in the history of this effort, it would appear from reading ACT UP's article that nothing exists. In fact, several agencies and a group of HIV positive women *have* worked to implement services specifically for women. The newest amongst these efforts is a statewide telephone network connecting HIV positive women together. At the very least, and for many, the very best, this network will allow the opportunity to break down the walls of isolation.

There is most certainly lots of work that needs to be done—lots. What efforts and services exist right now are not enough, for anyone. But those efforts and services are a mighty start. Anyone wanting to respond to Lucy's call to action, please do get involved. Join the work, add presence and energy, diversity and thoughtful input. For information about CAE, CAP or other groups mentioned in this letter, people can call me at the Hotline. ACT UP is forming a women's caucus, giving one more opportunity to get involved.

Mimi Luther  
Oregon AIDS Hotline Coordinator  
Portland

## Buncher alert appreciated

To the Editor:

Please thank Bea Johnson of Eugene for her letter regarding "bunchers." We had not heard of this practice and are grateful Ms. Johnson took the time to alert us and your other readers.

Ginger wishes Bea Johnson — and all people who care about animals — puppy kisses.

Lee Lynch  
Grants Pass

## Out of line

To the Editor:

So there I was sitting on the front porch at LC's and Carmella's party tossing back a couple of brewskies (not Miller) hanging out with the good old dykes...up walks Lisa Loving. Hey, Lisa, what's up? Oh, I'm writing an article for *Just Out* on bisexuality. Well, you all know my response to that statement since it was printed in *Just Out*. Yo, let's spend some time thinking about journalistic responsibility. The next day Lisa called my machine and left a message about how I had some juicy things to say and she wanted to talk more but she never called back. So I'm mildly pissed. So, do I really think that bisexuality doesn't exist? Yup, that's certainly true. Do I really think that whoever you sleep with defines who you are ... no I don't. I certainly said it on the front porch along with hours of other bullshit but I don't believe it. Being a lesbian means much more than who I'm sleeping with. Of course you can't deny that where I have my fingers or tongue is a component of how I define myself. So what am I trying to say here is Dyke Culture is falling apart in Portland, we have no bookstore, we have no bar, we have no café, no place where we can be together and love and dance and talk and plot the next revolution. What's going on here?? Does anybody give a shit? Oh yeah, the next time I'm talking shit with my friends at a party I really would appreciate it not being printed in your paper.

Linda Shirley  
Portland

Editors note: Thanks for setting the record "straight."

## Darcelle's omitted

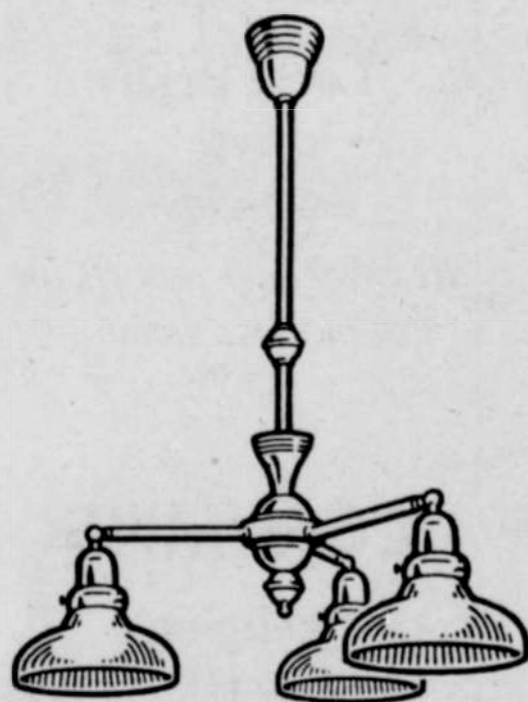
To the Editor:

We heard from Darcelle that Entertainment Publications, Inc. made the decision this year to delete them from the book. This deletion was done with no consultation or explanation at all.

I do not see how we can support such blatant bigotry in our society. We have already purchased our 1991 book, but we will not use it if this is how they choose to operate. Somehow we need to get the message out to the participating restaurants and businesses that we cannot be a part of this bigotry. We are asking that the gay community and all supportive people participate in this boycott and write letters to Entertainment Inc. expressing the same. Our letter is in the mail.

The address to write is:  
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8196 SW Hall Blvd., Ste. 100  
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