

support that has kept this paper going for seven years. It is time to just let those same people do what they have done all these years—give to the community more than they have gotten.

This community and the paper are mutually supportive. If you want to contribute positive energy to *Just Out* and to the community let *Just Out*, LCP or community-oriented people know. Change the negative to positive, earn interest and grow.

Donna Luckett  
Portland

## Think about it

To the Editor:

To say that I'm concerned about the current state of affairs in Portland would be a gross understatement.

*Just Out*, the first gay paper I read when I was coming out, is in trouble. "The Shareholders" wrote a letter to the readers that was almost defensive, even pleading, in tone. Then *Willamette Week* blew the scandal wide open with its sensationalist exposé. It's a real pity. *Just Out* is no cheap, high school "cub" paper, but a slickly-produced and intelligently written alternative news magazine. Its demise would be a great loss to all.

In the past six months, we have lost two gay and lesbian nightclubs and a women's bookstore. Now, we may be forced to look to our friends in Eugene for news coverage of Portland's gay community.

It seems to me that the gay and lesbian community in this town is losing its most important social institutions because of the lack of "fight" on the part of more of us. A handful of people cannot be expected to do *everything*. And all of the infighting and fragmentation will only make it harder for everyone to work together for change. The other, basically obvious thing is that most of us tended to take these businesses for granted, thinking they'd always be around, till time eternal. In a community that is almost a microcosm of an already small town, *never* take anything for granted.

The final question would seem to be, "is it really in my best interest to frequent and support gay-owned and gay-supportive businesses?" Sure it is. Until you and your loved one can walk down the street, holding hands, without even the *slightest* fear in your heart of hearts, you and I need a vital, vibrant gay and lesbian community. And even *then*, we still need one. We need lesbian choirs and gay bands and women's bars and gay pride floats and everything else, because these things (and others) are woven into the fabric of our lives; they are part of our *culture*. It is *no less necessary* for us to have a cultural identity than for native Americans, or Koreans, or anyone else. Cultural identity sets us apart from the status quo in healthy, positive ways. And it helps us to find each other in what could otherwise be a sad and lonely world. Think about it.

Beth A. Hamon  
Portland

## Clearly gay-bashing

To the Editor:

I was angered by the article in the *Willamette Week* entitled "JUST DOUBT." My greatest

fear is that readers might believe there is some truth in the article! It is clearly a gay-bashing attempt by a homophobic sensationalist newspaper.

There are times like this that I regret our right of free press. Some newspapers like *Willamette Week* abuse this right and take it as an invitation to achieve vindictive measures such as publishing untruths or slanted half-truths and subsequently damaging or destroying an individual or worse yet, attempting to sabotage a competitive newspaper like *Just Out*.

We must monitor from within our own community and make it known to *Willamette Week* that we will not tolerate their advocacy of homophobic views. They have a responsibility to their readers and we must make them accountable to this responsibility.

I encourage *Just Out* readers to write *Willamette Week* and demand an apology to *Just Out* and the gay and lesbian community. *Willamette Week* must understand we will not support their advertisers until they abandon their homophobic vendetta and publicly apologize.

I will continue to support *Just Out* because I realize the vital importance the newspaper makes in our communication within the gay and lesbian community. I thank Reneé LaChance and Jay Brown for providing us with this essential link.

Amber Lewis  
Portland

## Lost sense of community?

To the Editor:

Since when are the Portland police and IRS our friends and a dedicated person like Reneé LaChance our foe? It is intolerable to be turning one of our own over to these homophobic patriarchs as a means of settling a dispute, not to mention stealing her personal property to create evidence.

Have we lost all sense of community? Open your eyes, we are the underclass, the disenfranchised. The means we use to survive may not be by the book (i.e., check kiting, civil disobedience, and tax resisting), but you'll be hard pressed to convince me that these practices equate to a lack of moral integrity. If you think for a minute that Reneé, who has given years of her life to our community, has taken anything from us or the paper, you're nuts!

Littlejohn Keogh says, in *Willamette Week* (Dec. 5), he would like to see canceled checks proving reimbursement, then he would be willing to say he's sorry. He says this as if an apology would erase investigations by police and IRS; the damage, if not the death of *Just Out*; and the joy anti-gay conservatives got out of watching us devour ourselves. When will we learn that our divisions are THEIR power?

With the "mutineer's" talent for fracturing strong foundations, my only hope is that they'll find new employment with the likes of the Oregon Citizen's Alliance or maybe even the Jesse Helm's Coalition.

Rhia Weinhaus  
Portland

P.S. It's infuriating that the first lesbian and gay "front pager" I've ever seen in *Willamette Week* had to be this. We've accomplished so much and they write about us when we're down.

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