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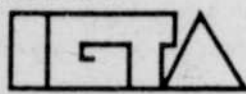
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letters

Coming out

To the Editor:

Coming out has been a most wonderful experience for me. Three years ago, my dad says, "Carolyn I accept you!" The lesbian word comes up in conversation so many times, during my recent visit to my folks. An ex-boyfriend's mom says "thank you, this explains things for me, and how about Lily Tomlin, is she one?"

And yet there are still times when I don't come out, a job supervisor; instead I come out to my co-worker, I know he is family. At times I am afraid to come out. Afraid to put the lesbian word on my class flyers; someone may call and say ugly things into my answering machine. Yes! sometimes in the hetero society it is scary to come out. So, in my mind it seems that simply coming out within our community, our society, is such a grand and important step in feeling a part of our lovely large family, coming out to each other!

And then, perhaps when I am ready to put the lesbian word on flyers and be posted in the public library and not just the Cup & Saucer SE, my family who knows me, will be there if I need them.

Carolyn R. Jordan
Portland

Sloppy journalism?

To the Editor:

Shame on you! Whatever the excuse, your failure to include the Gay Freedom Marching Band in July's Pride coverage was at best sloppy journalism, at worst, indication of an ignorant bias. I was reminded of the Gulf War media coverage, and how the absent news was as telling as the reported news.

Were you at the same parade I was?

Sarah Graham
Portland

Editor's note: *The Rose City Gay Freedom Band was a welcome and valuable part of the Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration, and was not specifically avoided in our coverage. Just Out did a feature with photos on the band in our June issue.*

Dismal photo coverage

To the Editors:

I must be the umpteenth person to comment on your dismal photo coverage of the 1991 Lesbian and Gay Pride March and Rally. There were over 6,000 people and a million and one things going on that day. I can understand that newspaper space is a hot (and expensive) commodity; but on one of the most important days of the year for our community, I think you can make more of an exception than you did. Eighteen pictures of selected couples and individuals did not do a great deal of justice to the diversity of our community. Where were the choruses? Where was the Marching Band? And where-oh-where was that gorgeous float? For one lousy day a year, I think our town's gay and lesbian monthly could splurge a little and devote much more space to what was, for many, the only time all year they felt safe about being out. There's a whole lot more going on in Portland than your pictorial essay cared to show. Live a little next year, guys—how about several pages of photos and stories?

Beth Harmon
Portland

Great columnist

To the Editors:

Up to now there has been only one other columnist I could not live without and that is Libby Gelman-Waxner of *Premier*. Now I have two, thanks to Linda Shirley. She's the Meow of the Cat! Irreverence to the second power. Shirley — "Thank you for sharing."

N. Conn
Portland

Get educated!

To the Editor:

Hi, I'm a gay male, 30, and I have AIDS. Last night I was in a neighborhood gay bar with a friend. Occasionally we kissed and hugged each other. At one time my friend returned from the bathroom and told me that someone had said "Hey, why are you with that guy? Don't you know that he has AIDS? You're not french kissing are you? You should stay away from him."

That attitude infuriated me. I wanted to stand up on the bar and scream—teaching every ignoramus in there the facts. First of all, with that guy's statement he's saying that it's unsafe to go home with a person with AIDS. That means if he goes home with people he's saying he can do anything "unsafely" so long as he "believes" that those people don't have AIDS. Many people in the gay community, especially gay men, have AIDS or are at least HIV positive, and still continue to mess around unsafely. That judgmental hypocrite in the bar should be practicing safe sex with others whether they have AIDS or not. And the fact that someone has AIDS should only make him more aware of the situation, but not necessarily more safe, because he should be playing safe to begin with. By saying that I should not be touched, dated, or taken home, he is calling me an outcast. I would never go home with someone who would do anything, anytime, with anyone because it's not obvious to them that their new sex partner has AIDS. That means they are more risky than I am.

I am a very healthy-looking person with AIDS, and comments like those are giving me and all gay people a bad reputation. And if gay people are this ignorant of the subject, how in hell do you expect straight people to ever understand the truth? A high percentage of gay men are either dishonest about the fact that they are HIV positive, or else they refuse to be tested in order to continue unsafe promiscuity. Those men are *much* riskier than I am as a known man with AIDS. *At least I'm honest about it!* I must give my friend credit for defending me and telling off the faggot who said those things about me.

And, by the way, I went home with my friend, and we had a wonderful time...safely. Thank you.

David Schneider
Portland

Heartfelt thanks

To the Editor:

This spring a budget crisis at Cascade AIDS Project made it necessary to make cuts—first in staffing and then in several programs. CAP's Speakers Bureau was a proposed cut.

A number of individuals and groups rallied to the danger of losing this important service. Heartfelt thanks especially go to five groups whose generosity and efforts helped save CAP's Speakers Bureau:

Triangle Productions contributed a wild and wonderful benefit performance of *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*.

CAP volunteer Douglas Hammond organized a benefit drag show at The Embers.

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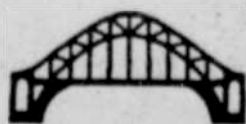
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