

Discrimination at The Brig

To the Editor:

I was very disturbed by action taken against me at one of Portland's gay night clubs (The Brig). This event took place on October 19, 1991.

I had been in the club for 90 minutes when I was tapped on the shoulder by an employee. I was dancing with a friend and could not figure out what this person wanted, so I asked him "What's up?" This man told me that I was loitering because I had not purchased a drink.

I approached the owner. I told him I had been in the club many times before. I also said that I had never been harassed like this and there are no signs posted requiring drink purchases. I was then told by the owner to either buy a drink or get out. Then he yelled "Get out."

I have never caused any trouble at this club or any club. There was no reason for anyone to be treated like this. As a black male I think this act was racially motivated and they did not want me there.

I have never heard of any other person being requested to purchase a drink or leave. I know several white men who don't drink and never purchase drinks at the bar, and they have never been approached like this.

It seems with all the discrimination in the world against gays, you would not expect such strong discrimination within the gay community, but it is there. That is why most minority gays don't patronize gay owned businesses.

How do Portland gay establishments expect to get equality from the non-gay community when they don't treat minorities within their own community with respect and dignity?

Adrian Jeffries
Portland

No money for OPB

(Editor's note: The following is a copy of a letter sent to OPB).

To OPB:

Until your organization becomes more sensitive to the presence and needs of the gay and lesbian community, I shall withhold my support of your network, as will, I assure you, a growing number of former followers. KBOO Radio exemplifies the ongoing respect you're not addressing, so I give to them instead.

Patrick Finneran
Portland

Defeat the OCA

To the Editor:

Measure 5 was a hoax. It moved the tax burden from the utilities to the homeowners. It played on people's justified frustrations about high taxes to put more money into the pockets of the big utilities.

Now we have a tax limitation measure put forward by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, and endorsed by Don McIntire, the right winger who initiated Measure 5. It also will not lower taxes for most Oregonians, but it is designed to gather support from angry taxpayers for OCA and its homophobic, racist and sexist policies.

Let's not be fooled again. What is needed is a bill that specifically shifts the tax burden from the individual homeowners and wage earners to the large corporations, to the utilities, to the owners with large property holdings—in short, tax the rich!

Let's also defeat the Oregon Citizens Alliance's numerous petitions to destroy the lesbian and gay community. In Hitler's Germany the population was frightened and angry because the economy

was crumbling. The nazis scapegoated Jews, Catholics, radicals, gypsies and gays in order to let Krupps and other large industrialists off the hook for being responsible for the deteriorating economy. They blamed the Jews and other minority groups instead of the profit system. Hatred, fear and persecution of target groups was not the answer then. It is not the answer now.

Jordana Sardo
Portland

Open letter to Keeston Lowry

I am writing to ask you to help intervene on behalf of a segment of the gay population that is sorely under-represented politically and blatantly discriminated against on many levels. This group is the gay consumers of the mental health system. As a client of Mental Health Services West (MHSW), I personally can attest that our voice is rarely heard and manifestly ignored by such important community organizations as the Right to Privacy, PAC. In particular, the RTP PAC has turned down our many requests for complimentary or discounted tickets to the Lucille Hart Dinner.

A chance to be a part of mainstream gay social events can make a huge difference in our feeling heard and being an accepted part of gay and lesbian life in Portland. I feel that the RTP PAC must be held accountable for its discrimination.

I know the meaning of discrimination and persistent and insidious hatred when it comes to finding work and housing. I do not need another dose of self hatred, internalized homophobia and rage brought on by the mainstream in the gay community who choose to represent us so shabbily if at all.

I ask you please don't allow us to slip through the cracks. I have known much pain as a gay manic depressive person. I seek a day in the light.

Kerry Hawley
Portland

I am afraid

To the Editor:

I have seen the OCA video. It shows clips from a San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Pride March and the March on Washington. It is us at our most shocking, outrageous, and sacrilegious. It shows the once a year wild "mardi gras" release and abandon some of us allow ourselves before the Ash Wednesday of every Monday morning. It is gay theatre at its best and most ridiculous.

What it doesn't show is our community in any of its complexity. Sex radicals are both homosexual and heterosexual. The OCA, however, isn't filming videos of heterosexual S/M clubs, or heterosexual child pornography rings. Their goal is to stigmatize and scapegoat the lesbian and gay community.

The OCA will use this video to educate ignorant and naive voters all over the state. The people susceptible to this propaganda believe they have never seen or known a gay or lesbian person.

We must do our own education—and I don't mean making a video depicting us as Ozzie and Ozzie or Harriett and Harriett.

I mean that we all must come out: secretaries, mechanics, attorneys, doctors, loggers, and teachers. We have to talk to our neighbors, co-workers, and the cashier at the check-out line. Only then can voters begin to comprehend the complexity of lesbian and gay community. We must not allow them to see us as one dimensional.

With solidarity and without denial we must demonstrate our own diversity—the drag queen and the dentist together.

If we don't, I am afraid.

Cathy Siemens
Portland

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