

letters

White woman searching for her heritage

To the Editor:

As a kid, I'd ask my mom, "what am I?" She'd say, "you're an American." Oh, an American. And then, on the forms I became Caucasian "white in race." Neither of these terms satisfied me. I am not just a white person, whose only claim to fame is the destruction of earth-based spirituality, whose only culture is consumerism. I am a woman whose whiteness covers, as a blanket, an unseen richness of culture and belief.

In white society we as women are not even taught to love our sisters. We are taught to compete with our sisters over clothes, over men, over looks. Within white culture, we are taught to leave our sisters behind, forgetting our wisdom. We are taught self-oppression. We are taught to read the fashion magazines and follow the soap operas. We are taught our emotions make us weak, irresponsible. We are given drugs for PMS, dioxin bleached tampons to stop our blood from flowing. We are taught the art of seduction, along with the evil mores of pornography. We are taught to do this.

So, for now, I am a white person who seeks her culture. A culture of sharing our differences. A culture which acknowledges the wisdom and sacredness of women in dialogue. I seek a culture which sees the beauty of our diverse bodies, respects our physical and emotional changes. Yes, I am a white woman who wants to know her heritage. I am a white woman who wants to feel deep belonging, to be brought home. I am more than just some white woman.

Carolyn Rachel Jordan
Portland

Uncovering deeper levels of racism

To the Editor:

Thank you for yet another inspiring and confronting issue of *Just Out*. Thank you for your distribution in Hood River. As a person of white color in this world, some of the views expressed in the articles on racism raised some very intense feelings of frustration.

After reading the articles by gays and lesbians about racism in the January issue, I realized I was experiencing a very strong feeling of discomfort. I also felt a strong need to resolve that feeling. I reread each article carefully to see if I could identify the source and perhaps uncover deeper levels of racism and discrimination within myself.

David "Spike" Livermore
Hood River

Exploitation of gay men for a buck?

To the Editor:

As a newcomer to Portland from Austin, Texas, I picked up a copy of your January issue. Even though *Just Out* is not what I originally sought, I was very pleased to find a paper supportive of the gay community. As a supporter of human rights, I was both uplifted and saddened by your "1991: A Look Back" feature and the "Briefs" columns. I was all set to share this new gem with two friends who

recently moved from Austin to the East Coast until I came to pages 37-39. What a terrible disappointment to believe I had found a publication that truly supported human rights and realize that it was like so many others; supporting the exploitation of gay men for the buck or do you run the ads for free as a service to your readers? I would be happy to make a contribution to offset the loss of funds from running these phone sex ads if it meant their elimination. I will still send a copy of your paper to my friends, hoping they will not be so put off by the ads that they toss out what your articles have to offer.

If stopping human exploitation is not a good enough reason to end these ads, surely it has occurred to you that they are just the ammunition the Oregon Citizens Alliance is looking for in their efforts to bash the gay community. Good luck to you. Perhaps 1992 will be the year that newspapers such as yours will not be dependent on phone sex ads to continue publication.

Kathryn R. Sherman
Portland

Stop selling sex

To the Editor:

There are certainly ominous threats to our community on many fronts, and there is not time to be petty or divisive. However, an open sharing and continued support for each other and our community in general is absolutely vital. Since *Just Out* is our community newspaper, it has an important part in my life in keeping apprised of political and social events and in just being aware of what is happening in the community.

I respect and appreciate *Just Out*, and I strongly disagree, often, with the policies reflected by the staff. I am writing this letter to share a wonderful event in my life as a lesbian. I still question the judgement of the editorial staff particularly regarding the inclusion of sex ads.

First, on June 8, 1991, my partner, Katherine, and I had a blessing ceremony in honor of our relationship, and it was a positive, beautiful, affirming celebration.

I believe these [sex] ads perpetuate stereotypical beliefs concerning the gay community and are detrimental to our health and wholeness as a community. I am NOT anti-sex; I find great joy in my sexuality. Reducing sex to a commodity to be bought and sold is, in my opinion, greatly invalidating to us all. I understand that these ads generate needed income, but I still believe there could be creative ways to acquire more income. I desire very much that our community celebrate sexuality, not exploit it.

I hope you will find joy in my joy as a sister in this community, and I hope that, even though you may be tired of hearing it, you will consider my concerns.

Rylee Brown
Beaverton

Editor's note: The staff of *Just Out* has debated this issue more times than you can imagine. Our overriding concern is that the phone sex ads promote the safest sex of all in this post-AIDS era, and that they are now a part of gay male culture. The other concern is financial. Those ads generate \$2,000 per month for us and allow us to print four additional pages of news. At this time, that news is very important.

Since women have a different perspective and experience regarding sexual exploitation, maybe it is time to hear from gay men. Are the phone sex ads, etc. offensive to you? Do you feel exploited? Do you think *Just Out* should keep running them? We want to hear from you.

JOANN LOULAN

LIBERATING OUR SEXUALITY: A LESBIAN EROTIC LECTURE AND WORKSHOP



**FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 14, 1992
LECTURE**

Don't let the word lecture intimidate you, watching JoAnn Loulan's presentation is more fun than anything you ever sat through in school.

Using lots of provocative humor and sex education, this lecture will explore lesbian culture and sexuality. Miss Brooks never talked about that.

Northwest Service Center, 1819 NW Everett, 8 pm
Tickets: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door
Available at Ladd's Editions, Music Millenium and Its My Pleasure
Wheelchair accessible • ASL interpreted

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 15, 1992
WORKSHOP**

Loulan uses lecture, experiential exercises and group discussion to explore secrets of lesbian sex, likes and dislikes, impact of roles/rules on dating, sexuality, issues between couples, and sexuality.

Northwest Service Center, 1819 NW Everett, (downstairs)
10am to 5pm
Tickets sliding scale \$50-80
Available at Ladd's Editions and Its My Pleasure
Wheelchair accessible

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