

letters

Coming out and not blowing up

To the Editor:

I have been wanting to write to you for some time to commend you on an outstanding paper.

I love Linda Shirley's column "Just Dish" and "Amazon Trail" by Lee Lynch. I also enjoy World Briefs and the Editorials. February's editorial was especially moving and inspiring. It zeroed right in to the heart of the matter.

Your paper gave me the courage to come out to my boss in December and to a few co-workers. My boss said, "It's okay. I did not always think so, but I grew." She has a daughter who is also a lesbian. What was and is surprising is the support from my co-workers. 100 percent down the line and an incredibly good feeling.

The freedom I feel, just from coming out to the people I work with, is well worth the risk. Every day I am glad and I continue to grow and relax.

You have a great publication and I look forward to reading it every month. It's quite a reflection of the strong leadership we have in our lesbian and gay community.

Keep up the good work! You make a difference!

Meg Trotzok
Portland

A naked man is almost a relief

To the Editor:

There is an old Zen koan that goes: Two monks were returning to their monastery through the rainy and muddy streets of a small village. They saw a young lady who was troubled by the prospect of crossing the street. Without a second thought the old monk picked her up and carried her through the mud. He and his brother continued on their way. They were quiet as they walked. As they approached the monastery gates the younger monk, who was gravely aware of their vows of celibacy and austerity, turned to his brother and said, "You carried that young lady across the street." Whereupon the old monk answered, "I carried her across the street. You carried her all the way to the monastery."

There are many things that we are compelled to see that I would prefer not to see. I would prefer not to see homeless men and women. I would prefer not to see Iraqi soldiers reduced to tears surrendering to American camera crews. I would prefer not to see 12-year-old boys shot down by police who have lost control of their office. The list is long. To tell you the truth, after scanning my long internal list of what I prefer not to see, the sight of a naked man comes almost as a relief.

I don't wish to sound flippant or crass but when I read that one respondent denied her friends the information in one of the issues solely because of the ads, I was dumbfounded. What exactly are the uses of correctness in an incorrect world? Would you stop the periodical that carries information to a community which the OCA is trying to repress? By fixating on our imperfections we merely succeed in producing more fodder for the opposition forces to hurl back at us.

Some laws of capitalism are interesting to consider in this regard. Law no. 1: "Ya gets what ya pays for." The fact is that in exchange for the revenue *Just Out* gets from the phone ads, we get four more pages of information. If we were asked to pay for this paper, we might even get more pages.

Law no. 2: "There is no morality in capitalism."

Law no. 3: "Capitalism is opportunistic."

Let's cease this mode of sanctimonious narcissism that preens and struts itself before "the world's swine" and get down to earth. We can only be as good as we are right now. We cannot support ourselves on idealistic feet.

Finally, if I refused to read a periodical because its ads offended me, I would be compelled to stop reading altogether. Honestly, are the phone sex ads the only ads you find offensive? In Lily Tomlin's show "Searching For Signs of Intelligent Life," the little punkster, Agnes Angst, is told by her grandmother to take the garbage out as she leaves the house. Agnes looks slowly around the room at all the bricabrac and nicknacks and awful furniture and yells in protest, "I wouldn't know where to begin." There is unity in diversity. We need to embrace our community, not condemn it.

Todd Oleson
Portland

Men aren't all the same size

To the Editor:

I would strongly encourage *Just Out* NOT to continue running the ads, but probably not for the reasons you might guess. I do not object to the concept of Phone Sex, nor am I opposed to those who wish to partake or provide that service. My primary concerns are about what is conveyed in the ads themselves. In the Jan. issue I counted a total of 17 ads that are sexually oriented (according to what I would consider "sexually oriented"). Among those ads, I counted a total of 15 images of men in various stages of undress. My complaint is not HOW the men were displayed, but rather THE MEN THEMSELVES. Of the 15 images of men that I saw, 14 were white, one was black and no other culture was represented, 13 were what I would consider young, and virtually all of the men pictured were very close to being the same size and shape. All were lean, muscular, and all but one were clearly masculine.

I guess what offends me about the ads is not so much what is being presented, but, more importantly, what is NOT being presented, and why. What is not being presented in these ads is most of the gay male population to whom the ads are directed. By publishing these ads, no matter how lucrative they might be, aren't we helping to foster a system of values that excludes people who are not fitting into a very narrow and very specific ideal?

Gregory Franklin
Portland

They are boring

To the Editor:

As for the phone sex ads: I don't think they are offensive. I think they are boring. I don't really care whether you print them or not. On the other hand, I haven't yet heard a good argument for not printing them. The "perpetuating stereotypes" argument doesn't work because phone sex ads are not limited to gays (see *Willamette Week*). The "public opinion" argument doesn't work because people won't change their opinions about gays based on whether or not phone sex ads appear in gay publications. Whatever your decision, please let your reading public know how you arrived at it.

Lou Miles
Portland

girlfriend productions proudly presents

FERRON

in a solo acoustic concert
Thursday, March 12, 8:08pm

Roseland Theatre

8 NW 6th • \$13

Her albums *Testimony*, *Shadows on a Dime* and *Phantom Center* reflect the power of her poetry, wit and enduring spirit.

Tickets available at Ladd's Editions, It's My Pleasure, Fastixx outlets including Music Millennium. Smoke-free and wheelchair accessible

Libana

WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE

April 19 • 8:08 PM

Pine St. Theatre

\$10 advance • \$9 KBOO Members

Libana is eight women weaving together the songs, dances and instrumental music of the world cultures.

Co-sponsored by KBOO

Tickets available at It's My Pleasure, Ladd's Editions, and Music Millennium
Smoke-free and wheelchair accessible
\$1 off tickets purchased at Ladd's Editions with a valid voter registration.

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