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letters

We are not post-AIDS

To the Editor:

Happy Valentine's Day. I enjoy your publication each month and read it eagerly, but I wish to take serious issue with a comment you made in an editor's note to the letter to the editor "Stop selling sex," Feb. 1992.

It made mention of the fact that we were now living in a "post-AIDS era." The only people who are living in a "post-AIDS era" are those people who have already succumbed to the disease. We are very much living in an AIDS era and I just wanted to remind you of that fact—if not for my own peace of mind, then in honor of every individual who has been touched personally by this tragedy.

Jeffrey Ofstedahl
Phoenix, Arizona

Get off your butts

To the Editor:

I have to agree with the two letters in the Feb. issue opposing phone sex ads and other exploitive ads in *Just Out*. From a humanist's standpoint this objectifying of people is ugly exploitation and greatly demeans the beauty of humanity and sexuality. You are right, however, it has become almost a part of culture for the gay man; however, I see the ads as degrading to the whole community (not that I'm trying to impress the straights).

To the side, I have heard other gay men say *Just Out* should be called "Just Dykes" therefore; I am more in tune with lesbians than with the "GWM" crowd.

P.S. I highly disagree with the 90s being referred to as the "post-AIDS era." If something had been done to eradicate AIDS in the 80s, yes this could be post-AIDS, but we are in the middle of a struggle with an epidemic. I would like to see more encouragement to do something about AIDS and less apathy from the gay community. I have seen people get tired of the topic to the point of boredom. Hey! **People are dying and most gay people are doing less than the government!** GET OFF YOUR BUTTS AND JOIN THE FIGHT!

Jean-Pierre Vignon
Portland

Who needs the OCA?

To the Editor:

As a gay man I was a bit distressed to see two letters to the editor in the Feb. *Just Out* regarding the sex ads in the back of the paper. The two women who wrote, Kathryn Sherman and Rylee Brown, claimed these ads "perpetuate stereotypical beliefs concerning the gay community" and "are just the ammunition the Oregon Citizens Alliance is looking for."

Well, Ms. Sherman and Ms. Brown, with your holier-than-thou attitudes, who needs the OCA? We've obviously got our very own "Moral Guardians" right here in the gay and lesbian community! Who are you to judge the appropriateness of a gay man's sexual activity? Hasn't the OCA's rantings taught you two the meaning of the words "diversity" and "tolerance?" Phone sex, while not my thing (I'm much too visually

oriented) is safe, private, consensual and, to many men, *fun*. If these ads offend you then please don't look at them. Perhaps *Just Out* like *The Lavender Network* can develop a pull-out section for sex ads. Regardless, the debate over sex ads in *Just Out* has been going on for at least five years and I for one am really sick of hearing it. These ads help pay *Just Out*'s bills and are obviously a viable service to many men in this community or they wouldn't be running every month.

I found it particularly ironic that Ms. Sherman and Ms. Brown's tirades about "reducing sex to a commodity" were placed right next to a half-page ad for JoAnn Loulan's Lesbian Erotic Lecture and Workshop. Hmmm.....

Howie Baggadonutz
Portland

Casual sex is like smoking cigarettes

To the Editor:

Last month Rylee Brown and Kathryn R. Sherman wrote letters to the editor objecting to the phone sex ads which line the back pages of *Just Out*. The editor wrote back saying *Just Out* runs the ads, in part, because "they are now a part of gay male culture." As a gay male I am telling you: phone sex is not a part of my culture.

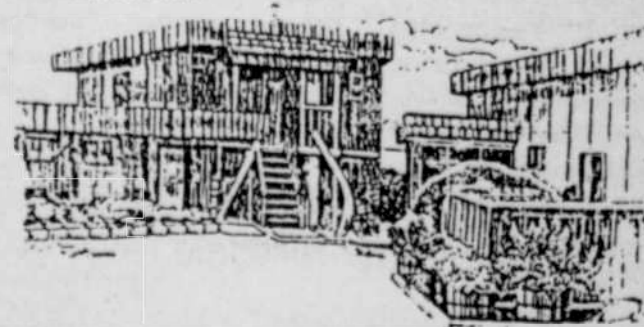
Just Out gives gay men a very mixed message. Gay-positive articles highlighting various facets of the community, encouraging us to become involved politically on our own behalf, etc., are paired with sexual advertising which suggests that the only thing gay men really want, or are capable of, is anonymous sex for a buck.

In 1988 I was a rather confused 22-year-old struggling to understand what it might mean to be gay, and I had just moved to Portland. Reading the advertising in *Just Out* (among other things) I concluded that as a gay man I might enjoy many sexual encounters, but intimate relationships of any depth would prove beyond me. Today, after many awkward hours at the Brig, silently yearning to dive into the pants of so many of you (a desire, alas, rarely fulfilled), I have learned that engaging in casual sex is like smoking cigarettes—unhealthy and addictive. A neon sign ought to flash in the imagination of every gay man before one-night stands or phone sex session—**WARNING:** The average gay male has determined that separating physical intimacy from emotional intimacy may lead to loneliness and despair. Some may say that phone sex is a symbol of our liberation. After all, you couldn't do all that moaning and groaning in the 50s. But I say it's a symptom of our oppression.

I'm more radical than I used to be. I can no longer pretend that my telephone voice isn't connected to a body, isn't connected to a heart, isn't connected to a soul. I want to express myself sexually in a way that reflects this wholeness. I want to help build a community of gay men who are not ashamed of their sexuality; and being unashamed, integrate sexuality into the fullness of their lives. I want a paper that contributes to this effort.

Jesse Tepper
Portland

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