

letters

A voice from Idaho

To the Editor:

I am a 16-year-old male. I live in a small town. It's friendly here, to a point. I'm obsessed with a blond Danish boy here, and I think he's starting to realize it. Maybe it's the sexual comments I write to him in German. He speaks German.

My peers know I'm "gay." Well, I decided that I refuse to be labeled as gay. A label means you have to be something, or display a certain presence! I like men, but hey I'm not necessarily gay. I try to be happy too.

As for the sexual advertisements in your magazine—the reason I began to write—I say, "Great, who cares?"

They bring you money and an opportunity for people, who often have a hard time finding others, a chance to do so. Anyone who is offended should, by all means, not call the fantasy phone lines, or hire a male stripper.

Well, I live far away from you. I'm not some lost soul in a hick town. I'm sad sometimes, but more often I'm happy! Too bad I can't pick up any more copies of your newspaper. Maybe my sweet friend from Battleground will pick up some more.

Ted Burton
Idaho

Heartfelt applause!

To the Editor:

I simply have to write and tell you how much I admire your fine publication. I have to sit down and express my appreciation for the consistently high level of writing and reporting in *Just Out* through the years. How many times have I grinned, chuckled and laughed out loud over some outrageously funny item reported in various news "briefs." How much pleasure your editorials and reviews have given me! How proud I am every time a new issue comes out! It is like a monthly purgative—I feel cleansed and rejuvenated and inspired by the courage, hard work, intelligence and humor of lesbians and gay men fighting everywhere for justice and dignity.

I still remember the May 1991 issue with the pictures and stories of Chief Tom Potter and his daughter Ofr. Katie Potter. The message of equality and dignity came through loud and clear. I'm glad to live in a city with such an enlightened and sensitive Chief of Police. I was impressed with the January 1992 issue, with its "look back" at 1991's accomplishments, but especially "Voices Within Speak Out." "Voices" featured the inspiring photoportraits and stories of gay men and lesbians of many different ethnic, religious and age groups, giving us proof positive of the vast cultural diversity and richness of our lesbian and gay community. Thanks for reminding us! The March 1992 *Just Out* is to be commended for its discussion of domestic violence, a topic many would rather "sweep back into the closet." Every month I appreciate the consistent tracking of the benighted OCA and its hate-filled tactics.

I'm rather tired of hearing so many gay men in this town dismiss *Just Out* as merely "that lesbian paper." Frankly, I always find much to interest me as a gay man, and I think there is a real effort made to cover both men's and women's issues. I remember when Jay Brown was editor, he mentioned to me how much effort went into balancing gay male and lesbian material. I haven't noticed any change of editorial policy regarding this since he and Philip Anderson died [I want to honor the memory of both these brave and wonderful men].

Renée LaChance's self-admitted efforts to unlearn racism are commendable—would that we

could all publicly and honestly confess past transgressions in that area and then get on with the business of demonstrating our commitment, as she has.

I suppose I'll throw myself into the fray over the ads situation. After so many pious and deadly serious opinions pro and con, I roared with laughter over Lou Miles's comment: "As for the phone sex ads: I don't think they are offensive. I think they are boring." I agree. They're certainly not to my taste, and I find the idea of phone sex with a stranger not so much demeaning, as just rather meaningless (i.e., unfulfilling). However, having an extended and intimate phone conversation with someone I love or know well in which an erotic element develops that gives sexual release is not at all offensive to me. And in this age of AIDS, phone sex (between consenting adults) is certainly safe and non-violent. I cannot speak for how the ads of scantily clad men would appear to lesbians; but if those pages offend you, simply don't open them. They do help to finance a fine-quality publication that many of us would not otherwise be able to buy every month. I dare say that whether *Just Out* has phone sex ads or not will little influence the OCA's campaign of hatred and disinformation. That organization is so mired in darkness that they'd overlook all the positive and uplifting humanistic news the magazine reports anyway.

So carry on and keep up the good work. Here's heartfelt applause to you all at *Just Out*.

Jim Ancil
Portland

Moving forward in unity

To the Editor:

I generally do not write letters to the editor in response to letters written by other readers. Mr. Baggadonutz's letter, published in your March edition under the title "Who needs the OCA?", however, impelled me to respond to his criticism of two other readers.

In Mr. Baggadonutz's letter, he characterizes two women's statements concerning some of *Just Out*'s advertising as indicative of a "holier-than-thou" attitude, and then proceeds to ask these two apparently benighted (at least in his opinion) souls the rhetorical question, "Who needs the OCA?" when you're around and part of the gay and lesbian community.

Well, Mr. Baggadonutz, Ms. Sherman, Ms. Brown, and the OCA are clearly not the only ones with an obvious talent for ranting as self-appointed "Moral Guardians" of this or any community. Your snidely sanctimonious comments about diversity and tolerance have fallen on at least one pair of deaf ears, your own! "Politically correct" intolerance of other people's views is still intolerance and is hurtful to the development of any true sense of community.

What I found truly ironic was the sarcastic indignation directed at an assumed attempt at censorship of gay male sexuality, coupled with an apparent slight directed at lesbian eroticism; sounds vaguely sexist to me.

Can anything productive come of such belittling of one another's viewpoints? I don't think so! The gay movement is nothing if not a celebration of the beauty of every individual who is a part of it. It's time we moved beyond infantile insinuation and ridiculous name calling. How are we to move forward if not in unity that also celebrates its diversity?

Davydd E. Wilber
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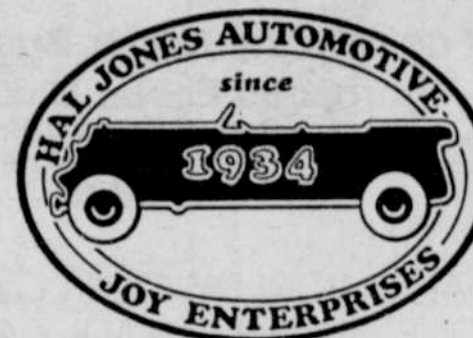
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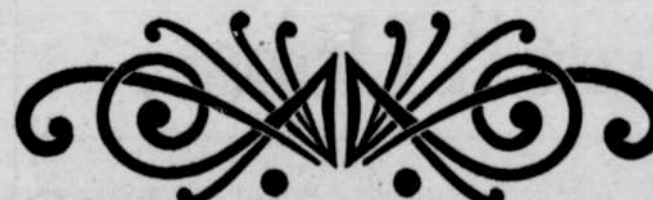
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