

letters

Sort of a love letter

I was given the sweet opportunity for full expansion of my politics and friendships

At the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force conference in November, Scot Nakagawa and Donna Red Wing showed me the OCA video, and I was struck immediately by the escalation in the assault by the Christian Right against people of color, women, lesbians and gay men, indeed, against the Bill of Rights and democracy itself. When I offered to come to Oregon to work on the campaign to counter this attack, Scot and Donna worked together through the Coalition for Human Dignity and the Lesbian Community Project to raise funds to pay my base salary for six months. Then they gave me the freedom to do whatever I saw necessary to create a climate of activism and change.

Thus began six months of incredible joy to me. I want to thank Oregonians for receiving me with—literally—open arms, loving affection, tolerance for my Southern ways, hospitality, support and respect. I was given the sweet opportunity for full expansion of my politics and friendships. I grew in ways that exceeded my imagination. That is no small gift.

On July 4 I returned South to resume my responsibilities at home and at the Women's Project. It was particularly difficult to leave at a time when biased violence was on the rise in Portland, with break-ins, vandalism, death threats and an intensifying climate of violence. Activists always leave even the best work wishing they could have done more. As I drove through spectacular scenery on the long trip South, I kept thinking, "If only I had had just a few more weeks, maybe I could have helped construct the bridges necessary for people working together in unity."

But my time ran out, and I left with concerns about the kind of isolation and alienation people were feeling, reflective of similar feelings of people around the country. I guess I want to say to everyone clearly that these feelings can lead to our destruction. The only hope we have for making change is through making authentic connections. Consequently, I hope that everyone, in whatever way possible, gets involved in the campaign to defeat the OCA initiative. This means knocking on the door of Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, and if no one has had time to put out the welcome mat that day, then just walk on in and get busy. CHFO belongs to our community; we must make it what we want it to be. Our freedom to have whole lives, our freedom to participate fully in society is at risk; we have to get over ourselves and eliminate the barriers to creating a victory for justice for all of us.

My life has been enriched by my time in Oregon. Here in Little Rock, I am filled with memories of beaches and mountains and of the beautiful faces of the friends I made there. I wish I could call everyone by name in my thanksgiving, but there are too many. However, I do want especially to thank the Coalition for Human Dignity and the Lesbian Community Project for making my work possible, and Holly Pruett and Holly Duncan for providing me a loving home. As for the rest of you, I will thank you in person when I return in September to work with you through election day and the following days of celebration of freedom.

Suzanne Pharr
Little Rock, Ark.

Shop around

To the Editor:

Last week I spoke with the local county clerk and learned that I was able to see Oregon Citizens Alliance petitions that were submitted to her for signature verification. In the course of our conversation I found that I could buy copies of the petitions from the secretary of state's Elections Division for 15 cents per page.

I am buying the copies of the petitions for this county and will use them as a sort of shopping guide. I plan to share them with my friends. I recommend that other people around the state purchase copies for their local use.

Skip Cockerum
Tillamook

Sexy: Not!

To the Editor:

Someone out there thinks this is a turn-on; big hunks with tattooed swastikas posing for pornographic consumption. If you've ever fancied having a "No Comment" section, such as the one in *Ms.*, then this could certainly find a home there.

Am I missing the joke, or does this offend you all as well?

Michael Ambrosino
Portland

Honest accountability

To the Editor:

Lesbian and Gay Pride 1992 would like to thank the gay and lesbian community and our

supporters for making this year's event such an outstanding success. Not only were we the top news story on all four local stations and on the front page of *The Oregonian* (!), but we also made national news on CNN Sunday morning. This could not have happened without the over 9,000 people who attended the event. Special thanks must also go to Janna MacAuslen and Kristin Aspen of Alternative Sound, Howie Baggadonutz and Carol Steinel, Jude Watson and our security and volunteers for all of their hard work.

We also feel it necessary to respond to a letter printed in the July issue of *The Lavender Network* written by Jordana Sardo, Radical Women and six co-signers, contesting the \$45 fee for sales-booth space. We agree with the letter writers that it is "crucial" for all people to participate in the event as fully as they are able. That is why our fees are based as they are. Groups and individuals can be involved for costs ranging from nothing to over \$500, depending on how they choose. This is a way for us to make sure that everyone can join us in one way or another. Those groups wishing to have a booth but who lack the financial means have always been welcome either to share space with another organization or to work-share. Both of these options were offered to Radical Women, who informed us that they did not have the resources for either one. To date they are the only vendor to disagree with the cost or to not have paid their fee in full. If your organization found these fees to be excessive, please contact us so that we can take these things into consideration for 1993.

As you can see from the 1992 financial report, this event is expensive to produce. We too are a "small group on a shoestring budget." Before depositing the money brought in on the day of the event (merchandise sales and donations), we were

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