

just out

since 1983

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steppin' out



We can't all be winners. Meet the losers of the Lesbian Community Project's Tournament of Choice, the SOS Team. They lost every game and had a blast doing it. The tournament took place Aug. 15 and 16.

guest editorial

The master's tools

*An easy lesson on internalized oppression,
internalized homophobia*

by Pattie Ladd

I just got home from a No on 9 house party where I saw the infamous OCA video for the first time, and I feel sick and sad. Not because the video is a powerful propaganda piece, obsessive and manipulative beyond belief. Not because the video provides more evidence that some members of the OCA *must* be getting off on us (they do see the video over and over). Not because their lies this time around are at least as vicious and calculating as last time. That all made me angry. What makes me want to cry and throw up is the reaction of the majority of the people in the room watching the video. After watching footage of gay men in the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Pride March waving their penises at the crowd and the cameras, one lesbian said, "I don't blame the OCA, I blame us!" Someone said thank goodness they "behaved" much better in Portland's parade this year. The murmurs of affirmation in the room made my heart begin to pound. In my head I heard that part of Bill Clinton's convention speech when he talked about Americans "them-ing" ourselves to death. While the OCA is busy painting us as *other*, we are just as busy drawing distinctions between good and bad queers. They want us to conform, and so do we. Getting cozy with the master's tools.

We know exactly what the OCA is up to with this video. But I wonder if even the OCA realizes what a bonus it brings in further dividing their enemy. The video brings the gay and lesbian community's differences into graphically sharper focus and provides a golden opportunity for the margins-to-the-mainstreamers to set themselves apart from the leather dykes and flaming faggots. No, that man with the leather jock strap on the parade float doesn't represent me. And I wouldn't think of trying to represent him. What an odd notion. But let me tell you, the mood in the room at the house party was such that if we ran the world beginning tonight, the man on the float with the fish between his legs and the bare-breasted dyke with the whip would not be free to walk the streets. We, ourselves, would punish them for not conforming. Their civil rights were so clearly less precious than ours tonight, in that comfortable room, in the blue TV light, as we happily scarfed down our "No on 9" cupcakes.

(Please know that I'm not defending members of the North American Man-Boy Love Association, who were trotted out later in the video. I wholeheartedly support rejection of NAMBLA as criminal pedophiles, indistinguishable from the

heterosexual variety.)

I understand that it's too much to expect perfect harmony and unity. We're all so scared. But I don't expect such intolerance from people who are currently the linchpins in a movement to freeze right-wing hate crimes. Too much is at stake—for us, for Jews, for people of color and for every fringe element and despised subculture targeted by the ultraright.

What really capped it for me tonight was when the campaign worker who brought the video to the party said that ignorance of OCA supporters is obvious...so many words misspelled in their hate mail! Let's try to remember how many people who can't spell "homosexual" are going to check "no" on their ballots. I've heard about other official spokespeople referring assumptively to "the rednecks in rural Oregon...." And the word "Christian" is thrown around so loosely that my mother—a straight but not narrow Christian—would believe herself lumped in with the likes of Lon. Is it so hard to remember that it's fascism we're facing down, not Middle America? Stereotyping and name-calling don't win us any votes. Without the support of people like my mom and the logger in Roseburg who knows his Hispanic neighbor is next on the OCA's list, we will surely lose.

And if we lose on Measure 9, who do you think the shock-troop bullies will kill or maim first in their celebratory frenzy? The gay lawyer on his way home to his loft in the Pearl District or the drag queen hurrying down Stark Street to catch his bus? One of the Lesbian and Gay Pride organizers said recently in print that he was looking for a way a "normal" gay man like himself could become politically involved. Can we even hear ourselves? Is this battle worth winning if it's on the backs of those of us who can't pass, who can't or won't assimilate, or who insist on flaunting it for those of us who can only talk the talk of freedom? This is about stopping an organized movement of terrorist bigots who don't care whether you find your pleasure in the Dungeon or in your Jacuzzi. I have to believe we're going to win this one, and when we wake up from this terrible dream, I hope we have strength left to fight the homophobe perched within.

Donna Red Wing said recently if you don't come out this year, don't bother, because those of us who will take the heat need you right now. To that I would add: if you're not working to protect the civil rights of *all* queers, keep your money and stay home.

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