

letters

Civil rights under fire

To the Editor:

I just read Pattie Ladd's "guest editorial" in the September issue [of *Just Out*]. In between the first and last paragraphs she made some very good points about inclusiveness and diversity, but the overall tone of this editorial is derisive and not particularly valid in terms of assisting our community in fighting to retain our civil rights.

We are a diverse community, and are greatly enriched by that diversity. However, what is publicly appropriate behavior and what is privately appropriate behavior are two different issues. They are and will always be defined by cultural mores in any community or society. Furthermore, most of the gay persons I know don't feel that it is necessary to abandon a sense of social decency to feel politically correct, nor is a lack of fondness for being offensive indicative of "internalized homophobia" as Ms. Ladd suggests. Believe me, if all those members of our community who believe in the civil rights of every individual but who are outraged at being told that they have to publicly condone nudity and displays of sexual behavior on city streets stayed home and kept their money, it would be Ms. Ladd and about 200 others who would be left alone to raise a million or so dollars and fight the OCA.

Diane Flanders
Portland

Rebuttal?

To the Editor:

September's guest editorial by Pattie Ladd is a perfect example of ridiculous hypocrisy and the very intolerance she decries. She clearly believes that she, and only she, can decide what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Anyone who disagrees is full of internalized homophobia and is as bad as the enemy.

For paragraph after paragraph she vigorously defends behavior many others find offensive—from gay men "waving penises" to "bare-breasted dykes" and more. She claims the other viewers of the OCA video were drawing distinctions, wanting others to conform and wanting to deny others their rights. Then smack in the middle she pointedly does the same: sticks in a paragraph to emphatically state that she is *not* including National Association of Man Boy Love Activists members in her let's-accept-everybody tirade. This is because child-fuckers are *criminals*, whereas the rest are just examples of, apparently, cultural diversity, to be accepted and honored.

Come on, Pattie. Are you such a solid citizen and supporter of the establishment that you define right and wrong by whether something is legal or not? You yourself state the *majority* of people

viewing the video objected to the behavior it depicts. Isn't that how we develop our laws and customs? On what the majority believes to be acceptable or unacceptable? What if the majority of the viewers had *cheered* when the NAMBLA section came on? How would your editorial have read then?

Remember—the OCA did not invent a single frame of this footage. They merely spliced together what they felt to be the worst, most outrageous and condemnable behaviors filmed. The NAMBLA folks *did* march with everybody else, and they can be seen as "criminals," as you see them, or as mere "marginals," as you see all the others. There are those who would happily include them under the umbrella of "all queers," as you wish to include every single other group and individual who marched, regardless of behavior.

In one sentence you say we must avoid stereotyping, and in the next you refer to "the logger in Roseburg" whose vote we need! *You can't have it both ways!* Furthermore, you must also realize that our "logger" friends are likely to react in much the same way as the majority of those who viewed the video with you.

Perhaps you ought to practice what you preach and learn to tolerate views that are different from yours.

Regina Orion
Portland

Pattie Ladd responds:

Yes, my own tolerance falls short of accepting child sexual assault. No, I would hardly define right and wrong by what's legal in a system that offers me and other minorities scant legal protection. I really don't find anything appealing or amusing about penises being waved about—but the social contract to which both writers refer is the same one that says I can't lean over and kiss my girlfriend in public. We're talking about parade nudity, not flashing. Flashing is an assault, potentially very dangerous. These are complex questions. I mean, just as I'm sick of men taking their shirts off on a hot day when I can't, I'm equally sick of being told by people in my own underclass to clean up my act to please the people (the majority) with undue power over my life. In times like these, I'm afraid that words like "condone" make me very nervous. When outrageous public acts are used to condemn us all, I believe we should resist our own narrow standards; by such intolerance are we divided and conquered. And isn't it puritanism that's responsible for this creeping morass of moralizing about family values? Maybe if we didn't have to keep fighting the same battles, we would have the time and psychic energy to debate these fascinating questions as well as many that are more important.

Pattie Ladd



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Kristine L. Falco, Psy.D.

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transitions

Paul Ray Province

Paul Ray Province, 32, died at home from complications of AIDS on Aug. 22, leaving his beloved companion, Rick Loyal Brooks. Also left behind were Paul's family, Michael Hatleny, Tammy, Melissa and Aaron Michael of Cottage Grove, and his large family of choice including Fred Kirste, Lynda Miles, Kay Stiles, Christopher Nepper, Sandy Johnson, Linda Tody and Eric Brown.

Paul was born in Cottage Grove, March 1, 1960. He moved to Portland in 1980. Paul gave freely of his time, talents and energy and was quite active in the music ministry of Crown of Praise and Living Communion Church. He led home Bible study for gays and lesbians. He also hosted cable outreach with song and gospel.

Those who wish to express sympathy may

contribute to Portland Gay Men's Chorus in his memory.

Commitment ceremony

On the afternoon of Aug. 28, Dr. Mary Ann Humphrey, co-host of the award-winning weekly television program *Nightscene* and author of the recent book about gays and lesbians in the military, *My Country, My Right to Serve*, and her partner of nearly eight years, Debra Sue Keever, exchanged vows in a commitment ceremony held at their home in Portland, Ore. Nearly 100 of their friends and family attended the catered, festive summer occasion.

The ceremony was officiated by a minister from a local United Church of Christ congregation. Their nine-year-old son Parke was the ring-bearer.

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