

letters

An open letter

Valerie Taylor is one of our oldest living national treasures. Whether you bought *Whisper Their Love* from a drugstore rack in 1957, or *Prism* in a womens' bookstore in 1981, or have just heard her name, the fact is she has made a difference in your life.

Taylor, now 79, was creating lesbian literature before most of us came out. She writes with humor, hope and triumph about the struggle of old lesbians, poor lesbians, disabled lesbians and all gay people. Even in the early 1960s her Erica Fromm series dared happy endings.

When Jeannette Foster, ground-breaking author of *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (1956), was in a nursing home, Valerie was instrumental in creating the lesbian-supported fund which helped pay for Foster's care until her death.

Today, Valerie Taylor needs us to return some of the support and love she has given. She lives with a variety of medical problems. Because of nerve damage in a leg, she uses her arms and a cane for balance. Now she has fractured a shoulder and cannot walk, write or care for herself.

Immediate special care is needed for about six weeks. Although Medicare and basic donated health insurance cover a portion of her needs, she has only a social security check to pay for the rest. Arizona has no Medicaid and, low-income as Valerie is, she doesn't qualify for the state program. With your help, we can ensure that a pioneering lesbian writer gets the care she needs.

Please mail contributions to:
Valerie Taylor Fund
c/o Antigone Books
600 N 4th Avenue
Tucson, AR 85705

Make checks payable to Valerie Taylor. If you can't afford to donate money, let Valerie know what her books have meant to you! Thank you for your generosity.

Lee Lynch
Cara Louise Vaughn
Tee Corinne
Barbara Grier
Jean Sirius
Carol Seajay

Another perspective

To the Editor:

I am compelled to reply to Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan's letter in the March 1 issue concerning Senator Allan Spear, president of the Minnesota State Senate. O'Hartigan said, "The photograph of Spear being sworn in as Senate president fills me with the same sense of revulsion I would have were Lon Mabon receiving the same honor." She continued by bestowing the same blessing on Minnesota's only open lesbian legislator, Karen Clark.

I lived in Topeka, Kansas in the late 1970s, when Sen. Spear spoke at our first gay pride rally. His campaign literature is framed on the wall of my study, and I have followed his career closely over the years. I consider myself privileged to have Allan among my friends.

Allan Spear was the first openly gay person elected to an American legislature. He has championed the causes of oppressed and working people throughout his career. He has been a good friend to the gay and lesbian community, to African Americans and the working poor.

In this era of corruption, greed and immorality among politicians, I can think of no better role model for young gays and lesbians than Allan Spear.

Eric Schuman
Salem

The Lavender Network Board's racist stand

To the Editor:

Positive changes are afoot in Oregon's other lesbian and gay journal, *The Lavender Network*. Over the last several months, the magazine has boldly attempted to address issues of race, bisexuality and ageism within regional and national lesbian and gay communities.

Under the editorial leadership of Frank Aviles, a young twenty-something Chicano from California, the paper has dared to challenge the dominant paradigm of a largely white, middle-class, gay population in Oregon. Aviles has courageously highlighted the disenfranchised voices of people of color, youth, and bisexuals in the Northwest.

We do not live in a vacuum in Oregon. Addressing and confronting issues affecting the traditionally marginalized lesbian and gay populations of people of color, youth, and bisexuals, to name a few, is essential if our community is to move forward.

Despite widespread support for the efforts of Aviles and recently increased ad revenues, the *The Lavender Network* Board of Directors has laid siege against Aviles with charges of incompetence and unwillingness to do things "the white way." Since last fall, the board has insisted Aviles take part in organizational trainings so as to bring Aviles in line with the established order of doing business in a largely white, middle-class production staff.

In Aviles' defense, he has spent endless hours building the confidence and trust of writers of color in the Northwest, no small task. Due to his efforts, new voices and faces have graced the pages of TLN.

The board and staff should consider that they too must make the effort to accommodate different managerial styles, and perhaps take the necessary steps to identify and unlearn their own inherent racism.

What hypocrisy for a board to profess respect for diversity, attempt to rattle the status quo by bringing in Aviles, and then fail to reflect on how their marginalization of a man of color in the offices of TLN is in many ways similar to society's indifference and discrimination against gays and lesbians.

I urge businesses to use their economic might by sending a message to the TLN board that their continued advertising support will not tolerate racism within the lesbian and gay community.

Brian Hoop
Eugene

TRANSITION

Harley "Tim" Steinhauser

A memorial gathering is planned for Harley "Tim" Steinhauser from 4 to 6 pm, April 18 at Hobo's Restaurant, where he used to work as a waiter. Steinhauser died at home of complications due to AIDS on March 22. He was buried in his home town of San Diego. He was 44.

Steinhauser was born in San Diego on April 6, 1948. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. He moved to Portland five years ago.

Steinhauser is survived by his longtime companion, Kellan Dean Desper, and his mother and brother. Contributions can be sent to Cascade AIDS Project.



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