

letters

Set the record straight

To the Editor:

This is in response to your note to the letter about Bigot Busters [*Just Out*, Aug. 5, 1994]. To set the record straight (our use of the English language is full of amusement and irony): Bigot Busters was a project that came out of the No on Hate Political Action Committee community meetings. One person did put an extraordinary amount of time and energy and heart into keeping Bigot Busters functioning, but he is not its "creator" nor is it "his organization." The name "Bigot Busters" is not legally patented, and no one can keep or give away use of that name. I think Bigot Busters is a good and catchy name for an action we all understand (people who shadow Oregon Citizens Alliance petitioners, talking to potential signers) and have a stake in. I welcome its continued use.

Marguerite Brodie
Portland

A historical view

To the Editor:

Your discussion of age-of-consent laws, such as it is, seems rather ill-informed and is certainly lacking in historical perspective.

The term "man/boy love" is derived from a word that, for many centuries, was used to describe all gay men in Europe. This word took into consideration the key role gay men played in society. We were the artists, poets, philosophers, and, yes, the spiritual leaders of our communities, literally keeping the culture alive. In these roles, gay men doubled as educators and socializers, particularly of boys with special aptitudes and/or family troubles. This changed with the industrial and technological revolutions. Economic forces removed adolescents from their traditional place (pre-factory) beside working adults and forced them into schools and involuntary childhood, where, even now, they are kept until the last possible moment and then unleashed on the world unprepared and unsocialized. The extended family and working community were replaced by the factory, the nuclear family, and the family physician. Advocates of the industrial system quickly identified gay men as a problem, since they were prone to treat adolescents as something more than future employees and producers of offspring. The gay community was targeted, divided, and viciously attacked by doctors (as were women who identified as anything but baby factories, and youth who challenged the system in any way). This sent many gay men running from their traditional identity as boy-lovers, redefining themselves according to the dictates of the common oppressors of women, gay men and youth.

The common history of gay men and youth continues today. Although age-of-consent laws are often justified as "protection" for "children," they are most often (and most harshly) enforced against consenting and demonstrably harmless relationships between adolescent males and older gay lovers. Meanwhile, the traumatic abuse of young girls by their fathers, and the rape of teens by young men, are seldom prosecuted. The fight against rape in the '60s began with the demand that judgments should not be based on whether sex took place, but whether someone's will was violated. Some of the most active women in the struggle against rape have supported the sexual rights of youth and strongly criticized age-of-consent laws, suggesting more effective approaches to end abuse.

We must not lose control of our movement by allowing doctors, politicians and fundamentalists to frame our issues; and we must not concede the debate on familial abuse and the oppression of youth to the extreme right by allowing them to equate principled opposition to age-of-consent laws and advocacy of the rights of youth with "child molesting."

Al Douglas
San Francisco, Calif.

Clarifying a position

To the Editor:

In his letter [*Just Out*, Aug. 5, 1994], Bryan Moore tried "not to misconstrue" my comments about mixed queer couples who brought children to Gay and Lesbian Day at Disney World ["Debbie does Disney," *Just Out*, July 1, 1994], but he failed. I'm not concerned with defending myself, but with clarifying my position.

There were several children on the Metropolitan Community Church bus my lover and I rode to Disney World, and I had no problem with them or their parents, natural or adoptive. My scorn was directed at the people who spent their day at the park acting like Ozzie and Harriet, wanting to be with us without being with us. We could tell who they were, but they weren't flying their queer colors.

Many of the adults accompanied by children that day didn't let it cramp their style, whether they were single, in same-sex or mixed couples, or in groups. I felt as much pity as contempt for the few exceptions who turned a gay-friendly theme park into the world's biggest closet. I hope they'll be ready to "take the next step" on National Coming Out Day.

While my lover and I don't care to parent, I'm as much pro-choice for other gay men and lesbians in this matter as I am for women in general.

Steve Warren
Miami, Fla.



Kathy Tysinger
Member, Portland
Million Dollar Club

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Andrea has over 8 years experience in the travel industry, with a strong background in both Corporate and International Travel. She has also been an active supporter within our community, most recently with the Cascade AIDS Project. Andrea will head our Corporate Travel Department.

From all of us at T A I -

"Welcome, Andrea!"

Rip, Jessica, Jim, and Michael

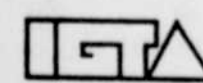
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