

letters

Bend successfully illuminates intolerance

To the Editor:

Beyond The Closet just wrapped up its first gay and lesbian educational series, "Illuminating Intolerance," in Central Oregon.

Thanks to all of the people connected with the success of the series: the nearly 1,000 people who attended, the half dozen or so people who put in many hours of their time, the 70 local businesses and individuals who wrote checks, and the speakers who traveled to Bend for a small fraction of their usual honoraria.

The work of Beyond The Closet goes on. In 1992 the people of Deschutes County voted in support of their gay neighbors, this year the county voted against them.

Election campaigns do not reach people's hearts and minds, they play on people's fears. The radical right knows this, skillfully deepening misunderstanding about, and fear of, lesbians and gay men to advance its sweeping, radical social agenda.

The OCA has pledged to return with another statewide, anti-gay initiative in 1996. Long-term, active community education about the truth of who lesbians and gays, and their detractors, are is needed in Deschutes County before the next campaign.

Beyond The Closet is the only organization in the Pacific Northwest which has undertaken an ambitious community-based lesbian and gay educational project. We invite everyone who wishes to advance a positive understanding of lesbian and gay people to join in our work.

Bruce Amsbary
President, Beyond The Closet
Bend

Movement narrowly defined

To the Editor:

In the Nov. 18 issue Kathleen Saadat commented on a truly important matter: "What exactly is a non-gay issue?" [Letters, *Just Out*, Nov. 18, 1994.] She and Gail Shibley are among many on the left who believe that all social and political issues are gay issues simply because they affect each of us in some way. In this position there is no room for difference of opinion on strategy or tactics, no toleration of political diversity, merely a demand for conformity.

Kathleen correctly states that "We must stop narrowly defining our movement as one in which our primary focus is what we get to do with our genitalia." However, no one defines our movement in such narrow terms. Our movement is a

call for equal rights for gays and lesbians and our bisexual and transgendered friends. Equal rights, not special rights. Equal rights, not blind acceptance of the entire rainbow of social, political, or economic solutions endorsed by the left. Or the right. Get it?

If our movement were not to be so narrowly defined as Kathleen would have it, each of us could have a place at the table in reaching the goal of equal rights, instead of being discriminated against (as we gay Republicans are) because we don't fit the left-wing model. Each of us would then be free to make up his or her mind on how to accomplish other important societal goals.

Lee Coleman
Aloha

Anybody out there?

To the Editor:

I just wanted to comment on your "Building diversity—Be part of the solution" ad which ran in the Dec. 2 issue, specifically the [words] "Boycott establishments that tolerate racism, sexism and homophobia."

How ironic, I live in Springfield and to date not one editorial in your paper has mentioned the hypocritical arrival of The Sony Corporation of America here, despite their own nondiscriminatory policies and benefit packages for domestic partners.

In addition, Julie Davis, the No on 13 campaign manager, publicly stated in the *Register Guard*, Jan. 22, 1994, that Sony's decision to fund anti-gay laws (via property taxes) was justified.

Therefore, I guess I should boycott Sony, Springfield, and No on 13.

Hello, is anybody out there?

S.G. Moon
Springfield

Bored with Lon

To the Editor:

Am I not the only one who is bored with Lon Labon [sic] and his "klan's" attempt to divide our beautiful state? Sure, all of us don't agree on every issue. But since when does that mean [some people] have the right to take away basic rights of others. Others, I might add, that pay taxes.

OCA take note, this is not your state. This state, this country, this planet, belongs to everyone. And we must learn to live together as one. We can still disagree. But there is no need to destroy others in an attempt to be superior.

Ric Berrong
Portland

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