

letters

Keep up the good work

To the Editor:

First of all, Renée, that was an outstanding editorial [regarding Clinton's firing of former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders] in the Dec. 16, 1994, issue of *Just Out*. Yes, the sexual repression in this country is strong and harmful. To quote another talent, performing artist Canfield, "I think we are a completely sexually repressed nation. Sex, sensuality and erotica can be beautiful if they are given in the right light." If only we were taught that while we were growing up.

My second comment is directed to Lee Lynch. Lee, how could someone who can write a wonderful, plum of a line such as "A warbler flicked its tail feathers at us, rummaging like an early bird at a garage sale," (from *Cactus Love*) give a book review in such succinct terms as the review you gave of *Sparks Might Fly*, by Cris Newport?

Sparks Might Fly is a well-written, well-thought-out book, and one of the few books I have seen where two women go slow when they meet, get to know one another, become friends before they become lovers... do not make a commitment to each other on the second or even 10th date. And all this time they treat each other with respect and kindness and talk to each other and listen. I enjoyed this book, and I recommend it.

Well *Just Out*, keep up the good work. I am glad we have you in our community. And you, too, Lee Lynch. You are one of my favorite authors, and your recent book of short stories, *Cactus Love*, is an incredible read—parts of it made me think, parts made me cry. And some of the lines you wrote in that book just made me stop and smile.

Meg Trotsuk
Portland

Local restaurant begets discrimination

To the Editor:

It's been about a month since I meandered north to visit the Rose City. During that visit a dear friend/colleague and I had an experience that left a very bad taste in our mouths.

Saturday evening we decided to eat out and chose a gay establishment. I felt like being around gays because southern Oregon is devoid of gathering places outside of private homes and the traditional potlucks. So choosing a place named after a main street [Stark's] we arrived to have a quiet, peaceful meal.

The place looked classy enough, but the class ended in the looks. We were greeted by a person, male of the species, who referred to us as "girls" (and it was not used as a term of endearment). I spoke right up (as usual) and made some reference to "not being a girl for over 35 years." His condescending retort was "What would you like to be called?" And I, who am never short of answers, responded with "I think 'women' would be appropriate!"

He then tried to give an excuse justifying his rudeness. The only clear observation I made for this part of the verbal exchange was that he made a smooth transition from one foot to the other, momentarily—and not too gracefully, I might add—having both feet in his mouth at once.

With the conversation deteriorating badly, he added, "There's a \$10-per-person (or is that just per woman?) minimum," at which point \$10 was out of the question. Actually, 10 cents was out of the question. Prior to this demeaning encounter I would have easily paid double.

The impact of the incident really didn't hit us for a few minutes, until we were some distance away. I've been out for 25 years and this kind of treatment—from anyone—has been few and far (real far) between. There's an almost unrealness to having it take place in 1995, when I'm a respected, contributing member of the universe,

and to have it perpetrated by a member of my own subculture is shocking and troublesome.

After speaking with my Portland friend, I learned that she'd done a little research on the matter and finds this a pattern of this particular restaurant.

Discrimination begets discrimination. So where does it stop? I feel sorry for the Portland gay community when this sort of behavior is nurtured and condoned.

An important tidbit of wisdom I've learned (the hard way) is that to complain without solutions is to be considered a whiner, bitch, troublemaker or crackpot. I consider myself none of these (PMS/menopause whining the exception, of course).

The following is my list of solutions:

- Post restaurant policies at the door. (Including disdain for females.) A code of conduct, if you will.

- Close the place to women altogether. (He doesn't need the extra revenue, and women of the world deserve better treatment.)

- Some nice person buy the bum out!

- Picket the place (especially Friday and Saturday nights). Consider it cheap entertainment, hitting him where it hurts—in the pocket book.

- Pray for him. (I was forced to add this by my right wing brothers and sisters. It's important to befriend the religious right—for obvious reasons.)

- And, finally, make phone calls to the eatery sharing (respectfully, of course) your concerns that women, lesbians, and perhaps drag queens are being treated poorly at the hands of a man who thinks he has some power or the right to abuse people using his position in the community.

In conclusion, as I tell my college students, "You are judged by the way you treat people that are of no value to you!" Well, Mr. Portland Restaurant Owner (and you know who you are), you just flunked Human Relations 101.

Karen Denman, co-owner and operator
Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast/Retreat
Rogue River, Ore.

Right wing resorts to fear and intimidation

To the Editor:

The recent brutal murders at abortion clinics in Brookline, Mass., take place in a vicious climate created by officials in both the Democratic and Republican parties. Both parties blame welfare moms, teen moms, penniless immigrants, and gays and lesbians for the country's moral decline and economic woes.

This calculated scapegoating of the least powerful invites lawless, terrorist acts at underfunded clinics that have limited security systems. The ultimate goal is fascist—women subservient to and dependent on men, forced to do free child care, cleaning and cooking.

The right wing resorts to fear and intimidation to terrorize clinics out of existence and strip women of their right to control their own bodies.

Well, it won't work.

Women fought long and hard to stop the thousands of deaths and injuries every year from illegal abortions. These latest murders escalate the battle to a war of guns, but women will never give up their right to legal abortions.

We need government funding for armed community defense to protect clinics, their staffs and their clients at all times.

We need a feminist labor party that will fight for all the rights of women, lesbians and gays, people of color, and working people.

We need a united effort to defend clinics, to protect our right to legal abortion, and to stop all right-wing attacks on our rights.

Marjorie Sandoz
Portland

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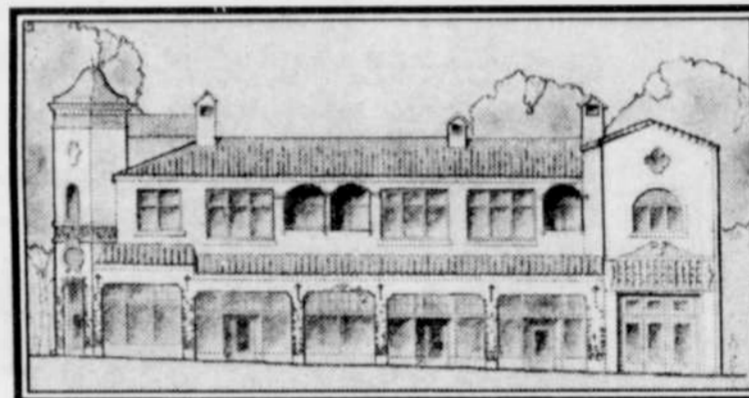


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