



SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Corner Denny Rd. & Hall Blvd
A Challenging, Supportive Community

PALM SUNDAY, NAILING OF THE CROSS
Sunday, April 9, 9:30 & 11:00am

MAUNDY THURSDAY
April 13, 8:00pm

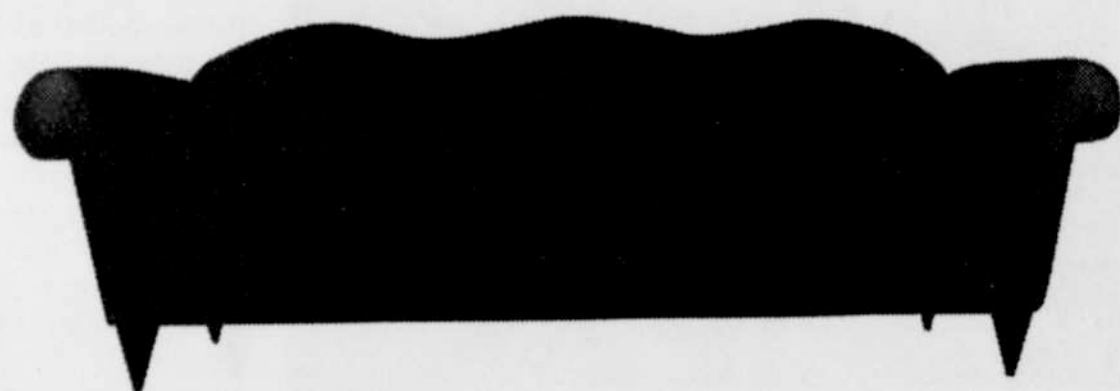
EASTER EGG HUNT & POTLUCK LUNCH
Saturday, April 15, 11:30am

GLORIOUS EASTER CELEBRATION
9:30am Worship, Flowering of The Cross
11:00am Chancel Choir presents:
Hallelujah Chorus from The Soulful Messiah

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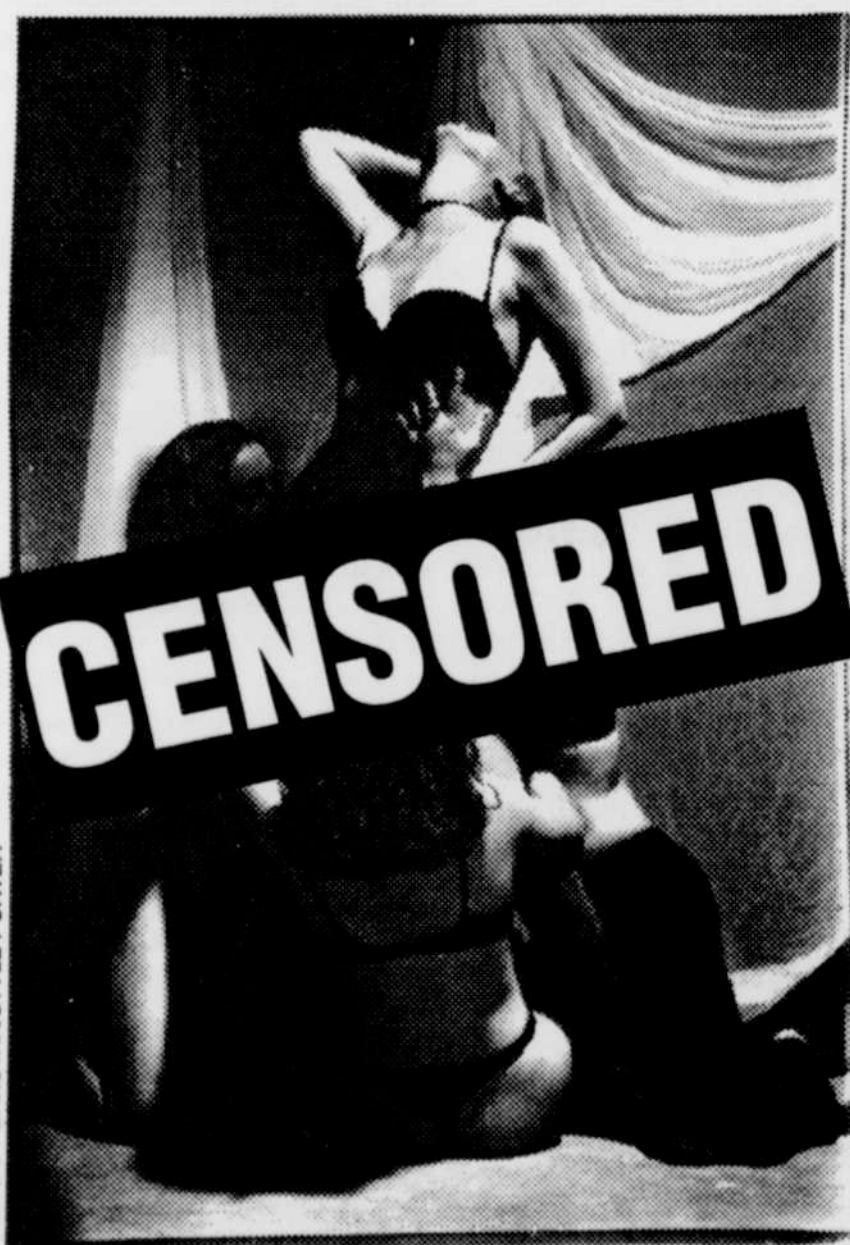


PHOTO BY DAKOTA/STYLE PORTER

**Begining
April 10th.**

**Every
Monday
Night**

**at the
BRIG
GOGO
DANCERS**

**Doors open @ 8:30
Close 2:30
1035 SW Stark St.
Portland
(503) 226-4171**

Must be 21

IT'S A QUEER THING

My eternal crush

*By putting Greg Louganis on a pedestal
we stripped him of his humanity*

by Howard N. Dana

In the fall of 1988, a group of U.S. students gathered in our dorm TV lounge each afternoon to watch highlights of the Olympic Games. I was there to see Greg Louganis dive. We were all living in Seoul, South Korea—where the games were taking place—studying at Yonsei University. Living in the city was advantageous, and I was able to get tickets to numerous Olympic events, but not diving. The Koreans love diving and all these events sold out quickly—right after ping-pong and gymnastics. I had to be content with watching Greg on TV.

I can't quite remember when I first began following the career of Greg Louganis. Having never been particularly interested in junior and senior high school sports, it seemed strange that I would take a liking to an athlete. Sure, athletes were sexy, but they were also some of the boys who would beat me up. There was something different about Greg, though. Being seven years older than me, Greg Louganis was building his diving career at the same time I was thinking about my own aspirations. I was attracted to him long before I was willing to admit my own homosexuality. For me, there were three "really great guys" I admired—Greg Brady, Shawn Cassidy and Greg Louganis. As a teenager, I could imagine nothing more blissful than hanging out with these three.

An extensive *Life* magazine interview, complete with the sexiest photos I had ever seen, fueled my love for Greg Louganis. I recall poring over the pages, much in the same way one would with a love letter. Now I had some real information about a love who, until then, had been distant. This interview gave me the first clue that Greg was gay. I recall the article talking about how Greg lived with his trainer. This comment was supported by a photo of the two of them together—the picture of a perfect couple. Of course, we all realize now that this man Greg lived with was his lover and that he was very abusive. But at the time, for a Montana farm boy, this was the first glimpse I had ever had of a life where two attractive men could live together and possibly be in love with each other.

From then on, any mention of Greg Louganis would make my ears prick up. I had a full-fledged crush on him. For the rest of high school and until I was at the 1988 Olympics, I kept a torch lit for Greg. Watching him on that dorm television and cheering for him, I was cheering for myself as well. I was really struggling with my sexual orientation that semester of college, and it may have been Greg's diving that convinced me to take the plunge myself. Greg Louganis left Seoul a gold medal winner; I left Seoul with the determination to come out to my parents and live my life as a gay man.

Until that fateful dive in Barcelona's 1992 Olympics—when Greg hit his head on the diving board—I didn't really give his mortality much thought. For me, Greg Louganis was like a god. His recovery and gold medal finish only increased his stature. I was sure that if anyone had the world by the tail it was Greg. I only yearned that he could take the big step and come out. After the '92 Olympics the pressure was off, and I was delighted that Greg did come out publicly. He had been seen with his new boyfriend on the street in San Francisco and Los Angeles often enough, but there was

still great satisfaction when he went public.

By this time I was way out of the closet, myself. As a queer activist and HIV educator I had in many ways "passed Greg up." I had grown a bit tired of waiting and wishing he would be gay. Rather than seeing him as an older brother and mentor, I felt that Greg had not been living up to his potential. I felt that by coming out Greg could lift an incredible burden which I had lifted years earlier. How short-sighted I was to think that this would completely free him.

My eternal crush on Greg Louganis went through yet another change when I learned he had AIDS in his disclosure to Barbara Walters on February 22. I was saddened and dismayed. Little could I or anyone have known the additional stress Greg must have been under being a professional athlete and living with HIV. For the first time I got a glimpse of just how hurt and abused my "Prince Charming" was.

It's not that I ever thought about Greg Louganis' HIV status—I neither imagined him to be HIV positive or HIV negative. However, the shock and sadness I felt upon learning that he had been struggling with the disease for years was more about my own callousness than about any change in Greg. He was my hero, and I didn't want anything bad to happen to a hero of mine. My crush on this world-class diver has been something which has deepened and become better-informed over time. Each time Greg stepped up to a diving block or a microphone, like opening an onion, I could see another deeper layer. By coming out as having AIDS, Greg Louganis was not changing, my knowledge of his life was.

Greg Louganis had been living with HIV for years, and he was now disclosing to the world something that is of the utmost personal and private nature.

Until now, Greg's had been a well-guarded life. Never one to publicize personal matters, the abuse, low self-esteem, suicidal tendencies, and fear in his life were never hinted at. Publicly, for Greg, diving was all there was and, in part, his adoring fans are to blame for this. We imagined that all Greg did or wanted to do was dive. By putting him on a pedestal, we stripped him of a chance to be human. We don't want to see the vulnerable or weak side of people we admire, especially sports figures. We collaborated with Greg's own low self-esteem in telling him the only thing he was good for was diving.

What I am left with in response to Greg Louganis' honesty is a sense of wonder. For the first time—possibly in his life—Greg is able to live with a clean slate. He may be healthier now than ever before. Through Greg's example, I wonder at the power society has over our actions. We are susceptible to those we love, even if they are abusive to us. We are susceptible to our teachers and trainers and mentors. And we are susceptible to the cheers of the crowd. Greg Louganis is just a man. Aside from having a talent for diving, he is as ordinary as anyone. He has made mistakes and has bravely admitted them. Because I admire him, I, too, am changed by Greg's admonitions. I still have an enormous crush on this beautiful man, and I only hope that he can live in peace.



Cassidy and Louganis