

letters

Incomprehensible separation of community

To the Editor:

I don't know how to begin to describe how appalled I am at the sexist, divisive responses to Karen Denman's utterly appropriate and justified complaint regarding her treatment at Starky's ["Letters," *Just Out*, March 3, 1995].

As a relatively recent transplant to the Portland area, one of the things I've commented to friends back home about is the obvious, and incomprehensible, separation of the lesbian and gay male communities here. After reading the responses to Ms. Denman's letter, the reasons for this division come much more into focus.

For the writers to attempt to justify the poor treatment of Ms. Denman by using the 'political correctness' argument is both tired and ridiculous. Showing a bit of common respect for a member of their community is not bowing to the gods of political correctness. Most women I know—straight or lesbian—would be offended at being referred to as a 'girl' by a perfect stranger, just as I would be offended at being called a 'boy.' Additionally, anyone who thinks that these terms could somehow be considered endearments is completely out of touch. Among my very close friends, maybe. Not, however, from a waiter I've never met before and who expects me to give him a tip at the end of my meal.

These 'men' go on to promote some of the worst stereotypes of lesbians that I've ever read in a gay-related newspaper. Again, their comments are appalling. Did they ever stop to think that maybe the reason that many of these women leave 50-cent tips has less to do with stereotypes than with the disrespect and poor service they've received? In their whinings these men have made it perfectly clear that they are predisposed to hostility toward any lesbians who enter their establishment. Why not just put up a sign: Enter only if you plan on spending a lot of money here. I don't know about the lesbians, but there will certainly be one less gay man spending money in Starky's.

Mark Mardon
Portland

Not this feminist's view

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the incredible media hype over Rene Denfeld's book *The New Victorians*. Denfeld describes her book as "a challenge to the Old Feminist Order" and from the *New York Times Book Review* to *PDXS*, the majority of the media enthusiastically agrees. Denfeld says she wants to see the feminist movement put "back on track" and deal with more "bread and butter issues" and claims feminism is to blame for the still-existing inequities in our society, like the lack of child care.

I want to see the feminist movement on track, too. I plan to do that by holding the movement's leaders accountable to the demands and needs of the majority of women. How? By getting out in the streets for abortion rights, by fighting the Contract on America that targets women and children, especially women of color, and by working with women and men, of all colors, to retain

affirmative action. These are the "bread and butter" issues. Denfeld barely touches on them.

We cannot blame the only movement that's consistently worked for a slew of vital issues pertaining to women, including child care, for the inadequacies and regressive policies of our capitalist economy. But this tactic makes money, and Denfeld's book is a sure profit-maker in this time of reaction. It fuels the fire of all the Rush Limbaughs, Lon Mabons and other right-wingers who want to see women excluded from the work force and back in the home so we can nurse "family values" back to life.

Denfeld has some valid criticisms of the feminist movement. The movement has elements that have become moralistic about sex and eroticism, and elements that blame men for the plight of women. Both of these tendencies can be turned around through education and debate. What the feminist movement needs is young women like Denfeld to fight to keep it alive, not books blaming it for the failures of a backward, capitalist economy. Denfeld and I agree that women need political power. Then let's talk about building an anti-capitalist, feminist, labor party that will advocate for the needs of all working people, women, people of color, lesbians and gays and men.

Jennifer Laverdure
Portland

Rethink religious freedom

To the Editor:

I have to commend you for the spirit with which you wrote your editorial about Nathan Jim Jr. [*Just Out*, April 21, 1995]. I extend my sympathies to all he left behind and hope that his spirit finds peace wherever it is now. However, I do not think that you truly want the religious freedom that you spoke of, because under such "religious freedom" the burning of witches and death to anyone disagreeing with the "Holy Doctrine" or its leader (the pope, etc.) would occur (and does). Certain religious practices are controlled and must be, when they begin affecting others not of the religion. It would seem that there were methods of obtaining the materials, and perhaps patience would have proved to be the better path.

We as a society cannot allow the acceptance of breaking laws because of "religious beliefs" without allowing terrorism to be the main action of the day. I do not believe that you condone the bombings that occur everywhere in some dispute between religious factions, however, while Jim's actions may not have been quite so severe, they are in the same vein. I do not think the U.S. attorney that prosecuted Jim for his crimes and tried to bring feathers to his burial service was doing anything wrong in either case. The separation of state and church must be kept strong and inviolate in America. Had Jim worked within the law he would be alive, and have his feathers, today.

Please rethink your editorial and see if you do not see where you were in error. Thanks for the continued publishing of gay- and lesbian-related news.

James Dean Poynor
Eugene

SERIOUS INJURY & DEATH CLAIMS resulting from:

- Auto accidents
- Medical Malpractice
- Unsafe Products

Free Consultation

No Attorney Fee Unless You Recover

295-1940

621 SW Morrison, #1218



Hala Gores
Attorney at Law

I AM COMMITTED TO MAXIMIZING YOUR RECOVERY



Eat your vegetables.
Wash behind your ears.
And don't you dare forget Mother's Day!

ESSENTIAL
lotions & oils

710 NW 23rd Ave. ☎ 248-9748 ☎ 3638 SE Hawthorne ☎ 236-7976

TRAVEL AGENTS INTERNATIONAL®

917 SW Washington
(503) 223-1100

Portland, OR 97205
(800) 357-3194

RSVP CRUISES Now On Sale!

Save Up to \$200*
on
1996 Sailings

*Available for European, Caribbean and French Canada Sailings. Not Applicable to Alaska Sailings.
Booking Deadlines Apply to receive this discount



OFFICIAL NATIONAL AGENCY
DIGNITY '95
Los Angeles

"Serving Our Community...
...by Meeting Your Needs"



223-1100



Proudly Serving
The Greater
Portland Metro Area

503/ 286-1330



8302 N. LOMBARD • PORTLAND, OREGON 97203

Located in Historic St. Johns