

letters

Get their number

To the Editor:

Last night I received a call soliciting my long-distance business. Like, who hasn't, right? But this one was different. This was from "Lifeline America, a Christian-based long-distance service," according to the sales representative.

The sales rep also said, "ATT and MCI support gay rights and child pornography."

Needless to say, both ATT and MCI were very interested to hear this, and I wasted no time in sharing the news with them. I apologized to ATT for not thinking to get Lifeline America's phone number, but the ATT rep assured me, "I'm sure we can get their number." Like, I'm sure, too. They are ATT, after all.

Just goes to show what interesting things you can learn when you give your name to the Citizens Alliance of Washington. I'd recommend that everyone who cares about the growing power of the Christian right-wing and its money machine do the same—after all, signing up with Lifeline America, according to its sales rep, would direct 10 percent of my long-distance bill to the CAW—Lon Mabon's offshoot of the Oregon Citizens Alliance. Bigots probably spend almost as much on long-distance bills as queers—a lot of money, if you think about it. And wouldn't you like to be the first on your block to know the latest fundraising tactic of the people who want to strip us of our legal rights?

MCI, I'm pleased to admit, was just as concerned about being misrepresented as was ATT—and as soon as they finished taking down the information about Lifeline America gave me their sales pitch about how they could save me money on my next long-distance bill. Hey, it's a cut-throat business, after all.

As long as it's not *our* throats that are being cut.

Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan
Portland

An opponent of affirmative action

To the Editor:

Next year's political season is on the horizon, and activists from all points of the spectrum are in a frenzy. Perhaps one of the biggest issues will be affirmative action, already a hot topic in the California Assembly, the Oregon Legislature, and even the editorial pages of *Just Out*. Kathleen Herron was bold in her assumption that she could teach Portland's gay community about the importance of affirmative action ["Affirmative action 101," *Just Out*, May 19, 1995]. Her article merely reflects the thoughtless propaganda and hypocrisy that have characterized the pro-side of the debate for years.

She argues that affirmative action is a *necessity* to create equal opportunity for historically oppressed groups, and any argument against it is an assumption that that goal has been reached. Her mistake lies in her own assumption that equal opportunity is not only achievable, but legislatable.

Prejudicial discrimination and violence against certain groups began—not with the founding of our country, as Herron argues—but with the dawn of humankind. Humans are Darwinian puppets who will use whatever means at their disposal to ensure their own comfortable existence. Societies were created out of the realization that humans stand more to gain as individuals in a cooperative status than they do in a one-on-one beastlike existence, in which they freely kill and eat each other. Unfortunately, watered-down remnants of our natural state still haunt our psyches and emerge as discrimination and violence, usually in the form of group vs. group prejudice. Though our intellect introduces us to civilization, it can never triumph completely over our passions, a phenomenon which reduces pure equal opportunity to a

mere guideline.

Affirmative action is one means of combating our pre-societal impulses. Ironically, it does so by employing the very beast it set out to destroy: discrimination. It evaluates us based on arbitrary factors such as skin color or genitalia. In other words, it prejudices us, just as colonial whites prejudged blacks and Nazis prejudged Jews. Essentially, it is nothing more than legalized discrimination for a good cause.

Thirty years ago Martin Luther King Jr. dreamt of racial harmony. Contemporary civil rights leaders have lost sight of any dreams in their efforts to cut corners. They seek tangible results which they can statistically measure, completely disregarding the psychological impact of affirmative action.

What affirmative action has achieved is not diversity and harmony, but division and hatred. It gives the angry white male a legitimate and identifiable reason for his anger as well as an impetus for his prejudice, and it teaches the black youth that his identity and self-worth are synonymous with the color of his skin. White against black. Man against woman. Group against group. Injustice continues.

Herron correctly asserts that "many of us...receive privileges we are totally unaware of," referring to the white, rich and straight male. Had she the courage to abandon the idealistic socialist malarkey of which affirmative action is a product, she might realize that her statement applies to everyone. I am suggesting that perhaps instead of cutting corners at the expense of other members of society, we should encourage people to tap their own individual resources and exploit them to their greatest benefit.

We all have different limitations as well as talents, and we must adapt accordingly, rather than capitulate to the prejudice of others and the lure of self-pity. This only perpetuates stagnation. Life isn't fair, and the sooner we grasp the idea, the better. That is not to say that we should not thwart each and every instance of discrimination through legal and rhetorical means, but we also need to use what we have in our individual arsenals to get ahead, realizing that that goal will always be easier for some than others.

If our aim is to create an atmosphere of opportunity and freedom from discrimination, the least we can do is practice what we preach. Regardless of the many success stories, affirmative action has only reaffirmed the idea that skin color and sex are characteristics by which we ought to be judged.

As an opponent of affirmative action, I do not assume we have achieved equal opportunity. I simply want to live in a world that is *indifferent* to skin color, gender and sexual orientation. Don't you?

Michael Barrett
Portland

Show some pride

To the Editor:

It is almost time for Gay Parade [sic]—although you wouldn't know it by reading the largest gay and lesbian newspaper.

From viewing last year's parade, we were wondering where some people's pride is. This is our day to show our pride—not show as much skin as possible, swing whips and things, and drink alcohol (in cars). The drag and leather community get enough crap. Do you really need or want to add to that? Whether you choose to believe it or not, without them we would not have a community or a parade.

The parade is not just about showing our pride to one another, but to everyone—so why feed the OCA and other hate groups?

This is the 20th anniversary of pride celebrations in Portland—show some pride!

Shannon Garrett
Portland

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

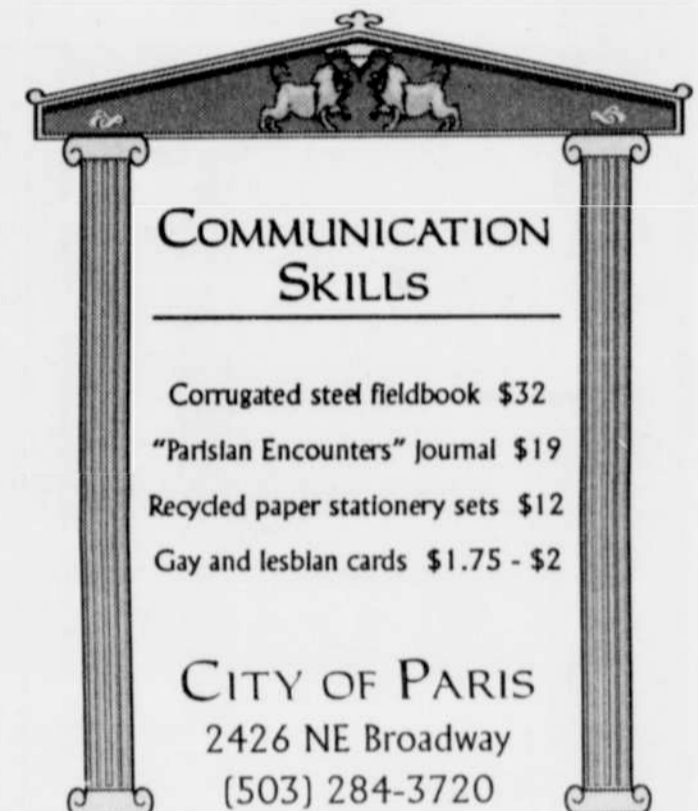
I AM COMMITTED TO MAXIMIZING YOUR RECOVERY



BRIAN MARKI FRAMING

21 YEARS EXPERIENCE
AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY
Oversize work our specialty

**2236 NE Broadway, Portland
503-249-5659**



PRIDE NW presents

The 20th Annual Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Celebration!

SATURDAY, JUNE 17

Parade Kick-Off • 11am, North Park blocks

Rally/Festival • 1pm, Waterfront Park/Hawthorne Bridge

Family Luau & Dance Party!

Fri, June 16 • 5pm on... Waterfront Park/Hawthorne Bridge

Hawaiian Buffet, Beer Garden, Entertainment, Fun!

Pride Volunteers Needed! Call 295-9788