

letters

Remove pariah status

To the Editor:

Inga Sorensen missed the real value of gay and lesbian civil rights legislation in her article ["Down, but not out," *Just Out*, June 2, 1995] on the Pamela Seidel vs. Albertson's Inc. case. Such legislation has little practical value because it is extremely difficult to prove that somebody has been fired because of homosexuality. Employers can almost always find some convenient excuse other than homosexuality to terminate lesbian and gay employees.

In a May 10, 1993, *New Republic* article, openly gay *New Republic* editor Andrew Sullivan wrote that only 1 percent of Wisconsin's anti-discrimination cases were gay-related although that state has had state gay rights legislation for over a decade. Few homosexuals were willing to go through the hassle and public exposure of a court case to win back their jobs. Even if Seidel should win, she might expect to find herself on the garbage detail scrubbing floors and cleaning up rotten fruit in produce cold storage.

If we want real results ending employment discrimination we might best work through company by company, starting with Portland's Albertson's supermarket chain. A little pressure on Albertson's might do wonders considering how competitive the supermarket business is. Blanket sexual orientation laws have lead to some counter-productive situations. A gay Boy Scouts of America employment case is presently working its way through Chicago's judicial system.

So what good is gay and lesbian rights legislation? I believe we really support gay rights because it legitimizes us and helps remove us from our pariah status.

It is the legitimization of homosexuality, not civil rights, that outrages our enemies. Homosexual civil rights and marriage legislation (even proposed legislation) has repeatedly resulted in fanatical anti-homosexual crusades by religious fundamentalists. These, in turn, have brought large numbers of gays and lesbians out of the closet. And that has been the real value of gay and lesbian civil rights legislation.

Homosexual women and men are America's ultimate social rebels, because we challenge the traditional family structure and female and male roles central to traditionalist social philosophy. The overwhelming majority of heterosexuals are also involved in this social change, but we are at the very center of the vortex of change. The traditionalists, most of whom are religious fundamentalists, figure if they can exterminate us they can destroy all social change and return America back to their comfortable world of *Ozzie and Harriet*.

Gay and lesbian civil rights and marriage legislation is counterproductive if we allow our fundamentalist enemies to use it to destroy us and turn America into a theocracy. Only about 25 percent of the public presently supports us as legitimate members of society, and we must expand that base to include the 35 to 40 percent of the public who are ambivalent about us. Most ambivalents lead lives which are not very traditional, and if we can persuade them that the religious right and OCA threaten them as well as us, we will put our fundamentalist enemies out of major party politics.

Craig A. Hanson
Gresham

Blunders and faux pas

To the Editor:

Over the years, we have overlooked your occasional blunders and faux pas. Because you are the voice of our community, we do not hold you to the same standards of professionalism that we would expect from more well-funded publications. And, hey, we all make mistakes. However, when it comes to giving credit where credit is due...enough is enough.

In your June 2 issue, you printed a collage of

wonderful photographs portraying our past Gay Pride celebrations. Three out of seven photos are actually the work of Linda Carter, not Linda Kliewer. Again, on page 17, two out of three photographs also are the artwork of Linda Carter. (Also the photo of Bob Ralphs on page 9.)

Linda worked many hours to produce a collection of work, some of which she sold—basically, donated—to you because she wanted to help our cause. All that she has asked since is that when you print her photos you print her name. She has never billed you for re-use as do your other photographers. If you want to tout yourselves as being patrons of the arts, especially the art produced by members of our own community, then show some professionalism and respect within your own medium.

I have ignored your continual misrepresentation of Linda Carter's work in the past, because it has never been to this degree. There are many artists among you, you must recognize our sentiment. (Linda Carter is my partner. I know what kind of time and energy goes into her work.) I'd like to believe that we would not be so careless. That we might employ some ethics. What if it was you...your artwork, with my name on it? Get the picture?

You know I support you all, and I commend the important work you do, but friends are for telling other friends to get their shit together when it's not.

Kate O'Halloran
Portland

Editor's note: Thank you for pointing out the error of our ways. If you saw our photo files, you'd understand how this could happen. Not that that is an excuse. We of course value Linda Carter and her work, and we will be much more diligent in the future regarding accurate photo credit.

Phone buddies

To the Editor:

The evening of Wednesday, June 7, I received a telephone call from none other than the Citizens Alliance of Washington's Sam Woodward—who most probably was utilizing the services of Lifeline America's long-distance service, whereby 10 percent of his monthly long-distance bill goes towards the effort to curb queer rights.

Sam and I have practically become regular telephone confidantes—ever since I requested from the Washington secretary of state's office a copy of the CAW's latest homophobic initiative, only to discover the secretary's office forwarded my telephone number to Sam for follow-up.

"I understand you seem to have a problem with our organization," Sam began, and when I asked him to explain, I received the information that he had a copy of "a magazine called *Just Out* with a letter from you in it."

I explained that Lifeline America's sales pitch claiming ATT and MCI promote child pornography gave me cause for concern. Sam referred, without providing specifics, to congressional inquiries linking both ATT and MCI to 1-900 numbers accessed by children, and cited the example of a man who discovered his 12-year-old son had run up a \$600 phone bill calling various 1-900 lines.

"Correct me if I'm wrong," I responded, "but I was under the impression that child pornography referred to pornography which exploited children, not pornography utilized by children."

Apparently sensing a hardened case on the other end of the line, Sam retreated to the issue of gay rights, referring to the fact that ATT supported the Gay Games—and then quickly disengaged from the conversation.

Sam did manage to mention that perhaps he should remove my name from his database.

I'm crushed.

Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan
Portland

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