

# letters

## Schindler killer denied parole

To the Editor:

Terry Helvey, the homophobic killer serving a parolable life term at Leavenworth for the cold-blooded murder of fellow troop Allen Schindler due to his homosexuality, was reported to have stated in his pre-sentencing apology that "I regret this incident happened and I feel like it could have been averted—had homosexuals not been allowed in the military." Unfortunately, this is the depth of thinking behind the "don't ask, don't tell," hide-and-avoid military policy regarding gays serving.

Had homophobes been screened out of our volunteer military service, perhaps Schindler would be enjoying a productive life and Helvey would have found a civilian to bash or kill. Regardless of the specific military policy on military service for gays, sexuality diversity awareness training classes militarywide [should be included] within newly implemented sexual harassment training programs, where such training belongs by the definition of sexual harassment, to help prevent such tragic events from occurring in the future. Currently, unnecessary homophobic and sexual innuendoes continue to be used in training new recruits.

Homophobia is not essential to discipline, unit cohesion, esprit or morale, or national security. It is the direct cause of disciplinary problems and compromises mission accomplishment. As our military forces are increasingly called upon to police diverse civilian populations, it is important that the military undertake specific policies to prevent homophobes, racists, sexists, alcoholics, drug addicts and those lawless persons who were traditionally pardoned their civilian criminal punishments in lieu of enlisting in the military, from entering or remaining in uniform. And the military should undertake specific diversity awareness training programs to prevent the kinds of disciplinary problems that homophobia presents, to protect straight and gay military and civilian Americans and foreign civilians during deployments abroad.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as well as President Clinton and the secretary of defense await your letters in this regard.

Rand Knox  
San Rafael, Calif.

## Sometimes we wish we didn't read our mail

To the Editor:

In your July 7 issue you opened the door to our expressing our feelings about *Just Out*, and since you asked...

I was one of the people who were disappointed that you did not include Peacock in the Park in your coverage of pride month events. I read your July 7 editorial where you claimed that it was "an oversight," and I'll be honest with you here: I find that hard to believe.

Peacock in the Park is a local, annual gay and lesbian event with a history of eight years under its belt, second only to the annual Lesbian and Gay Pride march itself in size and scope. Practically an entire subgroup of our community spends every waking hour for months preparing that event. It is one of the premier fund-raising events of the gay calendar year. There were posters in every gay or lesbian establishment I'd been to for at least a month leading up to the event, and you're asking me to believe that no one at *Just Out* noticed. I'm sorry, I just don't buy it. The event raised over \$5,000 in a single afternoon for the Audria M. Edwards Scholarship Foundation and the best you can do is *one* photo with a little blur under it? Hello?

This isn't the only thing you've missed: I told you about my own cable access program *Street Level* almost two months before we went on the air, way back in 1992. We were on, live, every week for three seasons and you didn't even mention it until the week we went off the air. That show featured gay and lesbian themes almost every week we were on and YOU missed it.

*You are asking us to believe that no one at Just Out watches cable TV, reads your mail, checks in with MCC, or goes to a gay or lesbian establishment.*

I won two awards from the Northwest region of the Alliance for Community Media last year for gay-themed TV shows that I produced right here in Portland. I even sent a press release to you about an excellent gay and lesbian news-magazine show produced by Karen Brown in Washington, D.C. (locally sponsored by Little Brother Productions). That show is currently seen on cable access six times per month. It is called *One in Ten People* and features interviews with gay and lesbian celebrities from all over the country (including The Flirtations and Lily Tomlin), and you missed that, too!

My friends at Riversong Productions have been producing a wonderfully intelligent and informative show about gay men and lesbians, called *Lavender Menace*, for two years now and other than a mention in the calendar section, you haven't said a word about it.

Metropolitan Community Church is mounting a citywide fund-raising campaign to restore its beautiful, but crumbling, building. You haven't uttered a word about that either.

You are asking us to believe that no one at *Just Out* watches cable TV, reads your mail, checks in with MCC, or goes to a gay or lesbian establishment. Because if they did, they would have to know about all this stuff. If you consider yourself to be the news and information source for the gay and lesbian community, you should be hanging your head in shame.

You seem to have lots of room in your pages for national and international news about gay and lesbian people, but you have almost no outreach in Oregon. You are shamefully out of touch with your own community. In my humble opinion, *Just Out* is a newsletter for a tenacious yet myopic little private club, to which most of the Oregon gay and lesbian community does not belong.

Gregory Franklyn  
Portland

Editor's note: *Every day between 30 and 50 press releases and news items cross my desk via snail mail; 20 to 25 items come in by e-mail, and 10 to 15 items come by fax. Weekly, we receive 20 to 30 lesbian and gay papers and magazines from across the nation that must be read for news of interest, and monthly we receive 10 to 15 newsletters. That's a lot to read and process. In addition, I have two Internet surfers who monitor various newsources on the 'Net and e-mail me information. As the editor, I totally depend on items of interest to our readers to come to the office in this manner—by deadline or sooner. Things that come after deadline just cannot be considered.*

*For mental health reasons, when I leave the office, I am no longer working. This has enabled me to avoid burnout and be able to stay with Just Out for 12 years. So, posted flyers, late-night channel surfing, and conversation at gatherings does not register in the same manner as a press release to my office does.*

*Just as an update: Ray Southwick, one of the producers of Peacock in the Park, recently phoned me to say that he did not give Just Out any press information because he assumed Lesbian and Gay Pride had. They hadn't, so nothing ever did come into the office.*

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