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# letters

## Queer youth usually overlooked

To the Editor:

I wanted to express my amazement and appreciation for the article "School is Hell." It was a pleasant surprise to open up to page 17 and find a picture of a friendly, familiar face. As both a young adult and a youth (I am age 20), I found the article both refreshing and informative. It is a comfort to know that sexual minority youth have resources currently available, as well as more community awareness/support systems being made ready for this oftentimes overlooked group.

If more of our adult community would take an interest in our youth, in offering some support or guidance, we would quickly witness the effects that a little caring and kindness can bring. How many times do we face opposition or discrimination in our daily lives, from our families or loved ones? How often do we see a youth on the street and take a moment to speak to him or her? I would venture to say that at least 70 percent to 85 percent of all the homeless youth are sexual minority youth. They are on the streets for facing the same issues that we each have faced at some point or another, as well as all of the other complicated issues you face in adolescence. These youth are people, and these people have voices! We can only help empower ourselves and our community by listening to, recognizing and strengthening our youth.

Tracey L. McCoy  
Portland

## Strange that we attack our allies

To the Editor:

I read the article concerning Margaret O'Hartigan's outrage ["Mixed signals?" *Just Out*,

Sept. 1, 1995] at the [perceived bias of] the Unitarian Universalist Association and Beacon Press [against] transgender people. I was upset. The UUA was one of the first churches to support lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender rights. The UUA is one of the few churches that ordain transgender people. The Metropolitan Community Church, the Quakers and the UUA are the few churches that perform commitment ceremonies for lesbian and transgender people. Yet O'Hartigan attacks this organization because of some books—some that are out of print? What ever happened to freedom of the press? Beacon Press publishes many books of different opinions. Why doesn't O'Hartigan go after other religions that have hate in their doctrine and have no intention to change? I always think it is so strange that we attack our allies (although O'Hartigan might not think the UUA and Beacon Press are her allies).

I am proud of the UUA. No person or institution is perfect. But as the Rev. Meg Ryan was quoted as saying, change takes time, and the UUA is working on more information on transgender issues. I am the president of the board at Eastrose Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Gresham. I am also an open lesbian. Taking a stand against the Oregon Citizens Alliance and other hate groups; opening our church for a World AIDS Day service; being a member of the Portland-area Welcoming Congregation organization; marching in the lesbian and gay parade; announcing any events of interest to lesbian and transgender people from the pulpit; using the words "lesbian" and "gay" in areas of worship service; welcoming lesbian and transgender people to our services; and offering our church for union ceremonies are just some ways that Eastrose UU is open and supportive of the lesbian and transgender community. Anyone interested in a liberal faith religion, a faith of values not of common belief, should look at Unitarian Universalism.

Sue Matranga-Watson  
Portland

## TRANSITION

### Talented musician dies

Composer and concert pianist Terry Allen Snowden died Sept. 10 from AIDS complications. He was 48.

Snowden, who returned to Portland this summer after two years teaching and performing in Spain, was active for many years in the Metropolitan Community Church. Snowden loved church music. He performed with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, and his compositions were performed locally by Virtuosi della Rosa and the Concord Choir, and as accompaniment for dancer Joe Morales.

Born in Baltimore, Md., on Oct. 2, 1946,

Snowden was a 1972 graduate of the Peabody Conservatory of Music. He later became the first African American faculty member of the Peabody Institute.

Survivors are his parents, Arthur and Claudine, and brothers, Vincent and Roland, all of Baltimore.

The family suggests that remembrances be contributions to Our House of Portland, 2727 SE Alder St., Portland, 97214.

Compiled by Inga Sorensen

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