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since 1983

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Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. **Deadline for submissions** to the editorial department and for the **Calendar** is the Thursday before the first and third Friday for the next issue. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The **display advertising** deadline is the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue.

Classified ads must be received at the **just out** office by 3 pm the Monday after the first and third Friday for the next issue, along with payment. Ads will not be taken over the telephone.

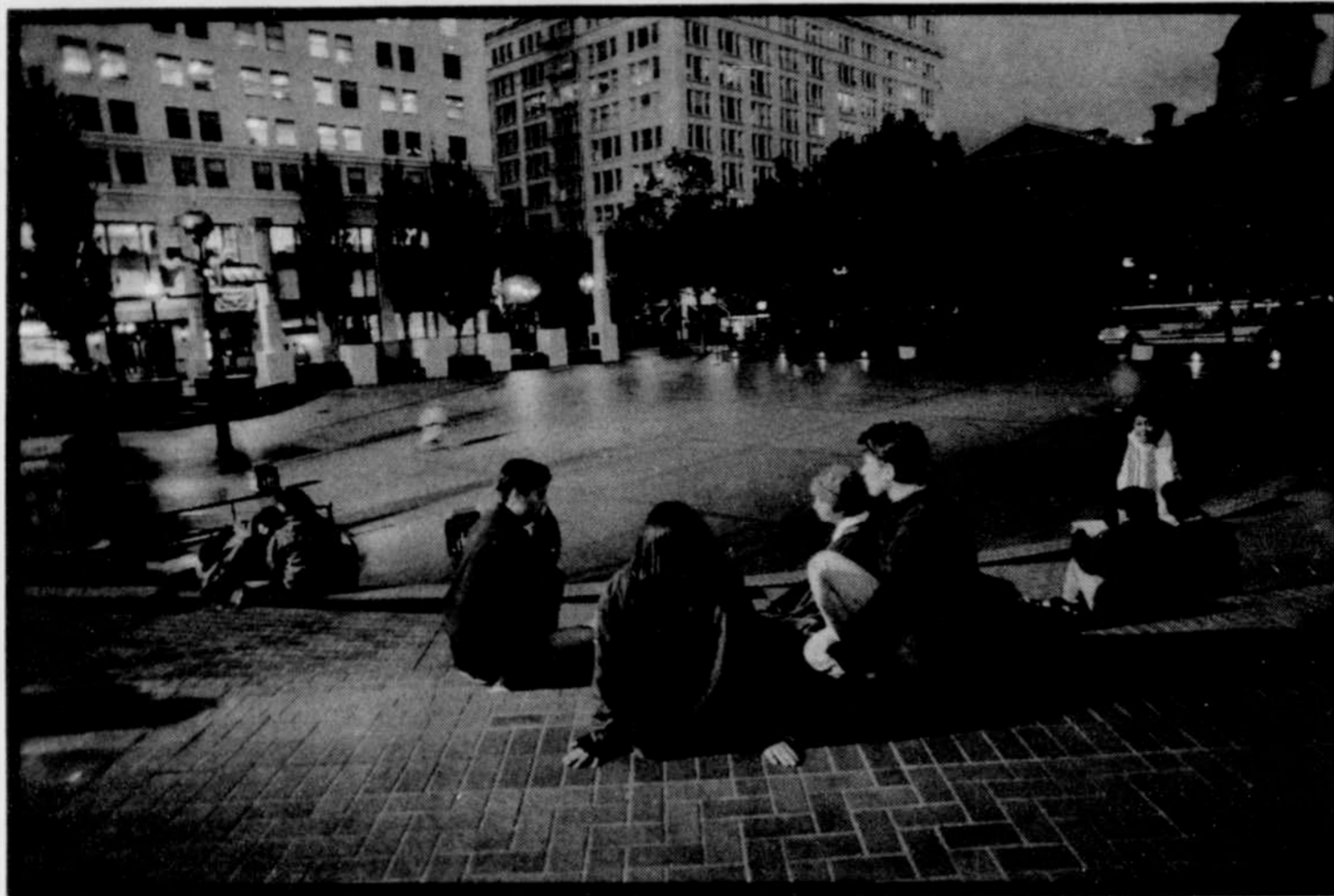
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Subscriptions to just out are available for \$17.50 for 12 issues. First Class (in an envelope) is \$30 for 12 issues.

A copy of **just out** is available for \$2. Advertising rates are available on request.

The mailing address and telephone numbers for **just out** are PO Box 14400, Portland, OR 97214-0400; (503) 236-1252. The phone number for the advertising department is 236-1253. Our fax number is 236-1257. Our e-mail address is JustOut2@aol.com.

steppin' out



A National Coming Out Day celebration was to take place at Pioneer Courthouse Square on Oct. 11. People eager to participate came out for the event, not knowing organizers had canceled it for fear of rain.

PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

guest editorial

Our kids, our schools, our future

When necessary, we must challenge our own internalized pedophobia enough to genuinely care about kids

by Steve Fulmer

It takes a whole village to raise a child." This African proverb has become a motto for people who advocate for children. Its message is as real for sexual minority people as it is for anyone else, yet the gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans communities remain shy of "kids' issues." Perhaps it's because so many of us do not have children. Perhaps it's because of the insistence by self-righteous "save the children" hatemongers that all sexual minority people are pedophiles and child molesters. And maybe it's because too many of us have "come out of the closet into our living rooms," but choose to deny the importance of coming out in boardrooms—or even in the privacy of a secret ballot.

Don't misunderstand: This isn't a pitch for injecting sexual rights into every conversation from sewers to educational reform, but a reminder that if we expect to be treated as equal members of society then we must take all of society's issues seriously, including sewers and educational reform—and especially the issues of kids. It's important that we expose the myths of pedophilia as an obstacle to our equality. It's important for kids that they have as many advocates as possible. And it's important to the future of all sexual minority people—the old, the young, even the unborn—that tomorrow's leaders be better educated, more tolerant and more creative.

In our civil rights rhetoric, we like to say, "We are your children (your brothers and sisters, sometimes even your mothers and fathers)." Well, the village children are ours, too. After all, our futures depend on today's kids. We will come to depend on them as surely as they depend on us right now.

One of the silver linings of the struggle for sexual minority

rights has been a growing sense of the political clout we can muster. In the process of fighting Oregon Citizens Alliance ballot measures, we've made many new friends and strengthened old bonds. The mainstream faith community, big business, moderate Republicans and leaders of other marginalized groups now stand proudly beside us.

Likewise, the HIV pandemic has demonstrated the awesome power of people who care about one another to transcend and even lead government response. Again, all kinds of people have reached beyond previous barriers to share our struggle for life, liberty and happiness. The time has come for us to return the favor—to use our new strength on behalf of the whole village.

If you are a registered voter and live in the core Portland area you will be receiving a ballot for the local school bond levy, Measure 26-31. This is Portland's first opportunity to support local kids since Ballot Measure 5, Oregon's statewide property tax limitation, put conservative (and often militantly anti-urban) legislators in control of local school funding. Fill it out, vote yes for Portland kids, and return it by Nov. 7.

As individuals and as a community, we must take our rightful place in the affairs of the greater village.

Over the past two decades, Steve Fulmer has been active in a variety of gay and lesbian organizations in Portland. He is currently serving as an out member of the Multnomah County Commission on Children and Families, as well as on the Sexual Diversity Task Force and the Multi-cultural/Multi-ethnic Task Force of Portland Public Schools.

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