

letters

Conservatism does not mean extremism

To the Editor:

As I was reading about the Postal Primary in your Nov. 17 issue, I was pleased with your endorsement of Norma Paulus on the GOP side, whom I cast my vote for. However, I have a problem with the way *Just Out* continues to vilify and stereotype conservative Republicans as extremists, especially when your columnists make such statements as "She [Paulus] is a moderate and fair-minded Republican." It is as if you are saying that the only good Republicans are those who are in the liberal-to-moderate wing of the GOP and that conservatives are a bunch of closed-minded, right-wing extremists. These kinds of misconceptions are unjust and uncalled-for—plus, these underlying swipes at conservatives are offensive, demeaning and biased.

It is obvious this publication has a very leftist slant, which has obviously been put ahead of objectivity. Historically, we know the politics of the gay community is rooted in liberalism, with its loyalty entrusted to the Democratic Party. According to your recent readers survey I am definitely in the minority, being bisexual, male and a registered Republican. But one thing I will not tolerate is being vilified and stereotyped as an extremist because my political philosophy happens to be conservative. I am not a Jesse Helms, Pat Buchanan or Bob Doman, nor am I a fan of these individuals or anyone like them, and furthermore I am not fond of such organizations as the Christian Coalition and the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

Your writers seem to always depict the majority of Republicans as being extremists. Remember, both political parties—Democrat and Republican alike—have their share of extremists. The point that I am trying to make is conservative is not a bad word, and conservatism does not mean extremism. The gay community should stop treating it as such.

To truly embrace diversity we must as a community be willing and open to all points of view regardless of whether we agree or disagree. We cannot afford this constant and relentless bickering and divisiveness to permeate the gay community. Let's truly be tolerant, fair-minded and objective—whether you are liberal, moderate or, like myself, a conservative. There should be room for us all to co-exist, regardless of our political beliefs.

M.A. Williams
Portland

Proud of Chuck Carpenter

To the Editor:

I am tired of being part of the "gay community." By the standards of the likes of Bob Doyle, I, too, might be considered homosexual rather than gay ["Letters," *Just Out*, Dec. 1, 1995]. And, if it means that I must follow his definition of what it means to be gay, then I also must admit that I have a preference for being considered homosexual as well.

One of the human beings that I know well who I can truly say I'm proud of is Chuck Carpenter; although I appreciate the contributions and openness of many of those who represent me on the Democratic side, I don't think that there has been one individual who has done so much for getting so many people to rethink their ideas about people such as yourself. You might be surprised if you took the time to talk to the man about the stands he has taken and the things that he has accomplished.

Because of Chuck, special interest groups were not able to get the big bucks they wanted to "promote" Oregon internationally—in other words, \$30 million was taken out of a bloated economic development budget which actually served relatively few Oregonians. Because of Chuck, the legislature approved the north-south light rail. And because of Chuck, there happen to be many more Republicans in the House who are not only talking about but seem to have a better understanding of gay and lesbian issues.

I guess I am also "stupid enough to think that being able to walk into Gordon Smith's office has some significance to the gay and lesbian community in this day and age." And let me tell you why: It's because Gordon Smith is Mormon, which is "not quite" Christian and looked down upon by many people; as a result, Smith has experienced a fair amount of ridicule and discrimination in his day. Although politicians have many agendas, I believe that [Chuck] has gotten Gordon to look at least a bit more closely and to empathize with what it might be like to be gay or lesbian in our society. Chuck has not minced words with him on this. I also realize that people are neither good nor bad, that the world is not black or white, and that it will take many more Chucks—especially those who are the closeted mainstreamers—to get people to not only tolerate but to really appreciate those of us who happen to be attracted to those of the same gender.

Although communities are often defined by similarities that people have in common, I would much rather choose my community by the character of individuals—the interests that they have or the ways in which they live and work in our environment—than by the gender that they happen to find erotic or make relationships with.

By the way, there really is something that you should know about Chuck. Now that the dust has settled and many are realizing how important his place is in the scheme of things in the House, some are rethinking their outright rejection of his support of Gordon Smith, such as the Human Rights Campaign, which has turned 180 degrees in asking him to again serve on its board.

There is one more thing that I would like you to know—the last thing that I would claim to be is Republican, but when a person comes along with the integrity of a Chuck Carpenter, I learn to look deeper than a political party.

Scott Thiemann
Portland

Way to go

To the Editor:

It really is too bad that After 8 felt they had to move their road sign in order to still help the community. Maybe they could have kept their place in Monroe along Highway 99 long enough to find out whether the locals would have left them alone after awhile.

Besides that, I think it is great to see homosexual-bisexual organizations participating in programs other than the stereotyped "homosexual" programs, while still keeping their pink triangles fastened firmly to their lapels. Way to go, guys!

Reineke M. Jerome
Beaverton

With hope for the future

To the Editor:

Metropolitan Human Rights Commission is outraged and shocked at the murders of two lesbian women in Medford. We offer our condolences to the family and community and reaffirm our commitment to work even harder to ensure that the rights of all people are respected. The hostile climate in Oregon that makes such violence possible puts all of us in danger.

We would like to repeat the words spoken at the service for Roxanna Kay Ellis and Michelle Abdill on Dec. 10 in Portland: "With all our differences, we are one people. Together, we are stronger than fear or despair. Together, we are builders of the community. Together, we shall overcome."

With hope for the future, the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission pledges to continue to foster mutual understanding and respect, to eliminate bigotry, and to embrace and celebrate diversity.

Metropolitan Human Rights Commission
Nadia Kahl, chair

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