

letters

Making distinctions

To the Editor:

I am angered by the pedophobic attitudes that were expressed by Arline Jacobson in her letter [*Just Out*, Feb. 16, 1996].

First, I do not share Jacobson's simplistic belief that all sex with young people is "rape" or "abuse." I think the problem is our culture's puritanical attitude toward sexuality in general—and children's sexuality in particular.

My main concern, however, is her statement that "You simply cannot continue to refer casually to child sexual abuse as if it's just another sexual preference." My fantasies and desires do not make me a child rapist or a sexually abusive person. If we're going to judge people on their fantasies and desires rather than their behavior, then God help the radical sensualists.

Let's distinguish between "behavior" and "desire" and not stigmatize people because of their sexual identity. Failure to make such distinctions is exactly what has happened [in the issue of] gays in the military.

Pedophobia is rampant in the gay and lesbian community and cannot be excused because the religious right has chosen to discredit the gay community by exploiting people's fears about "intergenerational" sex.

Dennis Bejin
Seattle

Kudos and clarification

To the Editor:

A very big thank you to Inga Sorensen for her creative yet factual approach to our bowling community. Inga's thoroughness in gathering information was revealed through her all-encompassing review of the bowling leagues.

We've been waiting for years for a feature article to inform the general public that all are invited for a good time "in the gutters." We should point out that our Sunday league is open to all ages, and that we encourage the youth of our community who are unable to walk into a bar to instead come to the lanes for the opportunity to connect and relate with adults.

I'd like to clarify a few other areas. The Sunday league is actually called the BFD (Bowling for Dollars) League. The Portland Community Bowling Association is the parent organization overseeing the Sunday league and the Rosebowl Classic. Additionally, all Sunday bowlers' averages are recognized at all International Gay Bowling Organization-affiliated gay and lesbian tournaments across the country. The Sunday league has recently moved to Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave. Anyone is welcome to join in on any Sunday we bowl, through May. Last, you do not have to be a member of either league to join in our Rosebowl Classic international bowling tournament at the end of May. All you need is verifiable proof of an established average in a league.

Thanks again for such a comprehensive and positive in-depth feature on our association. We've already received numerous phone calls of interest.

Tom Geil, Executive Director
Portland Community Bowling Association

Further clarification

To the Editor:

Thank you for your recent article regarding gay bowling in Portland. The visibility *Just Out* has given bowling has resulted in numerous phone calls and much increased interest from the community. However, a couple of points need to be clarified based on questions I am receiving from bowlers.

The reason that 99.9 percent of all bowling leagues and tournaments in the United States and Canada [choose to be sanctioned] is to [be] official,

and to agree to play fairly and equitably along with all other sanctioned leagues and tournaments, much as other sports sanction their own organizations. All sanctioned leagues and tournaments follow common rules set forth by the American Bowling Congress and the Women's International Bowling Congress, and each league member's average and number of games bowled are recorded as official in the annual yearbook. Bowling leagues and tournaments that are not sanctioned frequently set up their own rules and are not recognized as official bowling organizations, and their bowlers' averages are not recognized.

The fact that a bowling league votes to play by common ABC rules does not mean that a league is any more competitive or less social than a non-sanctioned league, as stated in the article. In fact, one should see how social we become on Friday night, especially as hordes of bowlers descend on the bars and private parties after bowling! The main purpose of any gay league is to provide a positive social outlet for gay men and lesbians—sanctioned or not.

The article also suggested that the difference in costs between leagues in Portland is due to sanctioning. This is simply not true. The difference in costs is solely due to the bowling fees that alleys charge their leagues for prime-time Friday night versus off-time Sunday morning play; the cost for prime-time bowling is approximately \$2 per week higher.

There is plenty of room for both sanctioned and non-sanctioned leagues in Portland, and I believe that the gay leagues in Portland complement each other well. Thank you again for the wonderful press given gay bowling in Portland.

Gary Eldridge, President
FITS Bowling League
Wednesday Night Mixers Bowling League

Rethink endorsements

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on the endorsement made by the Right to Privacy PAC ["RTP issues early endorsements," *Just Out*, Feb. 16, 1996]. In summary, RTP endorsed Bob Duehmig in District 12, Frank Dixon in Senate District 6 and Gail Shibley for City Council. What concerns me with regard to these endorsements is that we are making such endorsements based solely on sexuality, or so it seems. While I understand the desire for representation, to literally increase our numbers in political office, I feel that it is critical to reach out more broadly and look more deeply at the candidates we endorse. For instance, I would not vote for Christine Todd-Whitman for governor of New Jersey just because she is a woman. I would rather vote for a man who had a strong record on "women's issues," (if that were my issue) rather than instinctively voting for a woman candidate to increase the number of women in office.

As a community it is important [for us] to make coalition-building a priority—this might mean at some point endorsing someone straight who has a solid record on civil rights rather than automatically putting our support behind a gay candidate. For instance, in District 12 I would endorse David Bragdon, because I feel that his experience and his ability to work in a truly bipartisan manner is what we need in Salem. I also support Gail Shibley because I think she has really proven herself as state representative.

I understand these points to be controversial, but I feel we need to start thinking about what our political goals are as a community of queers, and as citizens of a very diverse Portland. This is a difficult issue, because we are just now gaining the legislative power and representation we need to fight organizations such as the Oregon Citizens Alliance. We need to be in the forefront; we need to have gay candidates in office; but we should take care not to become insular and single-issue focused.

Ann Ross
Portland

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