

letters

How did it help?

To the Editor:

Recently I viewed the Rose Festival parade from Southwest 10th and Stark. It was wonderful seeing numerous gay men there, comfortable being themselves, amid other gay men, comfortable in their camaraderie. As well, it was great to see the rainbow balloon arch on the sidewalk of Southwest 10th Avenue. This gave much support to us, visually signifying our life identity.

Though I didn't know any of the guys on the corner, it felt good to view the parade with other gay men. It felt good to see the smiles of my brethren, to hear the laughter, to feel the strength in these men, and to see the character and spirit etched in their faces, and know the suffering we all have borne. It felt good knowing how strong we are, yet still tender, and friendly.

On the northwest corner of the intersection, a drag queen was giving commentary via a loud speaker system. Her/his humor was good; the spontaneity and original comments were part of the joyfulness of the occasion. Definitely, he/she is talented and is to be commended for this.

However, to coax something from street vendors, a free token gift, and then promptly call them "sucker," is hardly humorous. This happened twice. Is it worth the power trip against some straights one doesn't even know?

Is this sort of discord harmless? Is it necessary? While a person with a microphone on a wooden platform doesn't speak for the community, her/his comments do reflect upon the gay populace. The power trip dies quickly in a moment, yet the memory will linger with the straights, and the resentment will come, and it will be justified.

And to criticize the Shriners because their colorful costumes may be too bright or gaudy for someone's taste is pushing it a bit. It is diminishing to the person who made the comment, as much as to the Shriners and their parade clothing. I saw the confusion and hurt on some of their faces. I also know that many Shriners, and many drag queens, have done a lot for charity. So why the division, why make one side an enemy?

In a society where people are learning to live with more and more physical violence, where verbal abuse is becoming commonplace and shame is a forgotten concept, I do not see how the above helped any of us, gay or straight.

In a society where straights still think it's OK to call us faggots, I hardly think cheap power trips from us is going to help. It demeans them, it demeans us. In a society where at night on those very streets some straights are willing to physically attack us, degrading humor in the daylight hardly seems part of the solution.

Chuck Engel
Portland

Religion 101

To the Editor:

[In regard to] Rex Wockner's World Briefs [Just Out, June 7, 1996]: When he referred to Bishop [Desmond] Tutu and gay and lesbian rights for South Africa, Wockner wrote, "In the United States, Anglicans are known as Episcopalians..." which is simplifying it a bit too much.

Although the Episcopal Church is the logical religious successor to the American Anglican Church after the Revolutionary War, it is *not* the Anglican Church, although it is resident in the United States as a national body. I don't think St. Mark's or any other Anglican Church locally would agree with the oversimplification, either. Anglicans maintain a separate status from Episcopalians. The Anglican Communion is a separate body from the Episcopal Church USA.

The Episcopal Church obtained the consecration of its bishops through the Scottish church because it did not demand the Oath of Allegiance

to the King of England, which was demanded by an Act of Parliament, and which obviously most American Episcopalians couldn't give or it would amount to outright treason.

The Anglicans are ruled over by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Episcopalians, although giving primacy of honor to the archbishop, are not ruled by him at all. Episcopalians have a bicameral House of Bishops and lay-delegates operating upon convention for regulation.

Although most Episcopalians say they are "Anglicans" it merely means they follow the Anglican or English system of worship and its Anglo-Catholic tradition of national churches, where the ruling monarch is the titular head of the church, or protector of the faith.

The Rev. Paul Verhaeren, Vicar
Sts. Cyril & Methodius Church

Let's get to the truth

To the Editor:

I consider Bob Roehr's article ["Victory," Just Out, June 7, 1996] on the ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2 is unconstitutional to be fairly good. Of particular interest to me were the few comments that Roehr included by the religious right about the Supreme Court's ruling. It would be interesting to read other comments by the right wing on this ruling, although I suspect that a few such comments are enough, since they tend to be pretty much alike.

I am sure that by now most members of the gay community, like me, see whatever the right wing says about gay-related issues as being either half truths or whole lies. A good example of this is what Ralph Reed, the head of the Christian Coalition, recently said on television: that his organization is trying to protect the fragility of the American family from single parent families and gay marriages.

This is an absurd statement, because the family isn't as fragile a social institution as people like Reed make it out to be. The best proof of this [can be found in] the memoirs written by Holocaust survivors. In virtually all of these memoirs are references to how members of families tried to stay together, not only in the ghettos but in death camps like Auschwitz, where they were treated worse than slaves. The fact that these families tried to stay together, under conditions that defy imagination, makes the right wing's moaning seem downright ridiculous. If there was a bond of real love among members of the families that make up the right wing, they wouldn't waste time condemning gay marriage and gay rights in general.

The ties of love that bind a family or any group together in a positive and constructive manner are not the concern of the right. The right instead sees the family as based on rigid rules that are constantly in danger of being destroyed by some external threat such as homosexuality. It is no wonder that the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council and other so-called "family" organizations are not concerned with the downsizing that is being done by large corporations. More than anything else, it is downsizing that poses a real threat to the family when the major provider in a family loses his or her job. Major providers who don't lose their jobs are often forced to work extra hours to make up for workers who were fired. This cuts into the time that they can spend with their families. Of course this isn't of concern to the religious right, since it is a real issue that the right wing would prefer to avoid because of its cynical attitude toward anyone who isn't rich.

In the end, the important thing in regard to the future of America's children isn't who raises them, but how they are raised.

Dennis Meurer
Shelton, Wash.

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