

letters

Disparaging transsexuals

To the Editor:

I'm always concerned to see Richard Mohr write on the topic of prejudice (guest editorial, "Prejudice loses big," *Just Out*, June 7, 1996) knowing that few in the sexual minorities community realize that the man is, himself, prejudiced.

Mohr is one of Beacon Press' anti-transsexual writers. Along with Janice Raymond, Mary Daly, Joanna Russ and Walter Williams, to name a few, Mohr disparages transsexuals in his work.

In *A More Perfect Union*, Mohr consistently avoided any reference to the inclusion of transsexuals in the many cities and states he cited as protecting gays, lesbians and bisexuals from discrimination. In fact his only reference to us at all was to argue, *reductio ad absurdum*, against the logic that heterosexuality is "natural" and therefore worthy of emulation: "There are fish that change sex over their lifetimes: should we 'follow nature' and be operative transsexuals?"

Mohr writes eloquently in stating, "specific beliefs for which one can give no reasons are exactly those which are prejudicial." I should be most curious to read what Mohr has to say about his own "specific beliefs" regarding his dismissive attitude and comments concerning transsexuals.

Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan
Portland

People who live in glass houses

To the Editor:

In Pastor Roy Cole's guest editorial ("An Uncomfortable Silence," *Just Out*, July 5, 1996) he appears to gently chastise the gay male community for not coming to the aid of embattled police Commander Mike Garvey because of our confusion about sex and its place in our own psyche. I have another perspective that may have more to do with our community's "deafening silence" than worries about our own relationship with sex in the '90s.

I've been working closely with The City Nightclub for about a year as post-production supervisor and assistant director of *NightScene* and other programs produced at the club. Mike Garvey is well known in the community for being supportive of the efforts to close the club. He was instrumental in shifting the investigation of the club undertaken by the Portland Police Bureau from the Central Precinct to the Drugs and Vice Division in an apparent attempt to circumvent the community policing agreement between the police and The City Nightclub that has been in place for over four years.

In an article in *Just Out* last month about the club, Inga Sorensen reported that the Central Precinct, then under the direction of Cmdr. Garvey, was very concerned about the prevalence of prostitution at the club, but was unable to catch anyone doing it—hence the shift of the investigation to drugs instead. Her article points out that drug charges are much easier to document than prostitution. She is correct. Drugs are as prevalent at the city jail as they are at The City Nightclub. For that matter they are as prevalent at any high school in the area.

If Garvey wants to close The City Nightclub because of fears of prostitution, it would seem rather hypocritical for him to be involved with prostitution himself. People who live glass houses... What goes around, comes around... etc. Moreover, Garvey is paid by the taxpayers of our fair city (many of whom are gay men) to arrest offenders of the laws against such activities, yet may be implicated in breaking those laws himself. Who protects the people when the police are breaking the same laws they arrest others for breaking?

Pastor Cole's guest editorial also equated ev-

ery form of courtship with prostitution. Buying drinks for an object of one's fancy, dinner and a movie, membership at the club baths and cruising the parks. It sounds as if the good pastor is insinuating that we are all "johns" for seeking intimate company. I disagree. Although there is almost universally some money involved in our courtship rituals—gay and straight—few of them are about prostitution as much as they are signs of interest in a more intimate contact with another. Prostitution is a crime, courtship is not.

I do not agree that gay men are confused about what kinds of sex are appropriate or inappropriate, and I don't believe we are asking Mike to bear the weight of our confusion. We all decide what is appropriate or inappropriate for ourselves. That's one of the blessings of being gay. We don't have a blueprint laid out for us: We have to make those decisions for ourselves, and we do—almost every day. Mike Garvey's case is different. He's a police officer who is sworn to uphold the laws of our society, and he routinely supports prosecutions for those very acts he is alleged to have committed himself. Perhaps that's more of a reason to hold our tongues than ambivalence about his plight. We, as a community, did not make that bed or force him to lie in it. He made a good living making that bed for himself.

I also find it intriguing that Pastor Cole makes such an indictment of our community for not coming to the aid of Cmdr. Garvey, while maintaining a "deafening silence" himself as Lanny Swerdlow, an equally embattled member of our community, fights for the survival of The City Nightclub.

Gregory Franklyn
Portland

Plenty of jail space

To the Editor:

Goodbye Oregon beaches. Goodbye Oregon tourism. Once again propaganda has prevailed in the minds of the voting public. People have succumbed to the rhetoric of "we need more jails."

What's happening is that the judicial system is an industry that makes money (\$100-plus per day) for every prison bed that it fills. There is no incentive not to have the prison beds filled. In fact, it is in the interest of the Oregon economy to get as many prison beds as possible and fill them up. That is exactly what is happening right now. We have been so persuaded by our fears that someone is going to commit a violent act upon us that we have overlooked the fact that the largest number of people in prisons are in there for victimless crimes like drugs, prostitution, gambling, etc.

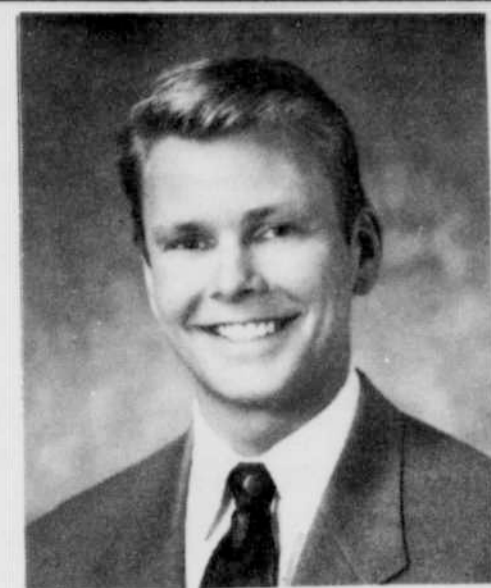
Victimless crimes are those offenses that involve consenting adults engaging in any activity that has been deemed by society to be so immoral that the individuals participating in such activity are subject to arrest even though they agree to the dynamics of their transaction. For those of you who are saying that drugs should never be legalized, I hope you gag on your cigarettes, choke on your coffee, and puke from your alcohol. This hypocrisy infects our youth, causing distrust and hatred toward a society that thrives on misinformation and faulty logic.

We may no longer have a major timber industry, nor, it seems, do we have a tourist industry. We do have some great jails, though. It is sad and it hurts me deeply that the people of the most beautiful state in the country would choose, through ignorance, to support a few enterprising people that will make millions from a prison contract, at the expense of our national parks. The ultimate slap in the face is that there will be plenty of jail space for those that get caught trespassing on the beautiful Oregon Coast.

Jayson Long
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