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letters

which denounces the oppression of all people by nature of its philosophy, is a mean-spirited action on the writers' part. Such an attitude feels judgmental and is ill informed. I question the gross generalization of the issue by the writers' reference to "oppression of youth," pornography and sexual intimacy between consenting adults in the same article.

The Rev. Ann Duffy
Portland

No affirmative action for white gay males

To the Editor:

David Batterson should not be surprised that the City of Portland and Multnomah County don't extend affirmative action hiring preferences to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community [Letters, *Just Out*, Aug. 2, 1996], since there are very few public or private employers that do. However, a member of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community could still benefit from affirmative action preferences if he or she also happens to be a person of color and/or female.

It's a different story for gay white males—they not only don't receive affirmative action preferences based on their gay sexual orientation, but they are also barred from receiving affirmative action preferences based on their white skin color and their male gender. It's not easy for us gay white males in the 1990s—we had all better start thinking about self employment!

David Gray
Portland

Good old-fashioned romance

To the Editor:

As I read your advertisements for men seeking men, I always have to sit down and wonder whatever happened to good old-fashioned romance and love without looking for what most men want other men to have nowadays: muscles, good looks, etc.... Why can't people (especially us gay men), just settle for what's available, without being so picky? Average- or fair-looking people need love and companionship, too. But it seems that people can't settle for that, they always seem to want that little bit more. I would really like it if someone could write to me and come up with a good explanation as to why. If anyone would like to give it a try, write to Blind Box 143.

Donald M. Atkins
Salem

Carbon copy

To Pride Northwest Inc. and Mayor Vera Katz:

When Radical Women, in coalition with drag queens, lesbians, transgenders and gay men, founded the first joyful and bold Lesbian and Gay Pride march through downtown Portland in 1977, we never imagined that 20 years later gay pride monitors would rip our leaflets out of people's hands, surround us, refuse to let us distribute our leaflets, and behave like thugs instead of protecting the march participants. What a degeneration and twisting of the original goals and purpose of the sexual minority movement: equal rights for all.

According to the monitors, they were trampling on our constitutional rights because the City of Portland demanded it. They had been told that Pride Northwest could not afford insurance to permit literature distribution and that the City of Portland would refuse to issue a permit next year if they allowed literature to be given out. The injustice of this was apparent to the monitors, who

told us they did not think it was right that we were prevented from giving out information, and they were just following orders.

What was the "contraband" information that was rudely ripped from people's hands—and in one incident crumpled up by the head monitor, David, and thrown on the ground? One was a leaflet advising the movement to "D-I-V-O-R-C-E the Democrats" and build a labor party. Another invited all to come and picket the virulent right-wing anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, which was coming to Pioneer Courthouse Square on June 26. We were also selling the Freedom Socialist, a marvelously optimistic socialist feminist newspaper that reports on local, national and international movements, and educates to replace capitalism with socialism. Our leaflets also advertised the appearance on the Pride stage of Sandy Nelson, a lesbian journalist fighting a precedent-setting free speech case, and Phillis Whitmore, a Black community organizer and gay sexual-minority-rights activist. Nelson was amazed to be attacked for distributing information at a march for sexual minority rights when her whole free speech case is a challenge to being demoted because she led a fight to protect gay and lesbian rights at the ballot box.

The police were even called; fortunately, two community members, outraged that our leaflets had been torn from their hands, defended our rights and defused the situation.

Softball teams trying to network were also harassed, and Peacock in the Park [organizers were] denied the right to pass out information about this tradition of the Pride movement.

Lesbian Avengers were fund-raising frantically at the rally site because the cost of the Dyke March was so expensive. They had been forced to pay triple fees—a permit for the park blocks, a march permit and a permit for using a bullhorn.

The questions are: Has the city passed unconstitutional ordinances which they are imposing on the community, using petty rules and high fees to squelch free speech and assembly? Or have officials in the sexual minority movement seized upon technicalities to silence radicals and dissidents in the movement who believe that the celebration of lesbian, gay, transvestite, bisexual and transsexual pride is still an unfinished freedom movement and not a business event? Or are the mayor and movement officials working together to achieve this silencing of the grass roots?

This censorship and bullying by Pride Northwest and the City of Portland must stop. We are longtime activists, co-founders of the Portland Pride movement, and we know our rights. We have a right to distribute information and sell our newspaper. Pride Northwest's policy of restricting the distribution of information and city ordinances 20.12.010 and 20.12.020 violate free speech. City Ordinance Title 20.12.020 restricts the distribution of information to "a sidewalk or footpath" in public parks. Ordinance Title 20.12.010, as described by a Parks and Recreation Bureau worker, extends a required concessions permit to sell food and beverages in the parks to printed material. This reduces freedom of speech to a business transaction. Pride Northwest and the City of Portland are not above the constitutional rights of free speech, assembly and the free exchange of ideas.

We want ordinance titles 20.12.010 and 20.12.020 eliminated and Pride Northwest to remove its censorship policy. If the city refuses to act, it is the responsibility of Pride Northwest to challenge these absurd and dangerous restrictions. Are you leaders of the movement or spokespeople for restrictive city policies against the sexual minority community?

Pride is about "Together for Freedom, United for Justice," and we will not let it be destroyed.

Signed by representatives of Radical Women, the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court and Portland Bisexual Alliance

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