

# letters

## Don't drive, he said

To the Editor:

The recently reported issues over Chrysler Motor Company refusing to acknowledge "sexual orientation" in its diversity programs should come as no big surprise. After all, Chrysler Motors was recently dinged by the State of California for reselling (laundering) "lemons" to second buyers without disclosing the prior use, condition and potential safety problems of hundreds of its "good-faith repurchases." It did to California consumers what it had been caught and dinged for previously in Pennsylvania and New York and God knows where else.

Chrysler merely operates within an industry that robs Americans of tens of billions of dollars every year through unfair, manipulative and fraudulent sales and service practices. No other industry shares the low level of public repute that new and used car dealers and manufactures do in our society, yet we would expect better regarding their treatment of our gay brothers and sisters inside the industry or in the general marketplace? Duh?

While it is good to work for equality in every business and social environment, the exploitative practices of businesses should be held up to ridicule and be made to evolve to a socially responsible level.

At a minimum, along with equality in the workplace we should be demanding that businesses behave fairly and responsibly in the marketplace as well, where everyone is affected by unscrupulous practices. The billions of dollars siphoned every year by shady practices in the auto industry could be helping to fund AIDS and other needy and worthy social and environmental charities.

But, like "they" say, whatever traffic allows: As long as we continue buying and eating the slop served by the auto industry, we'll be here for dinner.

Rand Knox  
San Rafael, Calif.

## What were you thinking?

To the Editor:

As I sit here in mixed emotions over this last election, I can't help but wonder what you were thinking when you endorsed Measure 44. Is it not clear to you that this another one of those measures that singles out a minority of people for the benefit of others? Didn't this look strikingly similar to Measure 31 to you, or did you just blindly "go for it" because you don't smoke?

Yes, I am a smoker, but that is beside the point. I am pro-choice and I am not a woman. I am brimming with anger too, when I heard the hypocrisy of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) early last year. He stated that the government should not fund AIDS research because AIDS is the end result of an unnatural act. All the while Sen. Helms was fighting for subsidies for tobacco companies, and let's face it, smoking is an unnatural act.

The point is that anyone who voted for this measure lowered themselves to the standards of Jesse Helms by picking on a select group of individuals. Smokers have now been singled out to bear the brunt of health costs for all Oregonians. Do you see what this measure is really aimed at doing? The authors of this measure figure that if they can make it unbearable for people to smoke by charging them exorbitant prices, they will quit. Talk about pushing your beliefs on others. Doesn't the gay community lament the fanatical religious extremists doing this to us on a daily basis?

I am not a drinker. Do you think it would be fair for me to get up on a soap box and point out all the hazards in drinking? Not only does one ruin their health by drinking, but they also put others in jeopardy when they decide to drive after drinking. Would it be fair to tax liquor to make drinkers

pay for my health care? I'm sure that measure would never pass, pointing out the true number of drunks in this state compared to smokers.

How about this? We tax all lubes and sex aids because they help to promote the spread of AIDS. Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it?

What I'm trying to get people to understand is that once we open the door for taxation of this sort, where does it end? I already pay for other peoples' children to go to school, but I am discriminated against for my sexual orientation. Talk about taxation without representation.

Does smoking really comprise the biggest cost in health care to Oregonians? I have had the opportunity to shuttle numerous friends to "clinics" funded by the Oregon Health Plan. Inevitably, as I waited in the waiting room I noticed that I was the only person who didn't have a gaggle of children swarming around me. If children of indigent parents make up the majority covered by Oregon's health care plan (and it seems this way), shouldn't pregnancy be taxed instead?

J. Martin  
Beaverton

## Institutionalized shit happens

To the Editor:

Anyone who believes the Portland Police Bureau isn't capable of violating the civil rights of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community through its attack on The City Nightclub and Cmdr. Mike Garvey need only look at the 16-year history of the systematic violation of the civil rights of transsexuals perpetrated by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries. For 16 years BOLI refused to enforce the state statute prohibiting discrimination on the basis of physical or mental impairment, solely because the bureau didn't like transsexualism and willfully and with malice refused to accept our complaints of discrimination.

Unpleasant as it may be to contemplate, much of the discrimination facing the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community is at the hands of the very governmental agencies charged with protecting those rights.

The next time you try to console yourself with the thought that the police or the government couldn't possibly be antagonistic towards us, remember ENDA, DOMA, "don't ask, don't tell"—and BOLI. And then remember The City Nightclub and Garvey.

Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan  
Portland

## TRANSITION Floral designer dies

Douglas Ray Gryder died on Nov. 10, 1996. He was born in North Carolina on Jan. 25, 1955.

Gryder was a resident of Portland since the early '80s. His career was spent in the floral industry. In 1987 he was inducted into the American Institute of Floral Designers, an international organization that comprises the top 2 percent of floral designers. A familiar face on the design circuit both locally and internationally, Doug touched and inspired many lives with his extraordinary talent and his humor.

Doug also made many friends while bartending at The Eastside and Scandals.

A celebration of Doug's life was held in Laurelhurst Park on Nov. 17. He is survived by his partner, Bill Sharp of Portland; his family in North Carolina; and many friends who will miss him dearly.

Remembrances may be sent to a charity of your choice in Doug's memory.

It's My Pleasure

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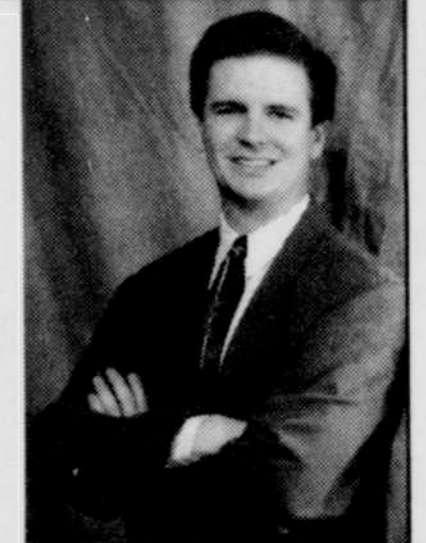
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