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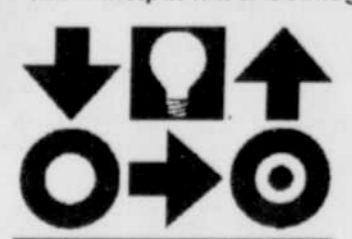
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letters

The spirit of giving

To the Editor:

Thank you for your support of Phoenix Rising Foundation, Lesbian Community Project and many other community endeavors. It is rare that a newspaper steps forward to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of those working in the nonprofit sector as well as to remind us of our civic duty to support these efforts. I applaud your leadership.

If everyone reading *Just Out* sent \$5—less than the cost of a movie—to Phoenix Rising or LCP, our community organizations would not be facing cuts in services and under-market wages to dedicated employees.

Phoenix Rising will continue to do the best it can with the resources at hand. But those out there who open their hand in the spirit of giving and for the sake of us all will make the job easier.

Allanya Guenther, executive director
Phoenix Rising

Don't let fear rule

To the Editor:

As members of the same rural community as Lee Lynch, we want to respond to her column "Caution is OK," [*Just Out*, Dec. 6, 1996]. She says that "queers come in all stripes, including brave and meek," as if these are personality traits which some of us have and some don't.

Meekness (fear) comes as a result of acts of oppression that have happened to gays and lesbians; we challenge Lee to consider that being afraid is something to overcome, whatever our age. It is important to remember that everyone who is brave is also frightened—they just do the brave thing anyway. Fear is a learned response, not who we are in the core of our being. If we can occasionally refuse to give in to our fear, we will be able to respond to intolerance when it occurs to us or to other people. It is very important to interrupt prejudiced comments and actions; when we hear homophobic or racist or anti-Semitic remarks we can respond in ways that don't antagonize, shame or blame the person. We can respond even if we are not ready to come out of the closet.

What about coming out? Keeping a job, staying safe from violence, having friends and bridge partners—there are as many reasons to stay in the closet as there are gay men and lesbians, and in a small town like Grants Pass we may think that no one knows, that the perm can hide us. (When in reality friends and neighbors may have already guessed!) Caution about coming out is OK, but to let fear rule our lives and keep us from acting is not OK. Our own best wisdom and judgment will tell us when to come out and to whom, so that we can help to change the world—starting with our own small town.

This is the '90s, and some things have changed. Right here in Josephine County there are many gay men and lesbians of all ages who have decided they won't be meek, hoping to avoid prejudice. They work to educate, do election campaigns, participate in cultural events and stand up against all forms of bigotry. Our community is a safer place because these people, probably feeling pretty meek, took a chance to come out in some way. Maybe the bravery of these gay and lesbian people will encourage others to keep the bumper stickers on their car, to go to the gay-supportive Josephine County Human Rights Alliance meetings, to tell our bridge partners, friends and co-workers who we are.

Billie Miracle
Amy Sobiech
Grants Pass

Well done

To the Editor:

I got caught without a book and I picked up *Just Out* to give me something to read while I

waited for a friend who was late. I read several articles and felt a need to write to say well done.

"The Ultimate Perk" [*Just Out*, Jan. 17, 1997] was well written, and I needed to say—as a hetero female—YES! Get a clue, you stupid hetero law-makers. Every time I hear about laws, bills, etc., being presented to prevent gay and lesbian marriage I am infuriated at their egotistical, self-righteous mucking about in other people's lives.

Know that you do have some hetero support—at least this hetero. Keep up the fight.

Linda McKinnon
Portland

Not surprised

To the Editor:

After reading your editorial "Say it isn't so" [*Just Out*, Feb. 7, 1997] I am, indeed, not surprised. You have been subtle, to this point, about displaying your preferences within our community, and how they are reflected in "our paper."

Overall, *Just Out* was of value to our community. However, you have for a long time shown a bias, with a diffuse, very circumspect eye—except for the last two pages. Being relegated to the back of the paper is enough [of an] editorial regarding the habits of a goodly part of your readership—males—and a segment of the sexually active.

You didn't need to expand the wide-angle judgment to [that of] your editorial. Yet another blow to the advocacy for individual options came in your comments regarding JoAnn Loulan. Are you, indeed, so naive as to say that a guru of lesbian sex should never have tried or enjoyed the intimate, ongoing company of a man?

You are deluded if you think the title "guru" implies total exclusion of all other points of view or actions by the title holder. (Your attitude is more that of bigot.) The third-from-last paragraph expresses Loulan's dilemma. It displays the pondering of someone who, by giving voice to her quandary (albeit to a "friend" in a private letter), is all the more worthy of the title guru. It is you who has the problem. The final indignity: "I can't help but hope her new relationship won't last forever and that she'll again fall in love with a woman." Does this equate with "see the light"?

You are perfectly free to think what you will privately. Your position makes you a public figure. You are continually asking/pleading/ranting about the need to "honor diversity, be community, take care of each other, value relationship." Is this public flame the true indication of your tolerance for diversity and individual choice?

As the major voice to and for Oregon's lesbian and gay community, say it isn't so.

RavOn Sistrwomn
Portland

The queerest thing

To the Editor:

What happens when a respected, nationally recognized figure comes out of the closet, risking the rejection of her fans and her culture, and admits her involvement with a person of the 'wrong' gender? Well, in the case of JoAnn Loulan, about what she expected—she receives "shock, sadness and disbelief" from people like Renée LaChance.

Say it isn't so, Renée. Say that you aren't horrified at the possibility of sexual attraction which sees beyond gender. Say that the queer community isn't about exclusion and building walls to keep the 'wrong' kind of people out. Say that JoAnn Loulan hasn't thrown out *her* history by breaking *your* rules. Say she has the right to love whomever she wants to love.

I've been a bisexual as long as I can remember, and since the early years of high school I've struggled to find acceptance from other women-loving women. For years I thought that meant