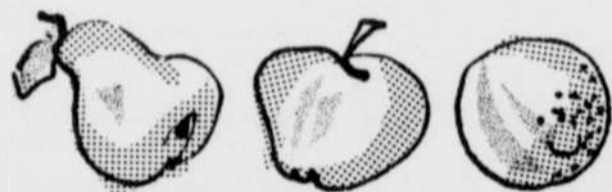




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letters

Give it a big kiss

To the Editor:

JoAnn Loulan fell in love with the wrong sort of person, and that rattled you. Then you publicly chided her ["Say it isn't so," *Just Out*, Feb. 7, 1997], and that rattled me.

At a time when you and your readers are asking for tolerance from Oregonians who would prefer that we all just shut up and go away, it's especially sad to hear how shocked you are—and think others should be—by the life choices of a woman you call friend and sister. I'm a volunteer at Bradley-Angle House and a member of the Bisexual Women's Caucus of the Tri-County Domestic and Sexual Violence Intervention Network, where we spend a lot of time talking about how all sorts of women can find healthy, happy, nurturing relationships. It strikes me that when a woman (or a man) finds such a relationship, that's something for her friends to celebrate—and it's no one else's business whom she finds it with.

It's heartening that recent letters to *Just Out* show others, too, were taken aback by the double standard you seem to apply to Loulan. By writing to you privately and then getting flattened in print, she shows how much courage is still required to stand out from a crowd—even the crowd we call our own.

The real point of Loulan's story is this: When love sneaks up on you, grab it and give it a big kiss and make it feel welcome.

Nancy Skinner
Portland

Hey, don't tamper with icons

To the Editor:

Boy, is Renée LaChance taking a lot of heat for her JoAnn Loulan editorial! Let me be so bold as to add my two cents' worth.

Loulan can love whomever she chooses. That should be the ultimate goal of the gay and lesbian rights movement. My discomfort comes only from the fact that Loulan is a "celebrity," and as such her being in the public arena changes the stakes a bit. If Loulan was, say, a longtime lesbian from Lake Oswego who led a very private life, I would not take issue with her choosing to be with a man. This is not the case, however. Loulan was a high-profile, highly paid lesbian therapist, who earned lots of money from the queer community by promoting herself as a lesbian. Further, she earned additional money and notoriety by presenting herself as an out lesbian on talk shows such as *Donahue*. The trouble with her being with a man is not that she's gone straight or bi, it's that she previously ran a highly successful business out of being a lesbian.

Imagine if Cris Williamson, k.d. lang, Romanofsky and Phillips or Greg Louganis recanted their queerness. The sense of bewilderment and confusion would be just as troubling as that of Loulan's coming out as bi or straight. In an ideal world it really shouldn't matter, but in these homophobic times such well-known celebrities validate the lives of a lot of people in the gay and lesbian community. Face it, queers love their icons and they don't like having them tampered with.

It will be interesting to see where Loulan's career heads now that she's come out again. I wish her only the best. In the meantime, we still have Ellen DeGeneres' coming out to look forward to. Win one, lose one...

Howie Baggadonutz
Portland

Slap in the face

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to *Just Out's* special Black History Month edition [Feb. 7, 1997]. The

beautiful brown cover with the face of Alberta Hunter was nothing more than a proverbial slap in the face by ignorant staff members, and poor editorial judgment. My disappointment was engaged as, page after page, I viewed no imagery or read no content to accompany that beautiful cover.

The first image in the issue was of a white man, the first image of a black person was a female athlete, and a huge cannabis leaf dwarfed a shrunken cutout image of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The first noticeable image of a black person was a portrayal of an overweight slave-looking woman seeming to nurse an infant, the editor's choice [to illustrate] an article on AZT and cancer. Nine articles and 19 pages pass before the reader arrives at the page set aside for this celebration of black queers. I'm sorry, *Just Out*, but two poorly Xeroxed photographs and obituaries of three queers who lived their entire lives in the closet does not a black queer history make.

Your issue undermines the progress, contribution and determination of the many entities that exist to exonerate our past. It served as a reminder that to some we did not exist in numbers then, and we should continue to be a part of the silent and unseen minority. It also points to the reminder that black queers are not so different from straights as it pertains to the ignorance of an America which continues to tumble aimlessly in white, generic and rhetorical depictions of black people.

In my sanity I carefully and skillfully recycled as many issues as I could. I surely would not want my son, daughter, niece, mother, grandmother or neighbor to view your special Black History Month edition as a reflection of my heritage: closet queers, basketball players, AZT, cancer, entertainers and obituaries.

A. Omari
Eugene

Thanks, Lee

To the Editor:

Back in 1992 Ballot Measure 9 changed our lives in so many ways. Some of us found ourselves stepping out and blazing with courage for a short moment in time. Then when all passion seemed spent, we retreated to our precious sanctuaries of home and family to regain ourselves.

Some of us, however, continue doing what we have always done. That is, quietly and doggedly keeping up the struggle through our work. Lee Lynch is one of those folks. For 11 years Lee has been putting her name on the line for "the cause." Each month Lee writes a nationally distributed column in which she expresses her take on her lesbian life. Think about it—in between taking out the garbage and walking the dog and holding down a full-time job, she manages to scratch out something about what's happening around her queer world. Then she has the courage to sign her name to it and send it all over the country. Lee's come out, by my figures, 132 times to date—next month, 133 times. I have to ask myself, could I do that? And could I write a "perfect" column every time?

There are others who come to mind who have chosen to keep on working, with or without public attention. They are there quietly keeping a part of our community's house in order while we regain our strength for the next time we are needed. Today I single out and honor Lee for her bravery. Thanks, Lee, you make a difference.

Sky
Southern Oregon

The big picture needs an overhaul

To the Editor:

I have enjoyed your publication since I moved to Portland two years ago. After reading your editorial titled "Wed alert" [*Just Out*, Feb. 21, 1997], I felt more light could be shed on this

A New Dental Research Study at Russell Street Clinic

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