

# letters

## Open really wide

To the Editor:

I read with interest your guest editorial by Beth Hamon ["Merely human," *Just Out*, May 16, 1997]. Hamon is an old acquaintance of mine, so her views come as no surprise. However, I feel compelled to reply to her self-centered view of the feature article on Ellen DeGeneres ["Out with Ellen," April 18, 1997]. It saddens me that Hamon does not see the significance of the coming out of both Ellen Morgan and Ellen DeGeneres. Does Hamon not realize that, with each person who comes out, especially those in the public eye, we are all more able to take our place in, as Hamon calls it, "the whole wide world"?

Ellen's coming out brings an out and proud lesbian into the living room of every American home... without the demeaning stereotypes and the radical right's ultra-conservative, bigoted perspective. Ellen DeGeneres' courage to come out helps us all, and moves our community (yes, we are a real community) one step closer to absolute equality and "living a human and humane existence."

I applaud DeGeneres, ABC, Touchstone, the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination for their courage and leadership. I encourage Hamon to open up and widen her gaze to include all of us—gay, lesbian, bi, trans and straight—as we step out together to take our places in the whole wide world.

Amy Gerver  
Portland

## Not invisible

To the Editor:

There are some issues and some stories which cross the boundary of narrowly defined communities of interest. They speak to human conditions and to concerns which many people might understand, by shared experience or by empathy. Sharon Boyd's story is of this kind.

Whatever the past might be for those of us in the "queer" communities, we have hope that we and our families may live—through our honesty, compassion and courage—in a brighter today, and help forge a tomorrow in which we can hope for respect and safety.

There are no "typical" humans—our differences and our individualities are our strength and our challenge. There are no "typical" queers or transsexuals, either. We have learned from painful experience that "typical" is the last stop before "stereotypical," and that as long as we can be dismissed as stereotypes, we are more easily marginalized and dehumanized.

I read with anguish of Sharon Boyd, her fears and struggles ["A father's rights," *Just Out*, May 16, 1997]. As a "trans-parent" myself, I know all too well the legal obstacles which have kept us both in terror. I know as a parent, and as one whose love of others in my family and my community gives me hope and joy, that we must struggle still to find a place safe from the hatred and fear that lives in the twisted minds of some other people.

Lori Buckwalter

Cosigned by 14 members of the Love Makes a Family Parents Group.

## We need real commitment

To the Editor:

I see little cause for optimism in Bill Clinton's commitment to developing an AIDS vaccine within 10 years ["Promises, promises," *Just Out*, June 6, 1997]. I suspect that his speech was yet more empty words from a slick politician.

If Clinton was committing the nation to research of all viruses including the various AIDS viruses, if he was committing massive financial resources to such a program, and if he was committing additional funds and research to alterna-

tives to a vaccine—and even to some of the wildly imaginative theories and/or solutions in case the vaccine program fell short—then I might be mildly optimistic. And if Congress was equally committed to all of the above, I might even be hopeful.

As a 48-year-old gay man, I know that practicing the safest possible sex 100 percent of the time can be a bother, and it certainly can diminish the romance of a moment. But tempering pleasure to preserve life and health is worth the bother and a certain loss of romance. I fear that Clinton's commitment—an unsupported commitment—may lead some positive thinkers (otherwise known as self-deluders) into unrestricted and unprotected pleasure in the confident belief that AIDS will be cured before the disease can threaten their existence.

In my view, Clinton's commitment is nothing but empty words designed to raise false hopes and to curry political popularity. We need real commitment, backed by sufficient funding and composed of the brightest researchers and the most sophisticated equipment that funding can buy.

Paul Crumrine  
Portland

## Wrong, wrong, wrong

To the Editor:

Regarding Beren deMotier's column ["The numbers game," *Just Out*, June 20, 1997] about the problematic teen suicide statistics: How can I put this? How about, No, no, no. Wrong, wrong, wrong. "And if it takes an exaggerated statistic to get some attention, well, whatever works." No. Wrong.

I, for one, do not want anyone lying for me. We all know being gay ain't always easy for kids, teens, grownups, whoever. But when will we get off this victim campaign and start dealing with reality? False statistics are lies, and lies won't move us forward. To suggest that knowingly permitting the unchosen spokesmodels of the gay community to press lies into service to further our acceptance by society at large is utter bullshit. It will not move us forward.

"Whatever works"? Don't you get it? Whatever doesn't work. Every time we permit these sorts of statistics to represent us we risk a very real loss of credibility in the entire community. And by our accepting these falsehoods and perpetuating them, we are perceived as duplicitous, and rightly so. Maybe if we got over this "whatever works" mindset we could do real work toward getting the acceptance we need to safeguard our rights and lives.

I was glad to see the stats get shot down in the *Oregonian* by a reasoned and logical argument. I get the same enjoyment out of watching the gay child molester stats get nailed, too. Facts work. Political B.S. doesn't, and can never, ensure a reasoned and healthy discussion by either side.

Honesty. That's the "whatever" that works.

Eric Vetter  
Portland

## Clinic worth supporting

To the Editor:

I read the article on the courageous Dr. Greg Coodley ["Bucking the system," *Just Out*, June 20, 1997]. Both the doctors Coodley and their entire staff are the "litmus test" of all the doctors on the Hill to break away and practice pure medicine.

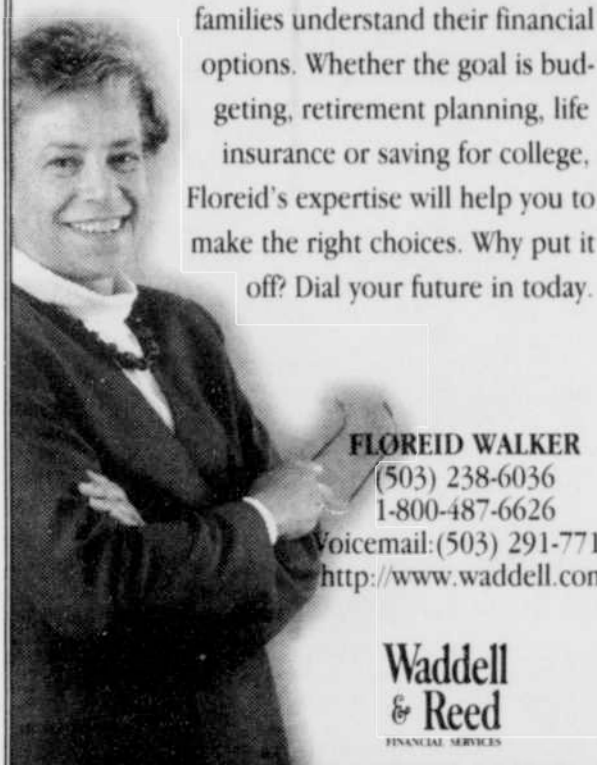
I have been a patient of Dr. Greg Coodley for some time, and besides being young, handsome and brilliant, he has a wonderful personal interaction with his patients. I would strongly urge that anyone in the community hook up with the Fanno Creek Clinic. The entire staff there is putting their careers on the line. It is only logical and fair that we support them as they, the staff and the doctors, continue to do all that they can to enhance our lives.

John Boynton  
Portland

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