

SPEAK out**You make us proud**

TO THE EDITOR:

I am glad that I made a trip to Portland in time to get my own copy of the Jan. 16 issue. On the cover you featured three men in uniform, and I am proud to say that I know two of them personally.

Andy Mangels has been an amazing role model for many. His visibility and energy have done much for pride and for being "out." His appearances at comic book shows prove to everyone who sees him that gay does not equal depraved, debauched or disgusting, as many would have the public think. In sharing his creative and artistic side, and in encouraging others' interests and creativity, he displays an energy that many envy. And to have Don [Hood] there to support and encourage him is a big plus. Thank you, Andy, Don and *Just Out*, for making us proud and giving us such good examples.

KELVIN JOHNSON
McMinnville

A piece of work

TO THE EDITOR:

Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan's letter to the editor [*Just Out*, Jan. 16, 1998] was a piece of work. Her accusations of Renée LaChance's lack of journalistic integrity and the carefully worded suggestion that perhaps LaChance was a bigot reminds me of the letter she wrote to Suzanne Pharr comparing her to a Nazi, and her hateful "no one's right except me" stance in her self-published manifesto.

I understand the single-minded commitment of those who are going about the business of liberation. What I don't understand, and what pisses me off, is O'Hartigan's position of "if you don't agree with me then you suck." An attitude short on wisdom and political effectiveness.

I'll bet many queers first read about trans issues, including GID, in the pages of *Just Out*. The articles are certainly not the be-all or end-all of the complexities concerning trans people, but they are certainly a start. And for this, LaChance should be applauded not accused of being a bigot. O'Hartigan does nothing to further anyone's understanding of these issues, she simply criticizes and harasses.

If you want to further your understanding of gender issues, here are some books that opened my mind (for the record, O'Hartigan thinks all of these authors suck): *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (1997 edition) by Suzanne Pharr, *Transgender Warriors* by Leslie Feinberg, anything and everything by Kate Bornstein, *Read My Lips* by Riki Anne Wilchins, and *Body Alchemy* by Loren Cameron.

JACK
Portland

Don't mess with GID

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with interest the interview of Daphne Scholinski [*Just Out*, "Gender Hostage," Dec. 19, 1997]. The real issue in Scholinski's case is not the use of GID against gay and lesbian youth, the real issue is abuse by mental health care professionals.

Mary Ann Stover's review shows the real problem: "For nearly four years, mental health professionals focused on the superficial..."

The abuse that Scholinski experienced was

not because there is a GID diagnosis in the DSM IV, but rather because there are bad mental health care providers out there. Stover writes, "By neglecting to look beyond appearances, these health care professionals missed...her mother's depression, her father's physical violence...and sexual abuse."

Nevertheless, anyone who comes to the conclusion that because some mental health care providers are negligent GID must be removed as a diagnosis has reached a spurious conclusion.

Transsexuals need the GID diagnosis in order to get the medical help they need and in order, in this state, to be protected from employment discrimination.

For those who want to see the real reason that groups are calling for the removal of GID, it might be helpful to read the most transphobic piece of literature ever published, *The Transsexual Empire* by Janice G. Raymond, which was recently reissued [in 1994]. In that book Raymond calls for nothing less than the total exclusion of all transsexuals from the lesbian community and the cessation of surgical treatment of transsexuals.

JOANNA E. McNAMARA
Lake Oswego

Thanks and blessings

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm not needed for my weekly two-hour shift with Marguerite Brodie, because she's gone.

We were only acquaintances before she decided to let herself die, but we knew each other for years. I always liked her, and admired her work as an activist, but I chose not to get closer because it took so long to understand her and I didn't want to take the time. I didn't want to look at my fear of being disabled, my fear of feeling any more left out than I do. I was afraid I'd say the wrong things to her.

A friend mentioned that Marguerite was choosing to die this summer and would appreciate support. I kept meaning to call. After *Just Out*'s tribute to her, I stopped putting it off and got connected.

So for the last month I got to sit with Marguerite once a week. We talked a little at first, but mostly she slept. I got to see what she put on her walls, what books were on her shelves, what was on her refrigerator, and saw that I would have liked to be friends with this woman. I'm glad I stepped forward at all, but I struggle with my guilt for only coming forward in the drama of crisis and not going the day to day. I missed out. And she probably could have used one more person dealing with their stuff and being a friend and ally.

She was very generous to let me be a part of her support team during such an intimate time. Sitting with her as she slept, I did get to be with what kept me away all these years—my fear, shame and guilt.

I realize it's not over: It's easy to zoom by other chronically sick and differently abled friends. But Marguerite gently taught me that it's worth taking a look at my fears and slowing down.

Thank you for running the tribute. Abundant thanks and blessings to the wonderful community of women who provided round-the-clock support for Marguerite during the past half year. And thank you, Marguerite.

GRACE SILVIA
Portland



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