november 20, 1998 - Just out

LCP hypocrisy

(Editor's note: The following letter was sent to the Lesbian Community Project. A copy was also sent to Just Out and has been edited for clarity.)

TO LCP:

This letter is to tender my immediate resignation to protest LCP's elimination of the affirmative action requirement that three of the 12 board positions "be designated for women of color."

LCP's new bylaw stating the board will "strive to be at least 50 percent community members of color" is unacceptable.

Adopting "strive" in place of "shall" is abandoning an adamant "we will" in favor of a whiny "we'll try."

As to how well LCP complies with its whiny new "commitment" to "strive," LCP's bylaws were also changed to reduce the number of board members from 12 to six, and of the six people elected [at LCP's annual membership meeting on Oct. 16], five were white and only one was a person of color. The last time I checked, 50 percent of six came to three. Exacerbating LCP's hypocrisy is its upcoming "sixweek series for white women" entitled Dismantling Racism: Doing Our Part, Anti-Racism Activism and Liberation.

According to the LCP flyer distributed at the Oct. 16 meeting, among the topics covered in this series-which is "open to all white women"-are "white privilege, internalized white supremacy [and] white culture," etc.

Apart from LCP's dangerous exclusion of women of color from its structured examination of racism, there is the irony that this organization-which has not only just abolished its affirmative action policy and betrayed its new "commitment" to racial diversity-presumes to instruct the rest of us on our shortcomings.

When I first joined LCP back in 1994, our executive director and six of our 12 board members were women of color. The LCP board's

decision to shape the world to reflect its newly adopted definition of "diversity," which includes men and "men-identified" females, seems guaranteed to succeed, given that we already live in a society biased in favor of whites, men and heterosexuality.

And since LCP is obviously unwilling to even comply with its watered-down bylaws, I have a suggestion-change the name of the organization. For some reason, "Aryan Male Community Project" immediately springs to mind.

MARGARET DEIRDRE O'HARTIGAN Portland

LCP answers the charge

TO THE EDITOR:

LCP's new board is committed to being a multiracial, multigenerational, cross-class, grassroots, lesbian organization that plays a central role in multi-issue organizing and community building.

It has been 10 years since the previous bylaws were approved. The new board proposed a few revisions to reflect the times. Two of the requested revisions in the pre-existing bylaws were to change the requirement of having a minimum of 12 to 15 board members to a minimum of six. The other change was to strive for 50 percent of the board being women of color instead of 25 percent being women of color. The new bylaws were approved on Oct. 16.

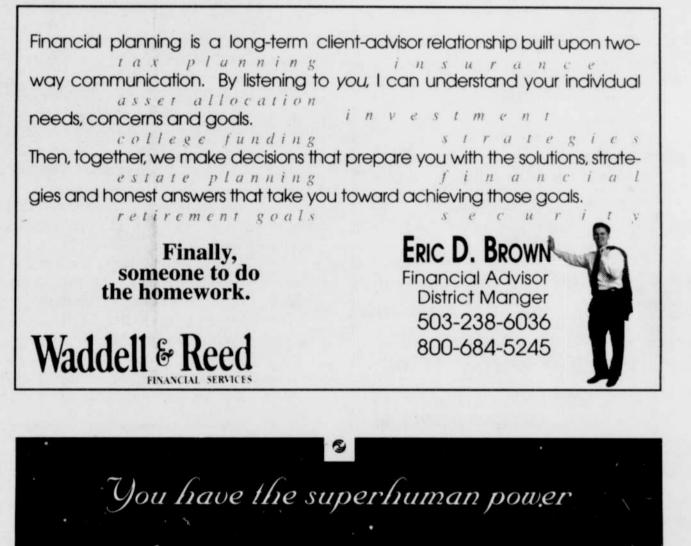
LCP has in no way "abolished its affirmative action policy" nor is it instructing anyone on their shortcomings.

The Lesbian Community Project is dedicated to building a world in which all human beings experience full justice, equity, democracy and liberation in all spheres of life.

NANCY CLARK LCP BOARD MEMBER Portland

Recently Just Out sought out readers at just asking random to ask them how they were personally impacted by the death of Matthew Shepard.





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convert it to steam



GEOFFREY BATEMAN Portland HIV prevention coordinator, Cascade AIDS Project

"It jolted me back into the awareness that gay and lesbian people live in a

potentially dangerous world."

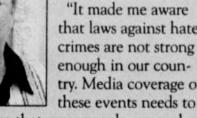


GUS WOLTER Portland Licensed massage therapist "It reminded me that I'm really lucky

to live in an open

community."





TERRI POPEJOY Portland Realtor, Equity Group "It made me aware

that laws against hate crimes are not strong enough in our country. Media coverage of

be aggressive so that more people are made aware."

> BOB TERRY Portland Licensed massage therapist

"It reminded me how I spent a lot of my life escaping from small town prejudice to a city with a semblance of civility and tolerance."

Got a question that keeps you up at night? We'll get the answers you need! Contact Just Out via fax at (503) 236-1257; via e-mail at justout@justout.com; or via the USPS at P.O. Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400.

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