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## Speak Out

### School board candidate clarifies position

TO THE EDITOR:

I have heard that statements are being made questioning my support of gay, lesbian and bisexual people because of my concern about the impact of the military ban on students in Portland's schools.

I want to clarify my position: The military ban is a highly visible and easily understood symbol of discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

I also know firsthand the intrusiveness of the military recruiters in the schools and know this type of recruiting must stop and am willing to work on this problem. I believe many students do need information about the realistic career options available through the military. How we allow this information to be provided has yet to be worked out. I will keep an open mind and will schedule meetings with people to discuss this issue.

I am absolutely opposed to discrimination and have a long track record in my work in Portland Public Schools to prove this.

In 1992, I established with Superintendent Matthew Prophet a committee to examine what actions were needed to ensure gay, lesbian and bisexual students were not being harassed and were treated with respect. I initiated the policies adopted by the board to clearly state the rejection of discrimination of gay, lesbian and bisexual people and reaffirm our commitment to educate all students and promote respect for all. I also organized the committee to hold workshops for staff to promote awareness of gay/lesbian issues and understanding of the needs of students plus actions staff would take to prevent harassment. Because of these actions gay, lesbian and bisexual students indicate they feel less harassment and more acceptance in school.

CAROLYN SHELDON  
Candidate for Portland School Board

### Keeping Tanner intact will take your help

TO THE EDITOR:

The Portland dinner of the Human Rights Campaign on Feb. 13 provided an extraordinary opportunity to witness just how far the cause of equal rights for lesbians and gays has come in the last 20 years. One could not help but be impressed by the number of extraordinarily capable people from all walks of life working so hard toward such important goals. And to see the incredible turnout of politicians for a dinner which would likely have drawn no politicians just 20 years ago, one can only marvel at the progress that has been made in such a historically-short period of time.

The education of the public and public officials on the realities of gay and lesbian life paved the way for the Oregon Court of Appeals' recent decision in *Tanner vs. OHSU*. For the unknown is easy to fear, but familiarity dissipates fear. HRC, Basic Rights Oregon and Right to Pride have been leaders in this educational fight in Oregon; and every person who has come out of the closet has advanced this important lesson by educating family, friends, co-workers and neighbors that they truly have nothing to fear.

Unfortunately, the *Tanner* fight is not over. The religious right has introduced at least three referrals in Oregon's House of Representatives to amend our state constitution and override *Tanner*. Given the current makeup of the Oregon Legislature, silence is not an option.

CARL G. KISS  
Attorney for the *Tanner* plaintiffs  
Portland

### Leery about legislative antics

TO THE EDITOR:

Your article on the anti-gay, anti-abortion and anti-Death with Dignity bills was well-written and informative ["Legislative Lip Service," *Just Out*, Feb. 5]. Thank you for alerting the community to the fact we once again must be prepared to fight the narrow-minded agenda of the extremist right. It is sad, discouraging and frustrating that the likes of Kevin Mannix, Roger Beyer, Bill Witt, Lynn Snodgrass, Marilyn Shannon and Eileen Qutub are able to muster enough clout that requires us to consider their hate-laden ideas as serious threats to our basic freedoms.

I have been trying for decades to understand why they fear us so much, but alas, I am unable to arrive at an answer. Instead, I consistently renew my conviction that, as long as there is a breath in my body, I will continue to fight their attempts to deny us our basic freedoms while at the same time make certain their rights are preserved. It is a struggle that will continue for decades, but one we must not give up on, lest all citizens lose their rights.

Thank you for being the public voice for our community.

GEORGE EIGHMEY  
Portland

### Play it again

TO THE EDITOR:

Holly Pruet's "A Place of Our Own?" story in *Just Out's* Feb. 5 issue is an excellent plea for what is needed next in the gay and lesbian community. The sad part is that there once was such a community center with a full program.

In the early 1970s, members of the Second Foundation formed a board for a community center. Participants included Neil Hutchins, Lanny Swerdlow, David Frederickson, LeRoy Kinsrud, George Oberg and others. The center rented the upstairs of a two-story building on the south side of Alder Street, between Southwest Second and Third avenues. It was above a clock shop, a dry cleaner, a pawn shop and The Other Inn, a popular gay bar. They thought \$375 a month was an astronomical price to pay for 14,000 square feet!

The center opened in 1973 with dances on Friday and Saturday nights; music was by a disc jockey. The pool tables, davenport and other comfortable furniture made for a homey atmosphere. There were Friday night shows by Rosie Waters, Lady Elaine Peacock, and occasionally Vanessa. Neil Hutchins and Lanny Swerdlow had an office there in which they founded and edited the gay newspaper *The Fountain*.

Second Foundation members also started a gay hot line, officially named the Counseling Center for Sexual Minorities, which lasted for 15 years.

NESTOR PERALA  
Portland

### Portland community center not needed

TO THE EDITOR:

How do I feel about a queer community center? ["A Place of Our Own?" *Just Out*, Feb. 5]. For Portland, I think it would be a bad idea. But understand that in saying that, I pay Portland a high compliment.

Allow me to explain: I grew up in San Antonio, Texas. All my friends were gay boys in high school, my best friend was a lesbian, though she didn't come out till her senior year. It was absolutely not safe for them to be out to anyone