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Speak Out

Reader says Abrams isn't her ally

TO THE EDITOR:

I appreciated your April 2 feature article "Straight Allies" and Marty Davis' sidebar on "Partners Everywhere."

One of the featured straight allies, Marc Abrams, was quoted as saying that his stand on military recruiting contributed to [the narrowness of his] re-election to the Portland School Board. There are more reasons than that for Abrams to lose votes.

Last spring, at Abrams' request, the Portland Public Schools Board of Education voted to require payment for use of space from existing School Age Care programs in the district. This was part of Abrams' plan to bring care into every school. So convinced was he of his own plan he gave no thought to the devastating effect building use fees would have on low-budget, single-site programs—especially those in impoverished neighborhoods. He didn't alter his plan even after a number of school age care professionals informed him of that fact.

I was one of the professionals who first tried to educate him and later actively protested his plan. I witnessed his arrogance and bulldozer tactics firsthand when he shouted me down with curses at a meeting with representatives of several school age care programs. I had been given the floor and was respectfully voicing my concerns. His reaction was extremely unprofessional. This behavior was not an isolated incident, because I witnessed similar treatment of another woman at the same meeting.

I cannot trust Abrams to be my ally when I have seen him behave in such an unprofessional manner, nor would I vote him into any office. He might get more votes if he took an anger management class.

ILA SUZANNE GRAY
Portland

Promoting harmony is music to her ears

TO THE EDITOR:

It was with some interest that I read the guest editorial by Bob Mensel ["Breaking Barriers," *Just Out*, March 19]. I had already planned to attend the concert with a friend, and reading the editorial made me more determined than ever to attend. Promoting harmony among the various segments of our community is something that I've been interested in for some time, and I wanted to support the chorus in that goal as well.

I was a member of the Portland Lesbian Choir for seven years. In that time, we sang with

the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Bridges Vocal Ensemble and other individuals and groups. We touched the lives of many people in other areas of the state during our No on 9 tour. We participated in the GALA festivals in Denver and Tampa, and were part of the Pacific Northwest Women's Choral Tour. All these things took a lot of hard work and dedication from many people of diverse backgrounds coming together. We learned a lot through the process.

Bob Mensel spoke from the stage, reiterating many of the points he made in the editorial. Some regular supporters were put off by the fact that PGMC would include women in their concert. I thought it was wonderful. If part of the mission was to promote harmony, it worked for me. The concert also got a great review by the *Oregonian* critic. I thought it was one of the best concerts I have attended in recent memory.

The makeup of the audience was a study in diversity by itself. I saw many old friends from the Portland Lesbian Choir in attendance. Residents and volunteers from Our House of Portland were there. I was happy to greet my favorite PFLAG mom and dad, as well as the Empress of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court. The composers of three commissioned works were in the audience, as well as former Gov. Barbara Roberts. Several gay leathermen were in attendance, as well as a lesbian couple who had driven from Vancouver, British Columbia, for an evening.

I would like to thank Bob and the guys of PGMC for putting this event together. I would hope to see more events that truly build community here in Portland.

DEB PRZEPASNAK
Portland

Where the girls aren't

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in response to Will O'Bryan's column ["Where's the Party?" *Just Out*, March 5].

From my understanding, historically Portland is not renowned as a woman-friendly town. The Rose Festival, one of the city's primary celebrations, is a time in which the number of reported rapes drastically increases. Off-shore military men dock here during the event looking for fun times and paid sex.

Portland also has more sex shops and strip clubs per capita than any other city in this country. This sort of "women as objects" atmosphere is not an ideal environment for women bonding in general, let alone lesbian solidarity.

Portland has also grown really fast in a really short amount of time. There are various clusters of lesbians who seem to be in their element here, but what about the large number of

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