

Speak Out

to me (and sometimes even that was shaky), and I couldn't think of anything.

My point? To those who long for an overarching "gay community," I have one observation: It ain't there. It never has been, it never will be. Just as it is patently absurd to expect one spokesman for all of "Black America," for instance, it is just as ridiculous to expect all of us to find common ground on any kind of political and/or social agenda. We will continue to disagree—and I, for one, think that's healthy. The day we all roll over and sublimately ourselves to a mashed-together "gay community agenda" is the day we lose our identities.

ROBERT HANSEN
Portland

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is in response to Marty Davis' June 4 editorial.

I believe the chill and the rain had more influence than your editorial in people deciding to don or doff their clothes at pride. Once again, as always, nature determines our behavior—something we've been telling people for a long time, and the core reason for pride and *Just Out* to exist.

There are plenty of groups and individuals at pride that do not represent *me* but do represent *us*. Diversity will never represent me, only *us*. Editorials that attempt to shame people into changing their nature are usually the works of a third group: *them*.

There are already groups and individuals that discourage participation in pride, and they are much better organized and funded than *Just Out*. I suggest you leave that job to the professionals and concentrate on where your strengths lie: encouraging participation at the community (not corporate) level; fostering dialogue (not shame) among diverse groups; and informing me, us and them of our options for groups and individuals to build a better world with.

TREVOR BLAKE
Portland

Posing a challenge

TO THE EDITOR:

After searching in vain for a dance club that plays something other than what is currently dubbed as "dance music," my boyfriend and I are almost ready to give up. We have one bar left to try, but we do not carry high hopes.

And let's talk about the smoke. I realize people have every right to smoke, but it gets awfully intense for those of us who don't. I expect many of you are thinking: "If they don't like it, stay away." Unfortunately, most of the time that is exactly what we do, as well as hundreds of oth-

ers who feel the same way. None of my friends patronize the bars for these very reasons.

I would like to propose an idea for all the bar owners out there. What if they had the courage to try one night a month where they played something other than the "thump thump thump"? How about some good old rock 'n' roll mixed with a little disco? What's wrong with a slow dance occasionally? I'd like to touch my boyfriend once in a while on the dance floor. And please make it smoke-free.

And don't give us a Tuesday night or Sunday afternoon and say "I told you so" when no one shows up. I'm talking about a Friday or Saturday night. I realize it would take money and effort to promote, but if done correctly, I'm sure it could be successful. So what do you say? Are we asking too much? Any of you bar owners out there with enough creativity and guts to give it a try?

GARY PERRY
Portland

It's up to us

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm writing in response to Ed Segel's letter criticizing my attempt to broaden "gay pride" to include world peace issues.

Contrary to what Segel writes, making war takes neither moral nor intellectual courage. What takes courage is to open up our eyes and minds to see what's happening beyond our community. What takes courage is to connect the gay and lesbian struggle to peace and justice issues worldwide. Only this will prevent the next war from happening.

I do not support any form of ethnic cleansing: The deaths of Kosovars are all our responsibility, as are the deaths of Serbians, such as those who are now dying from the toxic aftermath of NATO bombings of chemical factories in Panveco, Yugoslavia. Sadly, people equate Serbia with World War II Germany, unaware of the tireless work of peace groups and anti-Milosevic demonstrations long before the Kosovo war.

And what of other "ethnic cleansing"? Thousands of Iraqi children die of malnutrition each month thanks to our war against Iraq; hundreds of thousands of refugees still flee the military dictatorship in Burma; etc. Then there's the forgotten survivors. I've talked to many in Panama after the U.S. invasion, in Nicaragua, in Guatemala, in Cambodia, in Burma—people caught in misbegotten wars with pain and memories that thrive past the headlines.

War can be prevented, but it's up to us to start working to prevent future wars. Becoming aware is the first step.

CAROLE SCHOLL
Portland

Ancient Egyptian Teachings

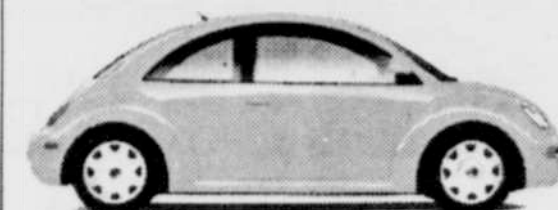


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