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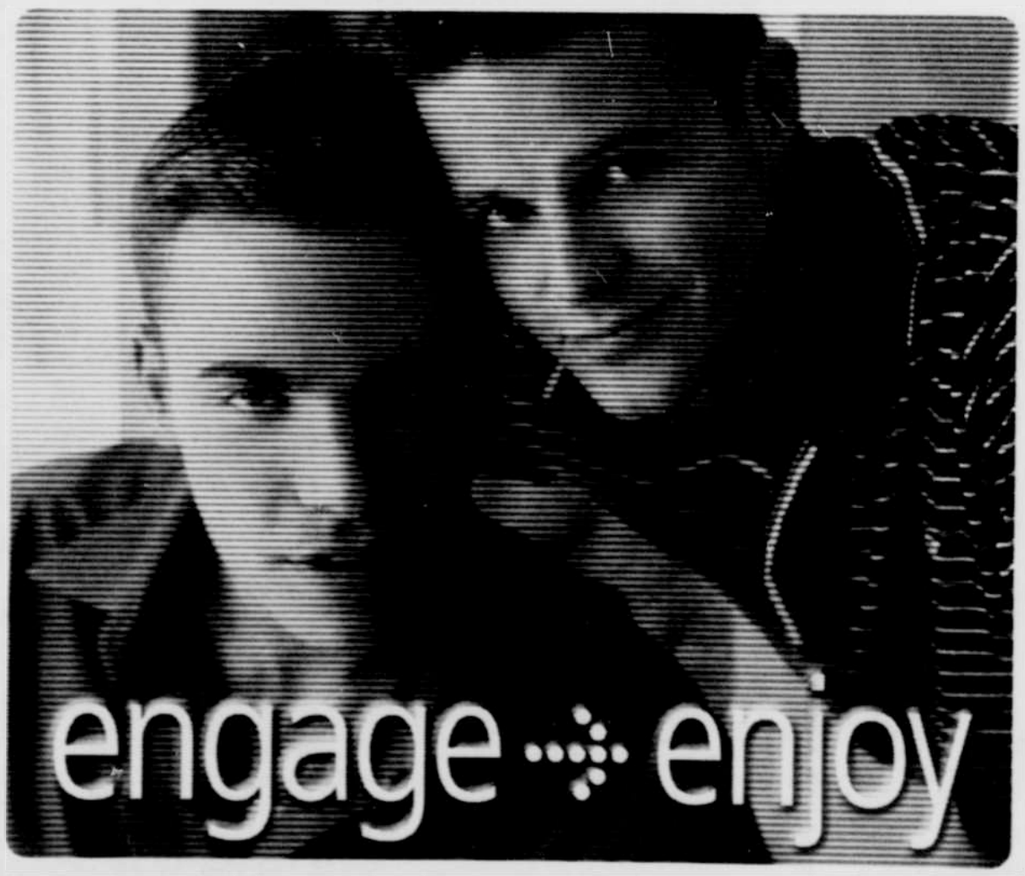

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speak out

Can we talk?

AN OPEN LETTER TO SUTREE IRVING AND OTHER CONCERNED WOMEN:

Sutree Irving's letter asserting that the "trans community has created an 'us vs. them atmosphere' " [Speak Out, Dec. 17] is not only incorrect but threatens to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Stereotyping all transsexuals as sharing a common view of recent events at Lesbian Community Project and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival—and by claiming that the trans community has "chosen to both attack and overtake our lesbian community in order to get their needs met"—ignores the opinions and actions of those who have publicly and repeatedly objected to such attacks.

More than four years ago, Transgender Nation's Christine Tayleur articulated the sentiments of many, many transsexuals when she wrote: "Will gaining access to Michigan help one single transsexual get surgery or hormones? Has the Michigan struggle so far helped anyone win a lawsuit to gain employment rights? How, may I ask, has the protest at Michigan helped one transgendered person (trans if you prefer) keep from being homeless, gain access to a shelter, [helped] one single transgendered woman to survive domestic violence?"

I'd like to suggest that preconceptions and prejudices be set aside long enough for us to actually dialogue outside the self-serving constraints imposed by LCP's current leadership. For our part, we could show how the majority of male-to-female transsexuals have been silenced and oppressed by the very same people invading the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival; we could show that the people attacking the festival have a long history of attacking transsexuals' access to health care and mocking transsexuals in the most disparaging and offensive of terms.

Far from being opponents, the women's and trans communities have both been victimized in recent years by a handful of people whose accomplishments consist solely of sowing the seeds of dissension and discord. If we are to stop this victimization we must recognize that it is only the patriarchal status quo which benefits from conflict between us.

Please, please, can we talk?

MARGARET DEIRDRE O'HARTIGAN
Portland

More on LCP

TO THE EDITOR:

I found the recent article written by T.K. Mantese to be for the most part an accurate one ["Aboveboard Meeting," Dec. 17]. However, there are a few points I would like to clarify. Regarding the lesbian health care issue, after I became a board member and during a conversation with Ellen Greenlaw, she indicated to me that the previous staff organizer told her that "it had been decided by the board of LCP that lesbian health care issues were not a priority."

In the meeting, as I was conveying this information, I followed it up by saying, "of course lesbian health care is important to us." There is no board decision that I have ever been made aware of that would indicate anyone on the board conveyed that message to the previous staff organizer. I further stated that I felt it was more likely that the reason it wasn't happening was our overall lack of volunteers to take on a project of that size.

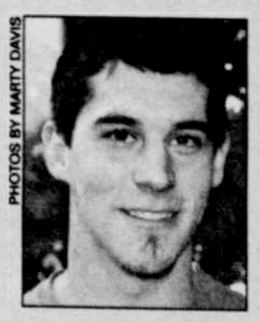
Also, I felt that the comments made by Smokey Satterlee were quoted out of context and did not include the comments that I made assuring her that I did not want her to have to identify as a "nontrans lesbian." That I understood how hard she and many others had to fight to be able to use that word. It's unfortunate, when talking about lesbians, that we have to differentiate.

The reason the words are even around is because whom I believe is a lesbian and whom someone else believes is a lesbian may not be the same folks. If we are having events in the com-

just asking

For this issue, Just Out readers were asked to give their opinions about a topic recently tackled by The Oregonian's arts and entertainment staff: "Whose 15 minutes of fame is long since due to be over?"

PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS



DAVID PALONS
Portland
Bar trash

"I'd like to see a pre-empt of George W. Bush—cut him off before he gets any more time."

DAWN SNIDER
Portland
Machinist

"I'd like to see all the millennium crap be done with, and also all the religious fanatics associated with it."

RICHARD COLOMBO
Portland
Musician

"My first thought is Lon Mabon. I was surprised to hear that he's back at it again."

JOSHUA DEVLIN
Portland
Gay man

"Jesus Christ, mainly because it's been 2000 years, and in my opinion the effect of his life on this planet has caused suffering in many ways. His beliefs and teachings have been turned to poison."

You have questions—Just Asking will get the answers! To submit a query, 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.