



**HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN**

Portland Gala Dinner

February 11, 2000

Honoring
**Women
In Politics**

With Special Guests

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The Honorable Governor Barbara Roberts
The Honorable Seattle City Councilwoman Tina Podlowdowski

Honorary Cochairs

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Speak Out

**Encompassing registry
a good start**

TO THE EDITOR:

I think it is long overdue that all citizens have equal rights, whether they are gay or heterosexual. I think a domestic partnership registry is a stepping stone in the right direction of giving gay committed couples equal rights and full benefits ["Will You Register with Me?" Jan. 21]. I also think the registry should be for all committed couples, heterosexuals as well as gays. I don't believe that the registry should be just for American citizens, as my partner has applied for citizenship (several years ago), but it just hasn't come through yet, even though we know it will with his profession.

My partner and I have been living together almost three and a half years, have bought a house together, and own everything in the house together. We have a joint checking account, joint credit cards and are responsible fully for each other's basic needs, just as any heterosexual couple. We should be afforded the right to marriage, but in the minimum, let's start with a domestic partnership agreement that has some teeth in it in case one of us ends up in the hospital and needs to make decisions that only we can make for each other.

ROGER STEFFANI
Beaverton

Don't define me

TO THE EDITOR:

In her letter to the editor in your Jan. 7 issue, Donna Lockett calls for the Lesbian Community Project's name to "reflect who they are," and I applaud her call for this blunt honesty. I too have been troubled by the semantics in the debate over "trans inclusion."

I have listened to the debates over whether or not I am welcome at certain events or in certain facilities. I have heard discussions as to whether or not my help is desired in a community project or action committee. I have read concerns over whether or not I am a legitimate candidate for a support group or shelter. And most importantly, I've heard people speculate as to the nature of my identity. This fascinates me, because, unless I'm mistaken, not one of these people has ever met me. To me this is not an issue of inclusion, it is one of exclusion. It is as simple as someone who has never met me saying that I am not welcome. So, I agree wholeheartedly that we should call it like it is. Call it prejudice.

In so many ways, the walls are coming down. They are coming down so fast that we are at risk of forgetting why they were put up in the first place. Were they to keep people out or to keep people in? What would happen if everyone wanted into the LCP, or the gay men's chorus, or the NWGA, or PFLAG? What if gays, lesbians, bisexuals, heterosexuals, transgenders, intersexuals, tops, bottoms, cat people, dog people, Democrats and Republicans all wanted in? What on earth would we do? Or could it be, that was the whole point to begin with? To deconstruct the world, clean off the hate, and reassemble it?

In the same issue, Jody Anderson from Bradley-Angle House writes a letter in which she cites a policy that a person needs only to identify as a woman to be eligible for the agency's services. This is nothing short of compassion, yet I wonder if there will come a time when it will only be "a person." And then I think, "Wait a minute, will there be a time when we don't need Bradley-Angle House at all?" Isn't that the real wall?

But until such a time, and perhaps even long after, we will always have differences that

require us to organize and categorize ourselves and others. So, as you debate where I belong, please accept these simple guidelines based on my response to Lockett's letter:

I refuse to "represent" anything for you. I do not expect you to make me feel like I belong—either I belong or I don't. If you decide I am unwelcome, that is fine. If you do it based on assumptions about me, what is in my panties and what that means, without knowing me, that is your right and I support it. The last thing I want is to be in the woods with a group of women who hate me, or to feel as if I have to meet some special criteria. I spent my childhood alone in the woods, and I can do it again.

But I do ask that you stand by that decision. Do not pretend you are facing a difficult dilemma of whether or not to "redefine yourself"—you are really trying to define me. Just say, "You are not one of us. I don't want you or your type around." Say it loud. Say it with pride. And finally, don't think you are deciding who I am. You are deciding who you are.

RACHAEL PARKER
Forest Grove

Appreciate the coverage

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for the article "Murder Mystery" in your Jan. 7 edition. I was a friend of Todd Asay in high school and was very saddened to hear of his death. I'm so very sorry for the loss of this charming, talented person.

Please continue your coverage of this case. I would very much like to see some measure of justice brought against the killer. Here in Eugene, unfortunately, there has been essentially no coverage, in spite of the fact that Todd grew up here. Thank you again for your article, as well as the notice of the memorial service.

MARIA BLUM
Eugene

**Credit where credit
is due**

TO THE EDITOR:

I found your article "Dollars & Sense" in the Jan. 21 issue very informative. I believe it is important when same-sex couples purchase a home together that they have a contract drawn up by an attorney. Often one partner can make a larger down payment and therefore has a greater equity share in the home. Should the relationship end, a written contract will establish the percentage of ownership without expensive litigation.

I was disappointed that your article didn't mention the location or artist who created the "stacked coins" sculpture used as the illustration for the story. The sculpture, sited on the plaza fronting Nordstrom (Lloyd Center), is by Larry Kirkland, whose public commissions can be found in public spaces nationally and internationally. His most impressive works in Portland are the interior staircase and lobby chandelier in the downtown public library, and a large exterior sculpture on the campus of Oregon Health Sciences University.

MIKE E. WALSH
Eugene

**Dissin' Dr. Laura
and her big-time backer**

TO THE EDITOR:

As a contributing, taxpaying member of this society, I highly object to Paramount's climbing into bed with Dr. Laura Schlessinger and granting her a syndicated talk show come fall.