

From one kind of Christian to another

AN OPEN LETTER TO THOSE ANTI-GAY PROTESTERS ["THEY'RE BAA-ACK," FEB. 18] WHO APPEARED AT THE PORTLAND PFLAG MEETING AT THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON FEB. 8:

Thank you for blessing me and all who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered. Thank you for blessing my mom and all the parents, friends and families of sexual minorities. We may differ in our religious views. Some of us don't believe in Jesus Christ as savior, or even prophet. Some of us don't believe in God. Some of us worship the Earth Goddess, and some of us worship no deity at all.

Yet by your own faith and convictions—expressed in the very words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount—you have blessed each and every one of us. I am a Christian, though I rarely express it. Rather than use a bullhorn to voice my beliefs, I prefer to follow the teaching of St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." I try to love my enemies (Mt. 5:43-48), treat everyone in the spirit of Christ (Mt. 25:34-46), forgive and reconcile with everyone around me (Lk. 7:44-50), carry the burdens I have been granted (Lk. 9:23-27; Mt. 11:28-30), and follow the living Word of God (Mic. 6:8; Lk. 8:11-18; Mt. 22:34-40). I try not to judge (Mt. 7:1-5; Rom. 2:1-11), I try to live with compassion and self-sacrifice (Mt. 10:5-15), and I try not to sin (Mt. 15:1-20).

But I am human and weak. I try to live as a Christian, but I often fail (Rom. 7:14-15). In fact, I know pagans and atheists who are better Christians than I.

I am more comfortable expressing my sexual orientation in my church than I am expressing my religious beliefs to my gay and lesbian friends. In our LGBT community, religion is rarely even mentioned, much less discussed.

When the topic does come up, it is usually treated as a superficial philosophy, rather than a personal set of convictions. I am bothered by our

distrust of (if not disgust for) religion. But then I meet people like you and I understand.

I see you, a group of self-proclaimed Christians, reviling others, persecuting others and shouting lies about others, all in the name of Jesus. I hear you shouting at my friends, at my own mother, and I understand why we in the LGBT community fear religion. And maybe my community is right to fear religion.

Perhaps you are right, and I am wrong. Perhaps God commands us to live with spite, vindictiveness, derision, fear, mistrust, alienation and condemnation. Perhaps I really am condemned to Hell.

But if I end up in Hell, at least I will go there out of love and compassion, rather than revulsion and persecution.

JOEL CORCORAN
Portland

Honoring pride in all its diversity

TO THE EDITOR:

In reference to the Feb. 4 article titled "Party Girl" regarding Pride 2000, the board of Pride Northwest would like to clear up any misunderstandings that might have occurred.

We value and honor the contributions of past board members and volunteers. The current board has built upon their successes, and it is their work that allows pride to continue to grow and evolve. No disrespect was intended toward anyone who has been involved in the creation of past pride celebrations.

We also want to acknowledge the many contributions of Janna MacAuslan, who continues to serve on the Entertainment Committee as vice chair and mentor, as well as logistics coordinator. Janna's involvement is an important factor in the evolution of that committee, and we hold her work in the highest regard, both past and present.

Any ideas that were mentioned in the article are still in development. If you have any con-

cerns, please feel free to contact us. Community input is very important to us, as it is our goal to produce an event that showcases the diversity of our community.

As was mentioned in the article, putting on pride is like throwing a party for 50,000 of our closest friends. That party includes music, dancing, inspiring speakers, grass-roots activism, political debates, celebration, education, and the plain and simple glory of seeing Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park fill up with thousands of queer folks.

Pride means something different to everyone. The board of Pride Northwest tries to balance the needs of the different aspects of our community by providing a broad range of events and speakers. The more input we get from the community, the better able we are to do this.

I ask that we all try to remember that although some of the events might bother you or even offend you, there are other people present who came to pride just to see those events. Our community is very diverse, and it is precisely that diversity that makes us strong and vibrant.

See you in June!

JES NELSON
Pride Northwest Board of Directors
Portland

Shame on you!

TO THE EDITOR:

The "Party Girl" article in the Feb. 4 issue is not only rude and insulting but also one-sided. In my opinion it is a publicity article for Michael Kennedy, a.k.a. Misha Rockafeller, as an entertainer. If she also intends to be in a leadership position in our community, she should do her homework. Pride is far more than a party—it commemorates a history long fought for and earned after much humiliation, violence and discrimination. Janna MacAuslan, Kristan Aspen, Cindy Dahl and all the other members of past pride boards put their hearts, souls, time, energy and love into pride and did a fabulous job.

These are things you failed to mention; honoring them in some small way for their untiring years of hard and successful work. I know you can do better.

MARJ GREENHUT
Gaston, Ore.

notables

During a Feb. 17 board meeting, Jes Nelson was elected chair of Pride Northwest Inc., replacing Christopher Webster, who resigned from the board Feb. 12.

Nelson previously served as vice chair. That position has been filled by Carmella Ettinger, who was elected to the post at the same meeting.



Nelson (left) and Ettinger



Portland attorneys Susan Eggum and Hala Gores are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Jacob Michael, on Dec. 22, 1999

just asking

For this issue, Just Out readers were asked the following: "What kind of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans social activities would you like to see more available or more frequent?"



SARAH SMITH
Eastmoreland
Student
"I would like to get together with my GLBT friends and play bingo."



CHAZ RIFFLE
Tualatin
Web genius
"Why do we need exclusively gay activities? Why can't we just get together with whomever we want? Screw labels, I just want to hang out and do stuff."



GARY BOYER
Portland
Senior loan officer,
Majestic Mortgage
"Dances—my partner and I love to dance."



KAREN SORENSEN
Portland
Digital Real Estate Services
"I'd like to be able to go out dancing in a nonsmoking bar."

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.

ATTENTION!
military service members and their families...

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- Harassed or abused?
- Know someone who is absent w/o leave?

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Drive with Pride

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What Makes A Gay Soul Unique? 8-week educational group for gay men on a spiritual journey. Wednesday evenings in April and May.

Soul Salon: Learn the basics of creating your own spiritual community by joining this 8-week class. Open to all. Thursday evenings in April and May.

GLBT Community-Building Programs: One Friday night in March - June.

Pre-registration required for all programs. Individual Spiritual Direction sessions by appointment. For information call:

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