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Speak Out

**Gimme a carrot,
not a stick**

TO THE EDITOR:

We respectfully submit to you: Beating up on the readers is counterproductive ["A Vexing Lack of Volunteers," March 3].

In our experience, it is rare for people to volunteer for anything when the recruiting method is verbally abusive, e.g., "Are people just plain lazy...?" (Read: What's wrong with you all, why aren't you volunteering?)

Nothing is wrong with us all. May we suggest the carrot? Please put away the stick.

People generally volunteer because they want to do something and feel they have something affirmative to contribute, not because they have been browbeaten into "working for the cause."

We suggest looking inward for the source of the problem. Beating up the readers is unlikely to bring more volunteers. A more affirmative point of view might help to turn this situation around.

STEPHEN CALLIHAN
CLIFF SWAN
Portland

I tried!

TO THE EDITOR:

I have never written in response to an article, however, I feel compelled to reply to the commentary in the March 3 issue regarding the lack of volunteer support.

I know people are needed, that's why I called the Pride Northwest folks to volunteer. Everyone I spoke with was very nice, glad I called, and so on.

The problem I have is, how can we help if we aren't given anything to do? I was told that "soon" a volunteer group would be forming and that I would receive some info in the mail. I also am supposed to expect info on sponsorship and vendors. Now, I knew it would be a while because of the reorganizing within the group, but when I saw the article I had to respond. I called to volunteer almost a month ago and have received nothing. Once again, I have to ask: How do we volunteer if we aren't given anything to volunteer for?

DEBRA PORTA
Portland

...me too

TO THE EDITOR:

For three years I've signed Pride Northwest volunteer lists and for three years I've been ignored by Pride!

To date nobody has taken me up on my offer—but I've seen plenty of appeals for volunteers.

I recently called Pride and said basically the same thing. They have just about passed my tolerance point of waiting while they consider my offer to volunteer.

Your commentary, "A Vexing Lack of Volunteers," is quite to the point, and I know there is a rightful need of help. I'm just plenty pissed that Pride hasn't responded to my repeated offers.

RICH KIBBONS
Portland

When rights collide

TO THE EDITOR:

It's great that we live in a country where laws no longer restrict self-expression. But no rights are absolute. Someone's right to offend the voting majority through bad drag, nudity, drunken-

ness and sexual displays in the highly public setting of the pride parade collides with someone else's right to enjoy the many privileges currently extended only to straight citizens. That's because there are potential consequences of public behavior that translate to the ballot box—and far beyond the ballot, to include the acts of violence directed at sexual minorities.

American life circa 2000 isn't a dress rehearsal for anyone's latest starring vehicle. The grim reality finds us as a very small number of good people scattered thinly throughout a deeply intolerant population, and it is under these circumstances that we are desperately trying to obtain the most elementary of human rights.

The inarguable fact is that homophobia exists, and certain behaviors take their toll. Every shake of bare unmentionable and every dollop of excess mascara in a public venue has the chance of weakening our supporters and inflaming our adversaries. In a practical sense, this can set the rest of us back in our quest to get child custody, health insurance, medical visitation, inheritance and the 1,000-plus other privileges that straights are fighting us tooth and claw over. Some may value public nudity, public sexual displays, and public fright-make-up far more than these things, but they have no right to queer it for others with different values. And moreover, some think that the behavior I'm describing is a contradiction to the concept of real pride, anyway.

Anyone who shares my concern over this so-called "pride" and its underappreciated contributions to prejudice can boycott the pride parade. It's time to send a message to pride managers and the self-serving revelers that a reasonable standard for behavior that reflects genuine pride in ourselves and our accomplishments must be adopted.

MITCH GOULD
Forest Grove

**He's a 'sex machine
to both genders'**

TO THE EDITOR:

My heart skipped a beat when I saw Rupert Everett, whom I have long admired, on your cover ["The Rupert Report," March 3]. My next thought was, "I bet *Just Out* won't even mention the fact that he is bisexual," and, unfortunately, I was correct.

Believe me, I can understand why gay men would want to hog him all to themselves. But the fact is he has come out as bisexual, so you just have to learn to share!

If Mr. Cuttone had really done his research he would have read the charming quote from Everett: "I am just a sex machine to both genders. It's all very exhausting, I have to get a lot of sleep."

Perhaps the character Everett plays in the movie is monosexual, but he is not. The numerous references to him as "gay" could have been replaced with "straight" and been just as (in)accurate!

I am hoping for, and working toward, a future when politics no longer demand that respectful, consensual sexual proclivities require labeling. Until then, I ask that *Just Out* respect, include—hell, even give lavish preferential treatment—to those of us who are bisexuals. We are not going to ask nicely for much longer.

TAMARA SWAN
Portland

Christopher D. Cuttone responds:
I consider myself bisexual as well, and I feel your pain.

While I don't recall reading the quote you men-