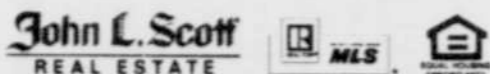


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**Speak Out**

mother and black stepdad in a black community in Los Angeles. I grew up poor, struggled to attain working-class status, and now am raising two daughters, one I would identify as working-class and the other as middle-class. I live in a middle-class area of Oregon City. My neighbors and parents of my daughters' friends are middle-class, and without exception white. I don't fit in here. Before I came out, I tried to fit in with the other parents, but I never did. Now I wonder why I ever wanted to. My lover is white upper-middle-class, and so are her children. We both have so much baggage about money, race and class.

In the queer community, I have been surprised to find the same race and class issues. It hurts at a deeper level to be dis'd (disrespected, disregarded) in this community. It feels like coming home to rejection. What I struggle with is how to articulate and help others understand without blaming or shaming them. I believe the burden is on both of us to educate ourselves.

I have met you and I do know your good intentions. I've heard you casually rebuke another dyke about the class issue of owning a boat. I think she was commenting about being the only dyke she knew with a boat, or something. It is so powerful to hear you and others call people on their classism. I've heard Erica [Silver] from Bradley-Angle House call someone on their racism and Bonnie Tinker [of Love Makes a Family] speak eloquently many times on these and other divisive issues. I am finding my own voice to speak up sometimes, and feel supported by those in our community who also speak.

**ELLIE PULE**  
Oregon City

TO THE EDITOR:  
After reading your commentary, "2, 4, 6, 8...We Refuse to Assimilate" [June 2], I have concluded that what Portland needs, desperately, is a gay newspaper. The attitudes and opinions you express are the most obnoxious I have ever read in a queer newspaper anywhere in the United States.

**CURTIS BALLS**  
Portland

TO THE EDITOR:  
This last week of visiting with friends gave me a chance to read your last two issues of *Just Out*. Seems like so little changes here in Oregon: The OCA has another initiative, and *Just Out* still struggles to understand diversity or even what it is to be queer.

I am glad I wasn't here last year for your "dress properly" lecture—that would have been

good for one burst blood vessel. But this year's "conform if you want to get rich and famous" editorial—no doubt pleasing to those at HRC and Log Cabin Republicans, I am sure—clearly misses out on why we are who we are and that being who we are should not mean we suffer economic consequences.

You can call it being PC—George Will and Pat Buchanan would love you if you'd sprinkle that label liberally in all your editorials—but giving into the bully mentality that attacks the prejudice in our society or at least questions its worth is not socially undesirable. And simply because you have achieved your own notion of a queer life doesn't mean you have figured it out for the rest of us.

Frankly, being contrary and different is one fairly common characteristic of being queer. Isn't the ultimate goal achieving some sort of society that uses character and the quality of one's contribution as a measure of success and not whether you wear the appropriate clothes and cut of hair? Won't those who want to deny us equal treatment always find some superficial reason to justify denying us those rights they take for granted? If we were only butch enough, or femme enough, we'd get those domestic partnership rights...somehow that doesn't wash with me.

Finally, can you teach your writers to refer to our lives as lives and not lifestyles? I stopped having a lifestyle when my mother stopped shopping for Garanimals for me at Sears in 1964. We live lives, and the sooner we stop referring to our lives as lifestyles the sooner we can bury the anti-queer rhetoric that our lives are some sort of choice.

**BOB DOYLE**  
San Francisco

**correction**

The article "Gaining Momentum" in the June 16 issue provided an incorrect phone number for the Hambleton Project. The correct number is (503) 642-1007. *Just Out* regrets the error.

**just out welcomes letters to the editor.**  
**Letters must be accompanied by a phone number for verification purposes.**  
**Anonymous letters and letters without sufficient contact information will not be published.**

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