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## Speak Out

### Public enemy

TO THE EDITOR:

After reading Chuck Engel's letter ("Get Off My Back") in the Aug. 18 issue, I felt moved to ask the question, "What is it about the male libido that makes men engage in sexual activity in public places?"

This behavior isn't particular to sexual orientation. On the contrary, Engel's letter makes it quite clear that "adult bookstores" (what a funny euphemism!) are not the private sleazy kingdoms of heterosexuals alone.

No, indeed! Gay men also haunt the dark and dingy aisles and back rooms of these places, jerking off to fine literature and film.

Seriously, though, I never have understood why men need to have sex in parks, bookstores, movie theaters and bars. When Engel says that "the problem isn't simply public sex. It is that the male libido is not easily outlawed," I wonder what he's referring to. Is public sex a problem, or is the attempt to outlaw public sex a problem?

When he says that "given the male anatomy, some sort of outlet is warranted," I'm curious about what that means. Does he mean that because a man has a penis, it needs to be stuck into something?

Or does he mean that men are ruled by their libido, driving them to uncontrollable urges that come upon them without warning, and therefore they need to duck into bookstores or movie arcades to satisfy these sudden attacks of sexual desire? Either way, it seems to me that Engel perpetuates some tired old stereotypes that don't give men much respect or credit.

I just can't believe that, these days anyway, it's so difficult to meet other gay men in safer circumstances, in the light of day. And I refuse to accept that most gay men need a public place to engage in sexual activities.

In fact, I hope we have evolved beyond back alleys, dark and dingy bookstores, public sex in parks and other historically shameful places. Otherwise, it sort of puts the lie to "gay pride."

I mean, how proud can you feel, jerking off alone in a dirty booth of a movie arcade or behind the books in an adults-only store? Or having to meet a strange guy down under a bridge by the river in order to have sex?

Ah, I guess I'm just an old feminist dyke with naive, old-fashioned attitudes left over from the '70s. But it still bothers me that gay men might fall back on dangerous, unnecessary behaviors that only give the Baptists, the Oregon Citizens Alliance and other straight folks of that ilk ammunition against us.

It's the 21st century. Do you guys really need to have sex in public places in order to find companionship or as an outlet for your sexual satisfaction?

RHIANNON ASHE  
Corvallis

### Fight back

TO THE EDITOR:

During last year's queer film festival, I was astonished at the line of gay men stretching around the corner—hundreds at least. But only four or five of Jesus' psychotic henchmen were yelling disgusting slurs and inviting us to curl up in hell with Satan and Saddam for eternity.

Why was it I still felt like the minority? Why is it the rest of you didn't fight back, too?

Yell back! Intimidate right back at them—as would any other minority in this country today if faced with the equivalent of that kind of bigoted attack.

Hold a kiss-in! Sing "Kum Ba Yah!"  
What happened to ACT UP? When

attacked, do something!

To defend oneself, especially when numbers are in our favor, is not stooping to their level; it is elevating our own level to that of equals who say: "Hell no, we aren't gonna take it anymore! Hell no, we are not buying into your shit anymore."

Everyone just stood there and ignored them. How mature!

No minority group ever was handed its civil rights on a silver platter. It had to fight for them, demand them and take them.

MIC HOLDEN  
Portland

### Unite and conquer

TO THE EDITOR:

It looks like the Oregon Citizens Alliance is at it again. Instead of offering up a ballot measure lumping homosexuality together with pedophilia and bestiality, this time they're aiming to "protect" students from positive "instruction of behaviors relating to homosexuality and bisexuality." Besides mistakenly equating one's sexual orientation with sex acts, what the heck could they be after?

Oregonians should not have to vote on another Ballot Measure 9, this one titled the Student Protection Act. Protecting young people is the last thing such an initiative would do.

Youths who come to the realization that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual do so at great lengths and pains to themselves. The last thing they need is another mean-spirited ballot measure to make them feel more isolated from and rejected by the general population than they already do.

The reason I can say this is because I know. While a teen-ager, coming to the realization I was not heterosexual was extremely difficult.

Even as student body president in a school of 2,000 young people, I felt like I was the only one attracted to the same gender. Had I been able to talk to my counselor, I might well not have suffered in such severe isolation and self-hatred.

Had I had support, I wouldn't have needed to put myself through endless prayer and spiritual self-abuse to be right with God. Perhaps I would not have hidden so deeply in the local library reading the few books I could find on the subject.

Fortunately, I came out to myself when the American Psychiatric and Psychological Associations were declaring homosexuality neither a mental disorder nor an illness. Fortunately, I chose to focus my energy on school and work instead of on suicidal thoughts and drugs to numb what I was feeling.

Fortunately, I had a strong, caring family at home, although I didn't come out to my parents until I was 30. And, most positively, I've been able to create a fine life with a great guy, my partner of 10 years and my best friend.

Chances are pretty good that many of you

have somebody in your immediate or extended family who has struggled or now is struggling with growing up other than heterosexual. Would you really want to put them through the kind of hell the OCA is attempting to create?

As a rural Oregonian, I've seen how the OCA has played the divide-and-conquer game in small towns and rural counties in the past. Don't let them do it again. Fair-minded, independent, intelligent Oregonians can see beyond this nonsense and simply will vote no on 9 once again this fall.

SCOTT THIEMANN  
Gold Beach

### A poem for Dr. Laura

TO THE EDITOR:

Hey, Doc Laura—it speaks for itself.

"Your Intolerance"

With religious freedom guaranteed  
We split the church and state  
Yet failed to serve diversity  
On our educational plate  
I, too, believe in God  
As do many of my Brothers  
A message of love is what I read  
Not one of hate towards others

But Brother against Brother  
Is the Bible's listed fate  
Parents teaching their children  
Not tolerance—but, hate  
So why should you be alarmed?  
Or even show surprise?  
You've set your children on a course  
That's sure to be your demise

The future is looking grim  
With every passing day  
This cancer of intolerance  
Is eating peace away  
And it doesn't seem to matter  
If religious you chose to be  
Just walk a difference path—  
Condemnation you're sure to see

You point a blaming finger  
At others and loudly mention  
How wrong they are in what they do  
While you somehow avoid attention  
In the way you've raised your kids  
To point out others' flaws  
Forgetting to keep in mind  
That someday they will write the laws

How unfortunate for us all  
You practice what you preach  
And somehow leave the truth  
Out of what you teach

## notables

### Stephen J. 'Flossie' Boden, 1953-2000

Stephen J. "Flossie" Boden, the namesake of Flossie's Tavern, died of liver failure Sept. 7 in Dayton. He was 47.

He was born April 25, 1953, in Camden, N.J. He moved to Portland in 1972.

In 1982, Boden opened the tavern, which had its name changed to Silverado in April 1987. He retired as part owner and operator in June for health reasons.

He was a gourmet cook and enjoyed collecting things. Tavern co-owner Tommy Breazeale said Boden will be remembered for his originality, generosity and unique look.

"He was a hippie when being a hippie

wasn't cool," he said. "He was himself, and he didn't let other things influence who he wanted to be."

Boden is survived by his sister, Pattie Che-nea of Dayton; brothers, Mike of Newport and Bob of Escondido, Calif.; mother, Alyce of Dayton; and father, Henry of Dayton.

Memorial services will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Sept. 16 and 17 at Silverado, 1217 S.W. Stark St., and 4 p.m. Sept. 16 at Chapel of Macy and Son, 135 N. Evans in McMinnville. Final disposition will be by cremation.