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## Speak Out

### Hart to Hart

TO THE EDITOR:  
Basic Rights Oregon played host Sept. 22 to the 17th annual Hart Dinner—and in doing so reneged on an existing agreement between the transsexual and gay/lesbian communities.

Readers might recall the extensive coverage *Just Out* gave during the mid-1990s to the conflict between Right to Privacy and an ad hoc committee of transsexual activists who considered the Lucille S. Hart Dinner disrespectful of the memory and last wishes of Dr. Alan Hart. (After undergoing psychiatric evaluation and surgery, Hart lived and was known as a man for the remaining four decades of his life, and his last will and testament requested “no memorial be erected or created or contributions made in my name to any charitable, educational, medicinal or religious institution.”) In an exemplary demonstration of how the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community as a whole can respond to legitimate criticism and engage in constructive dialogue, Right to Privacy proved open to hearing transsexual concerns and subsequently retired the name of its fund-raising dinner.

Basic Rights Oregon’s reappropriation of Hart’s name and memory for its own fund-raiser this year is a callous step backward that tramples the last wishes of Hart as well as his unequivocal identification as a man—and, by extension, represents a lack of respect to all transsexuals seeking to define themselves and determine for themselves when and how they are to be known.

Basic Rights Oregon’s insensitivity calls into question its claim to advocate for people who are subjected to discrimination based on gender identity. If Basic Rights Oregon truly is concerned with transsexuals, it should admit it made a mistake in reviving the Hart Dinner and apologize to the transsexual community.

Most importantly, Basic Rights Oregon needs to let Dr. Alan Hart rest in peace.

MARGARET DEIRDRE O’HARTIGAN  
Portland

### Get involved

TO THE EDITOR:  
The urgency of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community to register and vote in this election is well-known among many of us who have been political activists.

The need to rebuke the Oregon Citizens Alliance one more time (and crush their agenda, if possible) is critical to our full participation as citizens in this state. The point many of my brothers and sisters are missing is the equally critical difference between the Republican and Democratic candidates for president.

George “Dubya” Bush is clearly anti-choice and anti-equal protections for the gay and lesbian community and has no idea what the initials GLBT even mean. We are not part of his constituency.

From personal experience, I can tell you Vice President Al Gore is strongly and clearly in favor of a woman’s right to choose options for her own body and of ending discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations for the gay and lesbian community. The loudest applause in the Staples Center during his acceptance speech was heard when he said he would sign a new national hate crimes bill that includes sexual orientation.

It was so wonderfully clear to me, an openly gay elected delegate to the Democratic National Convention, that my party supports our community, our values and our issues and is willing to address them. I am quite convinced “don’t ask, don’t tell” will become an asterisk in the

history books if Gore wins this race.

When younger people come up to me and say there is no difference between the candidates, I beg them to remember that President Ronald Reagan took seven years to use the word AIDS in a public setting and that Bush won’t even address the hate crimes legislation about to pass the U.S. Congress. Most Republicans cater to the right wing, even if they don’t believe in those positions personally.

I urge you: Ignore the temptation to just “cast a vote of conscience” or support the party out of the presidential office. This election is not about just you or me; it is about the future of our entire country—all of us!

Please, get involved with the party that cares about our issues and will be there for us! Please tell your friends and relatives the importance of this election and of supporting the Democrats and voting no on 9!

RICHARD C. LEVY  
Portland

### Green light

TO THE EDITOR:  
We in the Green Party are perfectly willing to acknowledge the good record most Democratic politicians have in supporting the basic rights of gays and lesbians. Most of us were members of the Democratic Party in those past years, and we insisted on such positions for candidates.

But let’s face facts: It wasn’t the great vision of the Democratic political machine that resulted in the widespread acceptance gays and lesbians now enjoy. It was the good sense of the majority of Americans—of all political persuasions—that brought the result. And we who now have moved on to the Green Party are proud to have been actively encouraging the majority of Americans to reach that result, both in formal politics and the larger cultural scene as a whole.

We have moved past the Democratic Party and built the Green Party because the administration of the past eight years has abandoned or even victimized large numbers of the underprivileged. In the United States, youths who puff some weed have been major victims of these “New Democrats,” and almost all people around the world suffer from the undemocratic, pro-big business policies of President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore. For key constituencies of the Democrats such as women, blacks, labor and, yes, even many gays, progress under the Democrats has been fitful and defensive at best.

Gays have won victories because other oppressed minorities, and a good section of the privileged majority, have come to their aid. Will gays and lesbians now begin to use their influence inside the Democratic Party or otherwise to support other oppressed minorities not favored by the current Democratic Party machine?

RON BRANDSTETTER  
Portland

### Rules are rules

TO THE EDITOR:  
Katy Davidson’s article “Creature Comforts” [Sept. 15] speaks of Roger Troen’s unhappiness that the congregation of the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland does not support his animal rights program.


Personally, I attend church to hear God’s word. I became a member of the church five years ago because of its welcoming, open and inclusive Christian philosophy—for humankind.

To me, this Christian church’s statement that “all are welcome” to attend its services is

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