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## Speak Out

### Figure of speech

TO THE EDITOR:

"Freedom of speech" can become perilously oversimplified. Some are saying there would be no difference between a female officer being fired for avowing "I love Jane" and Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker being fired for telling Los Angeles' corrupt, brutal department how "terrible" gays are.

Maybe there is no difference in utopia, but in the United States as it really exists, we find a segment of people who love guns almost as much as they hate gays. In a crowded theater full of them, Kroeker came too close to shouting, "Fire...at gays!" To suggest otherwise is not to be open-minded—it is to risk a hole in one's head.

This incident demonstrates how well we have taught bashers they can pose any level of threat to gays, then be tearfully embraced after a mere apology. Could this explain why sexual minorities continue to lag behind all other citizens in human rights?

MITCH GOULD  
Forest Grove

### Scandalous search

TO THE EDITOR:

I was sitting in Scandals playing video poker Nov. 9 when four policemen and a policewoman strode into the bar. They demanded I put my hands behind my head.

They then proceeded to search me. I do not remember giving permission for them to search my bag.

They claimed to be searching for a gun. They even looked in the little zippered compartments inside my day planner.

I did not know they made guns that small. Thankfully, there was nothing for them to take issue with inside my bag, or I no doubt would have been hauled off to the station.

I am 37 and never have been arrested or detained in my life. I do not respond well to bullies barking orders at me, most especially one who is gripping my fingers so tightly behind my head that my rings are cutting off the circulation.

I finally was told they were looking for a dangerous criminal I supposedly resemble. They barked questions at me and wrote down my personal information into their little notebook.

I thought for a hot minute they actually were going to take a picture of me, as they called for a car with a Polaroid in it! Thankfully, I never saw anyone enter with a camera. Because they couldn't find any legal reason to arrest me, they abruptly left.

The bartender admitted to having called the police. I was told he saw a picture of the fugitive, which I asked to see.

I was shown a rather poor-quality black-and-white security camera photo. I saw an average-sized man in a bulky coat and a very bad wig.

He had a thin face and lips with a rather pointed chin. I am a 200-pound man with a full face and lips.

I have a full head of real hair. You would think a gay bartender would be able to spot a bad wig!

The only facial resemblance I have in common with the criminal is a full, rounded nose. Other than that, I do not look like him in the slightest.

I cannot believe that moron of a bartender thought that picture was of me. I have been going to Scandals for many years and have had many conversations with this fool many times.

He certainly does not have any sort of eye for

detail. He actually called out "thank you, come again" as I left.

Later while commiserating with some friends, I got a current *Just Out* and read all about our wonderful fundamentalist, righteous, moralist police chief and his desire to turn our police force into a paramilitary organization. Based on what I just had experienced, I do think he has been quite successful.

Portland is becoming more like Los Angeles every day. Are you ready? I for one am not.

PAUL BENNETT  
Portland

### Portland welcomes bigots

TO THE EDITOR:

The Nov. 6 issue of the *Oregonian* quoted a Radical Women representative out of context regarding what action is necessary in response to Police Chief Mark Kroeker's 1989 discriminatory comments.

We want to clarify our position, particularly given our long history in fighting police violence and right-wing bigotry. Our position has been and remains that Kroeker's stated beliefs are rooted in a right-wing ideology that is consistent with police violence against women, people of color, sexual minorities, youth, the homeless, activists and unionists.

He should not be allowed to use an important constitutional protection to legitimize his bigotry. He either must resign or be terminated.

Kroeker's Nov. 6 address to his police force failed to reflect a commitment to treat every member of our community with respect. His statement was a hollow proclamation that he will not allow discrimination within his police force.

These are not the words of an advanced consciousness but instead are a political maneuver to try to win back the trust of sexual minority officers and dampen the growing outrage from the community. Kroeker does not respect differences, as exemplified by his violation of the May Day protesters' constitutional and civil rights.

On Nov. 6, Radical Women participated in a meeting with Mayor Vera Katz and activists from the feminist, sexual minority and people of color communities. The majority of us called for Kroeker's resignation or termination.

Radical Women advocated that Katz establish an elected civilian review board because we recognize the problem is systemic within the police department. This review board needs to be independent of City Hall and the police department and have public funding.

It needs the authority to hire police officers and to investigate and discipline—including firing—cops who are found guilty of violating the constitutional and civil rights of civilians. Katz's own task force studying improvements to the Police Internal Investigations Auditing Committee recommended a civilian review board that had some teeth to hold police accountable to the public.

Her decision to retain and support Kroeker as chief of police sends a message to every KKKer that the city officials of Portland welcome bigots. Justifiably fearful of the police before his reign, people of color, youth, women, activists, sexual minorities and unionists have a right not to live in terror of racial profiling, excessive force, "knock and talks," rubber bullets, tear gas, nightsticks or boat oars.

We think Portlanders must organize together for Kroeker's termination and strengthen the grassroots movement to establish an independent civilian police review board.

JORDANA SARDO  
Radical Women Portland Organizer

### Get the message

TO THE EDITOR:

I am submitting this short letter to *Just Out* for a friend of mine in hopes that maybe it will reach God's only messenger, Lon Mabon. Obviously, he has taken on this mission under the grand illusion that he was sent to Earth for the sole purpose of dividing and destroying a whole group of Oregonians who have worked so hard and fought for years to achieve the basic rights we all have a right to—and who still have a long way to go.

Lon, people like you have become prisoners of your own ignorance. I find it hard to believe this is the only job you can get, but of course, the \$60,000 Pat Robertson pays you each year to keep up the good work doesn't hurt.

CHRIS SCHLEGEL  
Portland

### Tourist tribute

TO THE EDITOR:

To all the men of Portland: I would like to thank all of you for the wonderful time we had in Portland last week.

It is so rare when you can go to a city and feel totally comfortable and welcomed. I just hope you all will continue to open your wonderful city to outsiders and show them the hospitality you showed us.

And for all of you who told us you left Seattle because it lacked the personality Portland has, you were absolutely right. We will be back to visit.

P.S. For all the people at Silverado, you're the best.

TOM AND GARRYL  
San Francisco

### Change of Hart

TO THE EDITOR:

I was disappointed by Jaime Balboa's letter to *Just Out* [Nov. 3] regarding Basic Rights Oregon's use of Alan Hart for its fund-raiser.

I participated in what he referred to as the "conversation after the event" with Margaret O'Hartigan—and he makes me (a female-to-male transsexual) invisible by not acknowledging my presence, just as Basic Rights Oregon makes Alan Hart invisible as a transsexual by not acknowledging Hart's male status. *Just Out* readers should know Margaret isn't the only transsexual "offended or alienated" by Basic Rights Oregon's abuse of Hart's memory.

I also was disappointed that Jaime's letter didn't acknowledge that an agreement was breached and that he didn't apologize for the use of female pronouns in referring to Hart in the Basic Rights Oregon dinner program. When I met with Jaime in person, he said that it was his idea to resurrect the dinner and that it no longer would be named the Alan Hart Dinner (suggesting he could make a unilateral decision since he was the sole person responsible). Yet in his letter to *Just Out* he says the idea of continuing this dinner will be revisited by the board.

I appreciate that Jaime wrote a letter to *Just Out* as he said he would. But it doesn't go far enough. And I would like to understand what is behind the inconsistencies between what he told me during our conversation and what he is telling the readers of *Just Out*.

P.S. For those who don't know or remember me, in 1996 I was among the transsexuals who went to Portland City Hall seeking inclusion in the human rights ordinance. That same year, I