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Speak Out

Ding-dong! The witch is dead

TO THE EDITOR:

Too often after a long race, we don't take a breath and realize what we've done. The cancellation of *Dr. Laura* is a perfect opportunity to recognize the small steps and the huge efforts that have brought us to this pivotal achievement for the LGBT community.

For us at the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, this was never just a campaign about *Dr. Laura*. This was about holding up a clear, indisputable example of defamation and using it to tell corporations, advertisers, media outlets and the American public that our community refuses to be an easy target for society's "last acceptable prejudice."

Make no mistake: This is a *huge* and visible victory. Advertisers and media outlets now have an increased awareness not only of LGBT issues but also of the power of our community; anti-gay religious political extremists now know their attacks on our lives will be opposed vigorously; media corporations like Paramount have learned firsthand that profiting from anti-gay prejudice is bad business; and we have held *Laura Schlessinger* accountable for her attacks on our community.

Our victory would not have been possible without the generous efforts of many dedicated organizations and individuals, among them the local and regional organizers who extended this campaign into cities and towns across the country. Thanks and gratitude also go out to our other allies in this campaign—many of whom are straight.

From the start, GLAAD focused on national *Dr. Laura* sponsors (those that bought ads directly through Paramount), a strategy calculated to cripple the studio's revenue directly, significantly and early in the process. This succeeded because of the responsiveness of the more than 30 national sponsors whose ads ran on and were quickly withdrawn from *Dr. Laura* after being contacted by GLAAD as well as the almost 300 national advertisers and media buyers with whom we worked who never gave their support to the show.

Thanks also to the LGBT employee groups that worked with us from within these companies to discourage corporate support of Schlessinger's attacks. We also extend our gratitude to the local affiliate promotion managers we met with who made their decisions not to budget promotions of *Dr. Laura* and the journalists we met with at the Television Critics Association who ensured that her television audience knew exactly what she was saying about our community when the show debuted.

And to everybody who picked up the phone, penned a letter or sent an e-mail to advertisers, local affiliates and Paramount: Thank you! Your voice has been heard loud and clear, and together we've shown the power of a community that is willing to take a stand for what's right.

JOAN M. GARRY

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation Executive Director

Open your mind

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm writing in response to Wendy Judith Cutler's March 2 letter on U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith's movement from intolerance to leadership on the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. His change of heart on the issue reminds me of straight friends who might have told me a "fag" joke before I came out and now have made light-year leaps in attitudinal change about my sexuality.

What causes these changes? Knowledge,

understanding, compassion and an open mind. Smith has been on an incredible journey, and it takes time and energy to make this trip. I believe he should be rewarded and encouraged to continue his growth.

On the question of Smith's other views, I only hope he can evolve on women's rights, the environment and other areas important to me. What he has established is that he is willing to communicate and converse on these issues and that we need to reach out to him and not expect him to comprehend their importance.

To that end I would recommend that leaders in all of these movements make it a point to communicate with him on things that are important to them. I know from experience that no one will change his or her point of view through angry rhetoric and confrontation.

Real stories, such as personal coming-out experiences, move people to a greater understanding and change of views. My hope is that the traditional GLBT allies realize we must work with and try to provide the opportunity for growth to all people and not hold unbending attitudes to anyone.

RON GLANVILLE

Human Rights Campaign Board of Governors

Don't cop out

TO THE EDITOR:

It is great to see such spirited discussion about Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker. However, I was disappointed in Kim Roth's lack of critical analysis of the man ["Moment of Truth," March 2].

The long hours Kroeker spends talking to carefully selected gay "leaders" and his appearances at gay sports events are just public relations posturing. I want to see concrete plans to make the police department a safe, nonhostile working environment for gay male officers; steps to ensure all Portlanders are able to organize and speak out freely; an end to racial profiling; and a community-controlled oversight board.

A guest commentary from other lesbian, gay, bi and trans activists or a view from the African American or Hispanic communities would be welcome. Please broaden the range of views you air about Kroeker's competence.

Thanks for being an open forum for discussion of this important issue.

ELLEN GREENLAW

Sandy

Music to my ears

TO THE EDITOR:

Thanks for Andy Simon's article about Paul Scardina and the Portland Gay Men's Chorus ["Stepping Out," March 16].

It prompted me to attend the March 24 concert. If it has not been reviewed, it *should have been!*

As a newcomer to Portland, it was a treat to discover this incredibly fun and funny ensemble. Their music-making is at a very high level.

The passion and joy with which they sing is inspiring. Scardina's choreography was delightful, Timm McBride's cameos were hysterical, and the quality and variety of soloists were remarkable. A special nod to Ann Tedards, associate dean of the University of Oregon School of Music, for sharing her lovely voice.

It is to artistic director Bob Mensel and accompanist Michael Barnes that I offer the largest public bouquets. Their talents clearly were evidenced in each of the selections performed. From the silly "Garota de Ipanema" and "Beaufort Scale" to the sublime sentiments of Lauridsen's "Dirait-On" (a personal favorite) and Mulholland's "Heart We Will Forget Him,"