

just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

FOUNDED 1983 • JAY BROWN AND RENÉE LACHANCE
Vol. 18 No. 12 April 20, 2001

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The submission of written and graphic materials is welcomed. Written material should be typed and double-spaced. Just Out reserves the right to edit for grammar, punctuation, style, liability concerns and length. We will reject or edit articles or advertisements that are offensive, demeaning or may result in legal action.

Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. Announcements regarding life transitions (births, deaths, unions, etc.) should be limited to 200 words; photos are welcome. Deadline for submissions to the editorial department and for the Calendar is the Thursday 15 days before the next publication date. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The display advertising deadline is the Monday 12 days before the next publication date.

Classified ads must be received at the Just Out office by 4 p.m. on the Thursday eight days before the next publication date, along with payment. Ads may be placed by telephone or via the Internet with Visa or MasterCard payment.

Ad policy: Just Out reserves the right to reject or edit any advertisement. Compensation for errors in, or cancellation of, advertising will be made with credit toward future advertising. Advertising rates are available upon request.

Subscriptions are \$17.50 for 12 issues. First Class (in an envelope) is \$30 for 12 issues.

Contact Just Out at P.O. Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400; 503-236-1252, advertising 503-236-1253, fax 503-236-1257; e-mail justout@justout.com. Visit our Internet site at www.justout.com.

COMMENTARY

BY MARTY DAVIS

Correspondence coarse

Letters to the editor can be brutally honest—or just plain brutal

One of the most rewarding aspects of working at *Just Out* is the daily interaction we have with our readers. We get letters, e-mails, faxes and phone calls. Each and every one brings a smile or an ache, frequently a curl of the lip and a shake of the head and, every so often, incredulous disbelief over what exactly runs through the minds of some people.

The anonymous letters can be the most amazing. What confidence people have as they hurl insults and anger and curses and then slither off to mail their brave and bold missives while refusing to sign their name or attach an identity to their thoughts and feelings.

These letters usually merit chuckles but little more. The words of the cowardly fall short of their target. Such letters are little more than rhetorical vandalism.

More meaningful and touching to us are the letters from people with the true inability to name themselves for fear of harm from neighbors, lovers, employers and a world still filled for them with harshness and hostility. Many of these communications have to remain exclusive to us because of the need for privacy and anonymity from hurt or worried souls.

Whenever possible, we share these missives with you in the form of letters to the editor. Through shared experiences, we all grow and learn.

We are able to measure the impact of our articles and our features by the reactions we receive from readers. Jonathan Kipp's fine writing in our Feb. 2 issue, "The Second Closet: Domestic Violence Hides in the Dark," elicited more than enough feedback to make it very clear that this is one of the larger problems facing our community today. It seems our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers and, for some of us, our very lovers and partners are being hurt and damaged on a daily basis.

The saddest messages we received echoed the cry that many are trapped in abusive relationships and simply cannot find their way out. From these folks we also sensed that there are simply not enough places to go for help.

And if you are a gay man being abused by another gay man, your options are more limited than even we thought. This is a serious problem for our community.

Who has answers? Who can bring knowledge and experience and solutions? What can we do to help ourselves?

We have received the most feedback by far regarding our newest writer, Michael Wayne Keck. His April 6 recollections of being the only gay man in his straight college fraternity brought forth touching and personal memories from a host of young people with similar stories to share.

One woman wrote: "Yours is the first column I've seen in *Just Out* that

appeals to a late teen/early twentysomething audience. I've been reading *Just Out* for about five to six years but couldn't ever find anything that genuinely hit me smack in the middle of the face. Nothing ever really reached out and grabbed me."

This letter definitely falls into the good news/bad news category. Shame on us for failing this segment of our community for so long. Thanks, however, to the staff for having the vision to see where we need to be and taking the steps to get us there.

All members of our community should be able to find a reflection of themselves in *Just Out*. This reflection might be of a time past or perhaps a look ahead to a vision of who you might yet become.

We accomplish this by presenting profiles of strong role models, political and cultural activists, businesspeople and those who have the skills to lead others.

Not all readers, though, will appreciate change or the opportunity to share a variety of perspectives and attitudes. There are those who are unable or unwilling to allow others to take their own paths and make their own choices and instead prefer to sit back and peer out at the world from the smugness of their own self-righteousness.

I admit to taking strong offense to the use of words such as "vulgar" and "stupid," especially as applied to that which is different from yourself. It seems to me to be indicative of, shall we say, vulgar stupidity.



What confidence people have as they hurl insults and anger and curses and then slither off to mail their brave and bold missives while refusing to sign their name or attach an identity to their thoughts and feelings.

Moving on to this current issue, we are presenting the results of a questionnaire sent to the seven candidates vying for the two open seats on the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. There are two able and experienced friends of our community asking for your vote for the position of county chair and five others competing for the right to represent District 1.

The commission might not seem to be a powerhouse political force, but all elected officials in Oregon, from neighborhood association representatives to city commissioners to U.S. senators, must share and project values and standards that ensure continued success in achieving full civil rights for all members of the sexual minorities community. No public official ever should be viewed as insignificant.

The commission is a springboard for aspiring politicians. This training ground for potential long-term careers must be filled with the best candidates possible.

So I encourage you to study qualifications, evaluate experience and vote for the candidate of your choice. Remember to return your mail-in ballots by May 15. ☐

REFLECTIONS

5 years ago in just out ..

VOL. 13 No. 11, APRIL 5, 1996



- Phill Wilson and Ruth Waters, founders of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, were honored at a special gala April 28 in Los Angeles.
- The U.S. Senate voted to repeal a provision of the Defense Department authorization bill requiring the military to discharge all HIV-positive servicemembers.
- A microbiologist at the University of California at San Francisco grew in a laboratory the virus that causes Kaposi's sarcoma. Dr. Don Ganem said the discovery was a key step toward identifying the virus and one day could help researchers develop a vaccination to prevent the spread of the disfiguring tumorous condition affecting many people with AIDS.
- The Georgia Supreme Court on March 11 turned back a legal challenge to the state's sodomy law, saying the statute was constitutional and served a compelling state interest in furthering the public's "moral welfare."
- The Pacific Northwest—and the nation—lost one of

its pioneering civil rights activists, Perry J. Watkins, the first openly gay man to challenge the U.S. Defense Department's ban on gay and lesbian servicemembers. The 48 year-old died of AIDS complications March 17 at his home in Tacoma, Wash.

- The Equity Foundation gave a \$3,800 grant to support the Urban League of Portland's Rainbow program for sexual minority youth.

- Portland journalist David Batterson launched *The Pink Webazine*. The online publication contained queer news, opinions and graphics that could be downloaded.

- The Keeston Lowery Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club held its primary election straw poll April 14.

- The Gail Shibley for City Council Campaign sought volunteers to help with canvassing, visibility, phone banking, office work and more.

- Phoenix Rising launched a men's coming out group and a men's process group.

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