

Speak Out

teach the next generation that hate-motivated behavior is destructive not only to the person being harassed but to all of society. Please support House Bill 3247 by contacting your legislator today.

NURELLA DOUMITT
National Conference for Community and Justice Pacific Northwest Region
Executive Director

Conversion aversion

TO THE EDITOR:

National television coverage, including interviews with a Portland Fellowship ex-gay and a May 9 Associated Press story, about Dr. Robert Spitzer's survey of "well-adjusted ex-gays," stated he spearheaded the decision to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. This is misleading, because he successfully advocated keeping a classification for those who were troubled by their sexual orientation.

Spitzer views homosexuality as "an irregular form of sexual behavior" similar to "celibacy" and not a mental disorder unless it causes marked distress. Today's psychiatric manual still defines "persistent and marked distress about sexual orientation" as a "sexual disorder."

The controversy is not, as reported, whether people can change from gay to straight. The controversy is whether conversion via religious coercion and "reparative therapy" is worth the potential harm.

Spitzer's identification of some ex-gays, apparently unharmed by conversion, doesn't prove it is harmless for everyone. Heterosexuals who think they safely can change sexual orientation should prove it by converting themselves to gay for a year and then back again.

Analogously, it wouldn't be safe for people distressed by being white to convert to black using drugs, as John Howard Griffin described in his 1961 book *Black Like Me*. Psychological counseling would be safer.

Homosexuals are being singled out and pursued for elimination by theocrats who simultaneously whine about being persecuted for their religious beliefs. I guess they assume others are treating them as they are treating homosexuals.

Eugene television news anchor Tim Joyce comically, but professionally, transitioned from this ex-gay story by introducing the next story as: "It's magic! And I'm not talking about the previous story!"

THOMAS KRAEMER
Corvallis

Grey matter

TO THE EDITOR:

I was most disappointed to see advertising in *Just Out* for Multnomah Greyhound Park. (I'm writing to you as a greyhound advocate, not representing any organization.)

You have been very kind to me personally and to the greyhound adoption effort in the past. You have helped raise awareness that grey-

hounds need to be adopted, and we have talked personally about the racing industry.

Why would you support an industry that routinely abuses and kills animals in the name of profit? If your reason is the same, the almighty dollar, then you are just as bad as them. Not to mention the promotion of gambling.

I don't see ads for fur coats or cock fighting in your paper, so why this? I don't see ads for casinos, either.

Is it really worth the money to help them stay open and kill and abuse more defenseless greyhounds? Ask yourself that.

KEVIN FRIENDS
Portland

Think of Laura

TO THE EDITOR:

On Page 6 of the April 6 issue of *Just Out*, Laura Schlessinger was referred to as a "radio shrink" ["Dr. Laura Schlessinger's Talk Show Canceled"].

Laura Schlessinger is not a psychiatrist. She is not a psychologist. She isn't an M.D.

Laura Schlessinger has a Ph.D. in physiology, which makes her no more qualified to advise on mental health issues than if she were a chemical engineer or a patent lawyer. Not that you'd know that by listening to her on the radio.

She doesn't lie about her credentials. Not exactly.

But she also never comes right out and says, "I'm not qualified as any kind of counselor." She says, "This isn't a psychiatry show" or "I'm not your therapist," implying she would be someone's therapist if she weren't so busy on the radio.

Actually, if she hadn't figured out a new application for Don Rickles' insult comedy schtick, she'd be teaching Anatomy 101 at a junior college. Calling Laura Schlessinger a "shrink" is to give her more legitimacy than she deserves.

JOHN M. BURT
Corvallis

Young at heart

TO THE EDITOR:

We are 20 and 24 (almost 25). We moved out here from South Dakota a year and a half ago, but we still have not met any other gay couples around our age.

We have come to the conclusion that if you get into a long-term relationship at a young age, your chances of staying together improve; otherwise, you'd have to change your ways. And changing your ways at an older age is harder than at a younger age.

That is our friendly advice. Hope some take it to heart.

We also want to point out that people out here are so hard to make friends with. And we're hoping that an outsider's point of view will help.

JIM AND JAMIE CHRISTOPHER
Portland

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