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# GRAND RE-OPENING

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## Speak Out

### Don't be such a drag

TO THE EDITOR:

Well, I must say I pondered back and forth as to whether it was worth the effort to respond to such misguided and ridiculous banter from Paul Gregory about my Rose Festival commentary ["Every Rose Has Its Thorn," June 15].

What amuses me most is that in his first year he stayed throughout the event but never once approached me and asked whether I knew any of the folks I was commentating about. Instead, he made assumptions.

By the way, your accusations about comments I supposedly made about larger folks is completely wrong. You must not have taken a good look at me, because I am not a skinny queen!

Paul obviously doesn't realize most of the drag queens in Portland, just like me, are the same ones who are out in the public doing most of the work no one else seems to want to do. Stonewall for me and them is more than just a fairy tale but something all of us within the trans community—and the entire queer community, for that matter—continue to live daily.

I am truly sorry you could not find some joy in any of the experience with the Rose Festival party this year with the rest of us who obviously had a good time. I believe it is an awesome opportunity for all of the titleholders in our community to receive the visibility and recognition they deserve. It is also an opportunity for all of us to continue to show the straight community, who are so dismissive to throw us under the rug, that we are an equal partner in what is supposed to be a community parade.

I will not be going anywhere, and I intend to continue to commentate and be there until our community has an opportunity to proudly take its place within the Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade and all community events, receiving equal treatment. It has taken me more than 10 years to get recognized for speaking, and I gladly will take 10 more to ensure we have our rightful place within our Portland parade.

They allow us to build their floats and make their costumes, but they don't actively bring us to the participating table in what should be an inclusive citywide celebration. I will continue to support the Rose Festival Association, believing you go a lot further making friends.

I could use your help in the future and would suggest a different approach with some of us who are doing more than our fair share of community work. Funny how some are so quick to be critical about the smallest of things but often are not the ones to pitch in a dollar, help with our fund-raisers and organize these events.

Paul, maybe you should have dinner with me and try to get to know me. You might find we actually could be friends or, worse yet, have something in common!

MISHA ROCKAFELLER  
 Portland

### Give peace a chance

TO THE EDITOR:

When the United States decided, in my son's 19th year, to pulverize Iraq, I made a protest sign stating, "I'll die before my son is sacrificed to the U.S. War Machine!" I joined Northwest Military and Draft Counseling, which was among those principally involved in getting recruiters out of schools for anti-military reasons and because that institution discriminates against nonheterosexuals.

Then and now, grade schoolers receive military grooming with trips to the air base and soldier presence on their playground; middle schoolers had camouflage book jackets with soldiers aiming tank weapons (later used to bury alive Iraq's forced conscripts) and exhorting kids to be all they can be; and high schools had recruiters at

lunch, helping with registration, inviting test taking, calling homes, leaving cards in mailboxes and socializing as much as possible. They were/nearly omnipresent in our kids' lives; the actual recruitment was/is just the end result of that insidious grooming process.

There is no God-given right for the military, despite having limitless resources, to "buddy up" to children from grade school on just because there is federal money in schools. Should Head Start be forced to allow in recruiters?

No student interested in the military has difficulty finding recruiters' offices. Our greed- and death-driven culture is suffused with military propaganda from early childhood on.

I'm unimpressed by the argument that poor students and students of color might not have other options. They do. To the extent that they do not or think they do not, shame on us: parents, citizens and public schools.

Derry Jackson said at the May 21 Portland Public Schools board meeting that, although he reluctantly supported the "clarification" compromise (with which I disagree but applaud the board for reaching), it meant that needed opportunities still would not reach some students. But those heterosexual students of whom he spoke still can go to the nearest recruiter if they think it is their best post-high school opportunity.

He never mentioned students who cannot access that so-called opportunity—i.e., the ones who are gay and lesbian, including African Americans. When will those professing such concern around this issue for those who are U.S. minorities by skin color gain insight and show brother/sisterhood with those who are minorities by another fact of their birth, their sexual orientation? African Americans have the most horrible history of U.S. oppression, but that's no justification for not standing in solidarity whenever another group is being oppressed and when some of their own ethnicity are being doubly oppressed.

Thanks, Marc Abrams and all board members supporting the recruitment ban who were trying to keep a portion of the limits set to military presence. Unfortunately, your "clarification" strengthened the ability to groom youth for unquestioned acceptance of service in an unjust, ill-used military. But you recognized six years ago and now that ignorance breeds hate, that hate breeds violence and that every time we stand up for one target of hate we inch humanity forward into finding alternatives to community and institutional violence on small and grand scales.

CLAUDIA KING  
 Portland

### Barking up the wrong tree

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Marty Davis' commentary in the June 1 issue and am compelled to respond ["Lord, Help Me Be the Person My Dog Thinks I Am"].

First, I must state that your remarks about Peanut were not only very funny but were so descriptive that every reader truly will know her well. My congratulations on your loving relationship.

Second, your right to reject our advertising is certainly yours, and I respect your decision as being completely yours to make.

I do have an invitation for you—come visit us. Look behind the scenes and make your own determination about greyhound welfare here at Multnomah Greyhound Park. There is no "Fast Track to Death," as Stanley Jones-Umberger wrote ["Lose Track," June 1].

Greyhounds are tracked from conception through adoption. They are well-housed, well-fed, well-treated physically and emotionally, and placed into loving homes when their racing and/or breeding careers are over.

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