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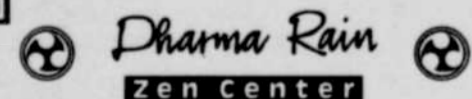
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Speak Out

The party's over

TO THE EDITOR:

The Portland New Party, which was in large part responsible for Derry Jackson's election to the school board, condemns his recent anti-Jewish and anti-gay statements. Because of these and other actions, we believe he is unable to effectively carry out his duties as a school board member and will begin a search for his successor.

The Portland New Party spoke to thousands of voters and distributed tens of thousands of pieces of literature urging Jackson's election. He helped craft and signed onto a detailed platform of the "Progressive Parents." Now, there is ample evidence that he has abandoned this platform.

Jackson's statement—"I see Jews running everything," running the country and the school board—is classic anti-Semitism. His subsequent apology does not recognize this. Nor does he recognize the anti-gay bias in his recent statements that homosexuals "choose their behavior."

Jackson is no longer a member of the Portland New Party. He resigned from our organization after we publicly criticized him for breaking his agreement to uphold the ban on military recruiting in our schools.

However, we recognize our responsibility to the volunteers, voters and community who expect and deserve better than they got. The New Party is beginning the search for a replacement, someone who will be credible and responsible to the children, parents and communities who are left out and locked out of quality education in Portland.

THE REV. CECIL PRESCOD
Portland New Party Chairman

Let's be consistent

TO THE EDITOR:

Derry Jackson's recent comments were unfortunate and lacking in maturity. Putting them in the best light, one would hope he was trying to illustrate that in the United States today, Jews have done better job at gaining acceptance and support than other minorities. One only has to look at the list of local dignitaries, including Portland Mayor Vera Katz, who are outraged and calling for Jackson's resignation to see that as fact.

Where were all of these human rights activists last year after Mark Kroeker was exposed for having advocated beating children with boat oars and keeping women at home, for calling homosexuals perverted and responsible for the AIDS epidemic and for implying vigilante justice might be better than the court systems? His comments are more flagrant, and he is a higher-ranking, non-elected official. Because Kroeker never has apologized for making the comments, nor has he recanted those beliefs, perhaps we now should ask Katz to be consistent and demand an apology and resignation from him.

RICK CRITTENDEN
Portland

An open letter to Derry Jackson

TO THE EDITOR:

As a Multnomah County resident, I voted for you in the last school board election. I liked your record and your face.

I am very disappointed in some of the things you had to say, however, about homosexuals. I do agree with you that the military is the only way out of poverty for some and that that opportunity should not be denied to those who want it.

Also true is the abhorrent way homosexuals are treated by the military. Remember "passing" for white? Surely you know that that is what living a secret life, fearful of discovery for any reason, is like.

My concern is that you sounded dangerously like Lon Mabon in the remarks you made regarding choice. (I heard you speaking on the radio.)

If homosexuality were a choice, why do so many "choose" to live in a world that denigrates? Why go on to "choose" homosexuality after trying so hard to be heterosexual?

Some people who thought they were homosexual found out, in fact, they were not. Does this mean everyone can change? Of course not.

Most of us have spent agonizing years trying to be something we cannot be—years that would have more profitable for us and for society if we could have been ourselves. Derry, I hope you can open your mind and your heart to the people who live the life rather than to the misguided rhetoric of hatred.

ROBIN LEE
Portland

Bylaw and order

TO THE EDITOR:

A recent letter to *Just Out* suggested the Rural Organizing Project was less than democratic in its selection of board members and officers ["A Mockery of Democracy," July 20].

In fact, the bylaws of ROP governing selection of the board members carefully were crafted to achieve several objectives, including geographic diversity and assurance that the board is composed of individuals connected directly to rural organizations. The emphasis of ROP on organizing also is reflected in its membership base of rural groups, because social change occurs when people work together.

ROP is actually more democratic than many nonprofit organizations, because any member group can nominate and subsequently vote for board candidates. The officers of the board are selected by consensus, which is a different process from what is prescribed in Robert's Rules of Order.

ROP's organizational structure and emphasis on consensus decision making dovetails with our goals to promote democracy in rural Oregon through the activities of grassroots human dignity groups. ROP greatly appreciates the love and support it has received across rural Oregon during the past 10 years and looks forward to continuing its good work for years to come.

LARRY TAYLOR
Rural Organizing Project Chair
Astoria

Frontier and center

TO THE EDITOR:

I am resisting the impulsive knee-jerk reaction that frequently occurs when I read something Margaret Deirdre O'Hartigan writes: If she's against it, I'm for it. Although that sentiment has proven to be historically accurate, the respect I have for the Rural Organizing Project demands a much more thorough response.

ROP was founded in the aftermath of 1992's Ballot Measure 9 when it became clear that those of us who lived along the Interstate 5 corridor had a different view on things from the rest of the state. Marcy Westerling and a host of other clear thinkers developed a strategy to address a broad range of issues, including queer rights, in rural and frontier Oregon.

The strategy called for forming human dignity groups in every county to meet, talk, learn

and mobilize against injustice in all its forms. When most of us were willing to give over rural Oregon to the right wing—it was too daunting, it was too conservative, they're all bigots—Westerling drove hundreds of miles talking with people, respecting them for where they were and helping them move forward.

O'Hartigan's complaint that "individuals...aren't permitted to join and vote" in ROP is a) wrong (my beloved girlfriend and I are both members) and b) politically naive and ignorant. Movements are built through people joining together in groups, working together, eating together, learning together and creating a just and equitable world—finding that common ground and building from there. We should be supporting ROP and learning from that model of organizing instead of tearing it down.

I also must take issue with *Just Out's* headline over O'Hartigan's letter. The previous issue focused on the work of ROP in a very positive way, and now you call it "A Mockery of Democracy." I'm sure if you had given it some thought you could have written a more honest headline.

JACK DANGER
Portland

Burning bridges

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very surprised by how Vancouver's Saturday in the Park made me feel last month. I went to this event after attending Pride in Portland, Seattle and the "heaven on earth" location of San Francisco's Castro District, where my boyfriend and I celebrated our 10th anniversary.

Mark was out of town for Saturday in the Park, so I went with our little dog, Lloyd, expecting the same sense of pride that the previous weeks had brought me. I was shocked at how fast I flew back into the closet for fear of being beaten up, being mocked and just plain being "the only gay person in all of Vancouver."

I grew up there and all of my life had these feelings engraved into me from the small-mindedness that lives inside these city limits. Now I live in Portland and don't feel the same way. It's always surprising to me how much the mentality changes by just going over one bridge.

My feelings did not come from the festival itself. I applaud each and every person who gave of his or her energy, time and money to put on such an event. They did a beautiful job and deserve a big round of applause.

My feelings came from the lack of queer folk attending to give that much-needed round of applause. Saturday in the Park was held right next door to the Farmer's Market, so at first you were deceived by the size of the event. Until you walked through the sour faces and found the rainbows.

Then it was impossible to pick out the people who were attending by choice or who just had wandered onto the "wrong" side of the tracks, then ran to get out of the park. I heard people passing through saying things like: "I am disgusted by this display. They should have signs up so we don't bring our kids into this," and "What is going on over here? Oh, the fags are out today."

Doesn't sound good for Vancouver, does it? I don't think this reflects the city as a whole, but it was pretty harsh to hear.

I was afraid to smile at anybody because I couldn't tell who was there to protest and who was there to partake. What made me sad is that more lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people didn't come out to support each other.

I don't think it matters if you live in Portland or Vancouver; we are so close that we are the same community. We should support each other's events.