

Speak Out

opposed survivor benefits for domestic partners, blamed the terrorist attacks on progressives and continued to lobby against gays in the military even as soldiers are sent to risk their lives.

And now this. I urge you to speak out by e-mailing Commissioner John Busby at SA_Information@usn.salvationarmy.org. I also would suggest that rather than giving to national organizations, choose the charity that best reflects your values, check out its policies and give directly to it.

So when you're out shopping and you see the little red bucket, tell the friends you're with about the Salvation Army's policy of discrimination. Because in a season of giving, we should value above all the gift of human dignity and equality.

ROEY THORPE
Basic Rights Oregon Executive Director

Older but wiser

TO THE EDITOR:

I recently was sent a copy of your newspaper, *Just Out*, and I want to thank you for your courage

and compassion. I was moved to tears by some of the special articles and letters to the editor and want so much to make a difference and to combat the hatred that the gay community has had to endure. No one should have to live in fear.

I am a grandmother and have three children who I have brought up to respect others and treat everyone in the same manner and, above all, not to be judgmental. They are fine examples today.

Your publication has helped me further to understand the gay community and how terribly difficult life has been for you. I am encouraged, in my association with much younger people, to see an acceptance of their fellow man. They are much more generous than my peer group, of which I am sometimes ashamed.

So, this letter is to say that I support gay rights to the fullest and those of my gay friends. Thank you again.

MARY P. WASTCOAT
New London, N.H.

to experience this feeling—kind of like being pushed out on a cultural ice floe to die. Sorry, folks, not yet.

JESSE JORDAN
Portland

...

I think a strong case can be made for using the word "queer." It's much easier to say than "LGBTQQ" or "sexual minorities," and everyone knows what it means.

When someone is startled to hear it used positively, there is the opportunity to explain that "gay" used to be the bad word and that "queer" was a euphemism. Besides, our movement's future is in the hands of the youth, and they already have decided that "queer" is the way to go. I'm ready to follow their lead!

BONNIE TINKER
Love Makes a Family Executive Director

...

This obviously is a generational issue. Older people who grew up with the word being used in a malicious way are offended by it. Those who are younger and who have grown up in a more accepting environment have not had to endure the word and therefore don't have the negative reaction to it.

I have used this analogy to those I work with: If someone is coming up to stab me and I take the knife away and stab myself, I still am going to feel pain. The word means "strange" and "odd," and I don't see myself as either.

NICK ELLINGTON
Hillsboro

...

Like Joe Jackson says in the song, "Don't call me a faggot unless you are my friend." Same goes for queer.

It can be a word that makes me feel proud or pained. Depends on who's saying it and how it's said.

BRYAN UTTO
San Diego

...

Even though I am 47 years old, the word makes me feel cold, sweaty and ready to

throw up. It diminishes all the years of coming out, the marches we did, the press, the votes on laws and ordinances and all of the explaining we did to all of our straight friends. It is the epitome of hate to me, and I hate it.

PAUL S. HOEFLE
Prineville

...

As a 65-year-old I'm for taking "queer" back. I use it with gay friends and with straight friends who know I'm gay.

GLENN HEISERMAN
Portland

...

Pained isn't the word; insulted is more like it. As a youth with epilepsy and a left hand that never has worked correctly, I have been called such hurtful things as "gip," "chip," "retard" and "spaz." I get the same kind of reaction from "queer." It is one of those words like "nigger" and "spic" that never should be a part of anybody's vocabulary.

The only way we can stop the hurt is to purge these words from our society. We need to stick together in unity, not divide by using language that can hurt so many people.

SCOTT E. STIERLE
Portland

...

I first identified as a "queer fellow," but it made my ex uncomfortable, so I settled on "gay." It doesn't make a lot of difference to me, but if it lessens the segregation between LGBT factions, I'll be here, QUEER and without fear!

THOMAS HORTON
Portland

next issue Do you feel HIV prevention tactics are effective in reaching out to high-risk groups, or do they enable dangerous sexual behavior by failing to stigmatize promiscuity? Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

RUTH THOUGHT SHE HAD TWO LEFT FEET. (BOY, DID WE PROVE HER WRONG.)



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