

# Speak Out

## just asking **Black Gay Pride celebrations are growing in popularity this year. Are they a positive sign of healthy autonomy or a distress call of increased segregation within the sexual minorities community?**

Is there segregation within the sexual minorities community? My partner is African American, and we have been together for three years.

I have gone to black "gay" events and parties such as Chocolate City and others. We never have sensed any animosity or discrimination.

Her family accepts me, and mine does, too. Am I living in the dark?

EVA HOFFMAN  
Milwaukee

...

I believe the question has many implications. Pride is important to all people. Color is not the important issue here.

Perhaps we all should look at how we reach out to diverse communities and groups. Are we inclusive with all people, or are we exclusive and simply seeking our own ways?

MICHEL MACCUTCHEON  
Dover, N.H.

...

Should African Americans stop identifying as black in order to unify all Americans? I don't think anyone would say that.

So why should people who are black and gay stop being part of their particular group in order to unify all sexual minorities? No one should have to choose between the two.

ELLEN WEIGANT  
Portland

gay people. Just slightly.

But in my 26 years of living in Texas, I never was harassed or confronted based on another person's judgment of my sexuality. No, that didn't happen until I moved to "forward-thinking" Portland.

On two different occasions in the Pearl District, I have been verbally attacked—called various names and shouted at with anti-gay slurs—all while I did nothing but walk up the street. I don't consider myself feminine nor was I dressed in what could be considered a very "gay" manner—shorts, baseball cap, tennis shoes.

But what a shock for this Texas boy to be walking down the street in a city I had been told was very forward-thinking, only to find out that anti-gay attitudes are alive and well at home. For all the work and gains we have made in Portland and around the nation, homophobia and bigotry are still alive.

I challenge the community to look at what they are doing on an individual level to combat this hate and ask themselves: Are we getting too comfortable when there is much of the game left to play? Just a point of view.

PHILIP KNOWLTON  
Portland

### Belly ache

TO THE EDITOR:

It's so unfortunate that Marc Acito chose the Pride issue in which to parade his stereotypes about what is and is not attractive to gay men ["Bulk Male," June 7].

I'm glad he finds himself more attractive as a thinner person. But attraction is not limited to the thin.

The assumption that fat people are that way because they eat too much is not only ignorant



...

The increase in Black Pride celebrations reinforces the diversity of the sexual minorities community. As a gay black man, I am very pleased to celebrate proudly who I am in any context.

I am also very pleased that the black queer communities in this country feel empowered to plan, coordinate and sponsor activities that specifically celebrate our Pride to be gay. Our nonblack friends, lovers and supporters tend to embrace the growing popularity of these events.

Black Gay Pride celebrations are no more of a distress call of increased segregation within the sexual minorities community than the "regular" Gay Pride events are within the community at

large. A Black Gay Pride activity is the same as any Gay Pride activity—a celebration! Let's embrace and celebrate all Gay Pride activities.

JERRY WALKER  
Brother to Brother

...

Ordinarily I would be completely against anything of an exclusive nature, but when I saw an ad in one of the gay chat rooms for a Black Gay Pride event, I took appreciation to the fact that it was targeted toward the black gay community but that the invitation was an open one, directed toward all. And I just realized that all of the black people I know in same-sex relationships are in interracial relationships, so if they were to attend any event that was race-exclusive, they would be forced to exclude their lovers as well.

JEFF TREADWAY  
Vancouver, Wash.

**next ISSUE** How do you feel about Nickelodeon's decision to air a special on gay families despite widespread opposition? Do you admire its bravery, or do you think the country simply isn't ready for a children's network to be tackling such a contentious issue? Respond at [www.justout.com](http://www.justout.com). (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

### The white stuff

TO THE EDITOR:

For those readers who have more of a literary bent as opposed to spending too much time in various clubs, a brand new book will open a lot of eyes.

Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* is not the usual P.C. diatribe. It is well written. Moore has a sly and dry sense of humor, and this book will help illuminate to many exactly what is going on and if things work at all—and why they always seem to work for the Establishment.

In my somewhat-less-than-"humble" opinion, having studied human nature for 40 years, there are three ways to get things changed: wealth, violence and knowledge. *Stupid White Men*, while hardly news to people such as myself, is both fun and shocking to those who have little or no real knowledge of just what the Establishment really consists of and how it stays in power.

The Establishment is like having a great white shark in your swimming pool; you can ignore it, but if you "go in the water" you have to deal with it, and its nature is to survive. Not nice, but it is reality.

"Knowledge is power." And so it is.

JOHN BOYNTON  
Portland

### correction

In the June 7 article "On a Queer Day..." Jack Keegan was misidentified as Pride Northwest president. He is the festival chairman.

Just Out regrets the error.



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