

Let's stay on track

TO THE EDITOR:

Like many of you, I read the *Oregonian* article regarding Ted Kulongoski returning the campaign contribution of a San Francisco-based corporation involved in the gay adult video industry.

Here is a critically important fact that wasn't part of that (non)story: Throughout his decades of public service, Ted Kulongoski has always "been there" for gays and lesbians in Oregon—and we can count on him to *continue* to be there. Legally. Ethically. Morally. Politically. Without question. Without fail!

The return of that political contribution was not about Kulongoski turning his back on the sexual minorities community. It was about ending the potential of turning this governor's race into a lengthy debate on adult videos—gay or straight.

This race should be about much more than adult entertainment. We can't let ourselves be sidetracked!

To me, the real question is: Who should be our next governor—Kevin Mannix or Ted Kulongoski? None of us who believe in fairness and equality can afford to be spectators.

We've voiced our displeasure. We've vented our anger. Now let's refocus our energies and not shoot ourselves in the foot.

Kulongoski or Mannix? The choice seems clear.

Participation or observation? Can you say Governor Mannix?

BARBARA ROBERTS
Portland

None of the above

TO THE EDITOR:

If the \$15,000 contribution to Ted Kulongoski's Democratic campaign for governor from a trust fund dedicated to "make the world a better place for gays and lesbians" is so odious that he or his campaign manager will return it, then that is a clear signal that they do not need gay votes to get him elected. I am sick of contributing to politicians who give lip service to equal rights in employment and housing for gays and lesbians but are too faint at heart to recognize that the Moral Majority is neither.

Since no gay or lesbian voter with any self-respect could vote for Kevin Mannix, I am going to urge my gay and lesbian brethren to sit out this governor's race. Ted clearly won't do anything as candidate or governor to offend the Christian far right, so what is the point of voting once again for the lesser of two evils?

Can't have it both ways, Ted. If our money is so tainted it must be returned, then you must not need our votes, either.

MICHAEL PUHL
Tigard

Butt out

TO THE EDITOR:

Would you please tell me why you chose to show three of our fantastically colorful community members smoking on the cover of the June 21 issue?

Was that necessary? Could you have waited until the cigarettes were out to take the pictures?

Tobacco use kills people, and queers are no exception. Studies show we smoke at almost twice the rate of the general population, which means twice the lung cancer, twice the heart disease, twice the respiratory distress and twice the death. Haven't we lost enough?

And don't forget, every cigarette we purchase eventually helps fund right-wing politi-

cians who continually fight to deprive us of our basic human rights. Those are the conservative politics of the tobacco industry.

Images make an impact. Please don't tell that beautiful young questioning person picking up *Just Out* for the first time that to be gay, lesbian, bi, trans or other means you have to smoke.

You have made some wonderful, responsible choices around tobacco use, such as not taking tobacco advertising. Please carry that commitment throughout the paper.

CATHRYN CUSHING
Portland

Closet case

TO THE EDITOR:

During the past few months I have noticed, and become increasingly concerned by, a substantial decline in the usage of the word "gay."

What traditionally has been referred to as "Gay Pride" is now "Pride." I just recently was informed, much to my surprise and astonishment, that the word has been stripped from my own title: I am not "Miss Gay Pride," as my sash reads, but simply "Miss Pride," and my male counterpart is "Mr. Pride."

Frankly, I am disturbed by this recent trend and am not convinced it is a step in the right direction but rather a step backward into the closet. Gay Pride always has been a time when we as a community put aside our differences and come together as one family to celebrate being gay, whatever that might mean to each of us individually.

Although we can be proud of many things—our ethnicity, our heritage, our country—Pride Week was designed specifically to be an opportunity for those of us who identify as gay (male, female or otherwise) to celebrate ourselves and our culture. The idea is to openly demonstrate our pride in being gay, and this event is not necessarily intended to be representative of those who do not identify accordingly. By removing the word "gay" we are doing ourselves a huge disservice by widening an already existing dichotomy within the community and, in fact, are defeating the entire purpose of Pride.

ANNIE OTIS
Miss Gay Pride 2002

You don't know Jack

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to take one more opportunity to thank the board of Pride Northwest, all of the volunteers who put in many countless hours producing Portland Pride 2002, our sponsors and our entire community for giving so generously to help pay for this year's event.

Portland Pride continues to grow each year. Without the commitment of so many wonderful people, this event just couldn't keep happening.

I also want to thank Mary Ridge for her letter supporting me for the work I have done with Pride Northwest during the past six years ["No, Tell Us How You Really Feel," June 21]. However, I disagree with her comments regarding Jack Keegan.

He has done a huge amount of work helping

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