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speak out

A big fat lie

TO THE EDITOR:

Marc Acito, you just don't get it. Your latest gospel is just another advertisement for Madison Avenue and the whole self-loathing, cynical judgment culture ["Weighty Matters," July 19].

Weight is a complicated matter involving genetics, food processing, labor issues (do you have time to make and digest a healthy meal for lunch?), our lack of leisure time (what artistic, social, connected time do you have to sacrifice to make it to the gym three times a week?), our lack of holistic approaches to life and our culture's twisted views (including yours) of what makes people beautiful.

If you were tying weight loss to health, we wouldn't be quite so pissed off. You still would be wrong, though.

Many people are fat and are as healthy as they can be. Ivar, whose ancestors come from the Russian steppes, might have a different-looking healthy than Suky, whose ancestors come from Okinawa. It's just the way diversity works. Get used to it.

But this isn't your argument. Your diatribes tie weight loss to beauty and sexiness. And this is why bears and others are growling at you.

Attraction is an individual's specific taste. There are many, many people in the world who find big men and big women sexy and exciting and vibrant.

I find it interesting that you want to be played by Robert Downey Jr. or Matthew Broderick and not by Harvey Fierstein. Besides the Freudian implications here (do you hate being gay?), there's the notion that Fierstein is somehow embarrassing in his appearance. ("Look at the fat queer! Aren't you glad you're not like him?")

And it's even more damaging coming from you because you do not have a weight issue. You were not fat before you lost weight.

Your self-loathing reeks of the rant of anorexics and bulimics who worry about their dangly arms and big bellies. You mock people with serious weight issues.

Worst of all is your use of the word "normal." Do you fail to see the irony? What is a "normal weight," Marc?

Are you going to be the one to tell us what normal is? Maybe you can tell us what a normal voice sounds like. Or normal eye color, skin color or, hey, tell us what normal sexual behavior is.

Just for a moment, think, Marc, just think what kind of message you're sending to young people (let alone the rest of us) out there: That love is conditional on the size and shape of your body. That acceptance is only for the "normal." That it's all right to scorn someone based on what they look like.

You say, "If I can do it, anyone can." Well,

statistically speaking, that's a lie. A big fat lie. And it's time we put these lies away and start accepting and loving ourselves no matter what size, shape, color, gender or anything else we are.

Fat is fine. Fat is beautiful. If you can't accept people as they are, then you're in the wrong damn community.

GLENN WILLIAMS
Portland

Bear attack?

TO THE EDITOR:

Your humorist, Marc Acito, included in part of his column called "Weighty Matters" that "Some bears even growled at me during Gay Pride."

The implication was that the bears were heavy men and that they took offense to his announcement of losing 60 pounds. In my opinion, Marc's vision is a bit defensive.

Perhaps this is justified in the case of the growling bears, but for entirely alternate reasons! If Marc were not so wrapped up in the sheer weight of his position, he would have realized the bears growling at him might have been doing so for, how shall I say, more carnal reasons?

First off, I notice he has a little Vandyke grown on his face. Most bears respond favorably to a show of facial hair.

Also, Marc is a man of a smaller build, which some bears find very attractive in a "cub." If he found the growling demeanor a bit threatening, I would like to add that some bears enjoy a little love nip, and so this overt aggression could have been a courtship stance.

So yes, Marc, a defensive reaction might have been justified, and in many experts' opinions, a genuine bear attack can be averted by assuming the fetal position. I would recommend a big hug for the two-legged variety, though.

RANDY HOGUE
Oregon Bears Founder and Past Board Member

The last word

TO THE EDITOR:

I attend church to hear God's word ["Church Bans Animal Rights Advocate," July 5].

Vegetarian menus welcome all—to eat vegetarian dishes. I haven't ever found steak on a pizza menu. As a member of Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, I enjoy being welcomed—to hear God's word. Everybody is welcome—unless, of course, you don't want to!

RICH KIBBONS
Portland

just asking

Now that Oregonians won't have to battle an anti-gay ballot measure this year, where should the queer movement focus its money, time and energy?

"Queer Summit 2002." Calling all members of the queer community—lesbian, gay, trans and others: Let's meet and discover what issues we share, what issues are unique to our particular communities and, finally, how we can work as a united front to improve the quality of life experiences for each community within the queer spectrum.

RACHEL LANE
Portland

And most of my friends who are gay have had to face physical intimidation, too. The places we turn to for help and escape don't have enough money to provide (or keep providing) the resources we need and are in danger of dying out. Queer youth are the gay future, and we need to be able to flourish.

AMANDA WAGNER
Portland

next issue

How should the sexual minorities community respond to First Baptist Church's complaint about scantily clad women at Portland Pride 2002? Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

The focus should be turned to queer youth. We don't have to worry about queer kids facing legal hatred, but the hatred is still there (just not supported by the government).

Trust me, I'm a queer youth still in high school. Every school day I hear at least one ignorant person say, "That is so gay!"