

Speak Out

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making our community more inclusive for everyone and those who resent having to add the word "trans" to the equation.

You have the women-hating men and the men-hating women. You have the "dykes" who identify as women, live like men and are threatened by transgender people.

You've got those who are in the endless pursuit of getting laid and the ones who always are looking for the "one." Then, you throw in psychotherapy, politics, everyday life issues, a Republican president and an ever-evolving society.

The other day I was looking for a lighthearted escape when I picked up *Just Out*. After I read through it I felt overwhelmed and frustrated, because in every issue the editor airs her personal problems and hang-ups and always ends up putting her foot in her mouth. Most of the letters submitted are in protest to someone else's letter, and the gay man who used to write the insightful and funny stories now is obsessed with his newfound skinniness, big dicks and offending lesbians.

To me, "community" is more than having alternative sexuality in common. It is about sharing a common bond, having each other's backs and being accepted and appreciated for who we really are.

I haven't found that sense of community here yet, and I'm not sure I ever will. For now, I guess I will have to take Portland for what it is: extremely diverse, fiercely opinionated, at times dysfunctional and definitely interesting.

JESS BRUNELLE
Portland

Stop the violence

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to express my appreciation for the story *Just Out* ran about the murder of Jerri Lee Williams allegedly by her partner, Lisa Marie Roberts ["Woman Accused of Strangling Partner," Sept. 6].

Domestic violence seems to be a taboo subject, especially within in the queer community. And while this story is extremely heartbreaking, I hope a light of good can come from the death of Williams, who was only 35.

Though my situation is different, during a two-month period within my relationship with my soul mate, I was a victim of his violence. Because of his social illness, obsessive-compulsive disorder, a period of immense stress upon him was released against me.

I never truly feared he would seriously hurt me; at these moments he was not fully in control of the situation because of his OCD. But because our relationship is so spiritually strong, I knew it was only a matter of moments before I could hold him and all the pain would be released for both of us.

During this brief period, I found myself very alone. Of course, many friends could not understand why I would stay with someone who had hit me.

But their lack of knowledge of OCD did not give them a valuable concern for my situation. It affects everyone differently and is difficult for outsiders to understand fully.

Crisis lines were available, but I felt a sense of distance when I informed them this was a gay relationship. No shelters or safe homes are available for abused men.

I have been very blessed to have found a wonderful gay therapist with a respectful knowledge of OCD. It is with his help that my commitment to my partner is stronger and more confident than ever.

Domestic violence comes in many forms through emotional or physical abuse. Reasons for it vary from alcohol, drugs and jealousy to mental illnesses, the weather and many other unlimited examples. It never should be justified or ignored.

Because of my situation, I have decided to begin a support group for people with OCD and those who love them. This illness is seriously misunderstood, and I know how alone he felt.

I have befriended people from across the country who just need someone to talk with who understands. Anyone can reach me at 971-544-0404 or FaithfulQueer@aol.com.

I encourage the queer community to come together against domestic violence. We still can have our fun with pageants, dance parties and other entertainment releases, but let's come together and not be fearful to tackle the serious issues within our community.

Domestic violence is just one overlooked reality. The outbreak of sexually transmitted diseases soon will become an overwhelming concern, as many younger queers are not completely educated. Breast cancer within the lesbian community has seriously high numbers.

These are only a couple of the issues begging to be recognized. We all have a voice, and one voice can make a difference.

RIC BERRONG
Portland

Let's hear it for the rainbow tour

TO THE EDITOR:

I was surprised to see the picture of only three people in your photo of our Saturday Burnside Triangle Advisory Group history tour in the Oct. 4 issue of *Just Out* ["Don't Know Much About History?"].

There were upward of 26 people at the Saturday tour and more than 45 participants Sunday. I was there, and we had problems containing the crowd at times. It was very successful, and we are considering another tour in the future. j

KATHY BAMBECK
Portland

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Welcomes letters to the editor



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