

speak out

just asking *Would a more vigorous courting and acknowledgment of lesbian fans have helped save the Portland Fire from financial failure? Also, what will dyke sports nuts do for athletic entertainment now that the WNBA team has folded?*



Courting lesbian fans couldn't have hurt. There was a lot of family at the games. We were season ticket holders.

I am so saddened and angry by the team folding. My first thoughts were to Paul Allen and the Blazers organization: Why did they not pick them up?

Yes, they lost money. But you could take your family to a WNBA game and have a great time for a fourth of the price of a Blazers game. The Blazers should have spent the money on the Fire instead of overpaid felons.

As for what us sports nuts are to do, maybe support the Seattle Storm, or wherever in Washington they end up.

EVA HOFFMAN
Milwaukie

It would be nice to think so, but in reality it would appear that Paul Allen and Bob Whitsitt just were waiting for an opportunity to put out the Fire. As an article in *The Oregonian* pointed out, the decision wasn't about financial loss. (It stated \$100 million is expected to be lost on the Blazers compared to \$1 million anticipated with the Fire.)

Maybe they just weren't keeping their end of the deal up. I mean, what could be fun about watching a team who could play a game and play it well, provide quality family entertainment and provide kids a picture of what sportswomanship is all about?

I think the only thing that would have saved the Fire were a couple of misdemeanors

and bonuses for felonies. They could have cut costs on the Blazers uniforms—get them orange coveralls that say "Property of Multnomah County" on the back of them. Way to go, Whittless!

KELLI RUSSELL
Cascade Locks

It takes more than ass-kissing (and that is what you mean by "acknowledgment") a particular group of people to keep something as complex as a professional sports team together. If you look at the history of professional sports, you will discover the demise of not only numerous teams but of entire leagues. They come and they go. The Fire is no different just because it was an all-female team.

As for what "dyke sports nuts" will do for athletic entertainment, I'm sure plenty of them will be in front of a big screen Jan. 26 to watch the Raiders kick ass at the Super Bowl. Maybe they prefer all-male sports just like they seem to prefer all-male porn.

P.S. I hope someday our "community" will aspire to be something other than a desirable marketing demographic.

DAVID LEE BALLARD
Portland

next ISSUE *Critics and mainstream audiences are raving about two queer-themed films, The Hours and Far from Heaven. Which do you feel is better and why? Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)*

expedience—instead, the solution is found in budget decisions based on equality, fairness and long-term results with the interests of every citizen in mind.

DAVID M. BAKER
Survivors Advocating for an Effective System Outreach Director

Cut it out

To THE EDITOR:
I am disgusted with our Legislature! How can they possibly believe the choices they have made are responsible?

The failure to fund programs like general assistance and Medicaid show a contempt for the most vulnerable and needy. The funding cuts as they are now, even if we pass Measure 28, will be the death of many.

This budget cutting was not an even-handed attempt at removing waste or cutting the fat; it more closely resembles the climate in Nazi Germany in the 1930s—the ultimate solution to the sick, poor and mentally ill. Hopefully enough of us will survive to ensure no incumbents are re-elected.

CHUCK DUIT
Portland

Fight the real enemy

America is in grave danger today, but not from Saddam Hussein. There is not a shred

of evidence linking him to al-Qaeda.

If Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program were the issue, then successive Republican administrations would not have supported him after he already had employed poison gas and attempted to produce bomb-grade uranium, nor would Vice President Dick Cheney have continued to conduct business with him as late as 1998.

Hussein fits the standard pattern of brutal dictators whom the United States backs until they become too independent and too grasping. Once they outlive their usefulness, the U.S. news media belatedly begin reporting on their human rights abuses and beating the drum for war, just as they have in the past for Trujillo, Noriega, etc.

The real danger is George W. Bush, the most powerful (unelected) president in U.S. history. The threat stems from multiple factors: obsessive secrecy, contempt for democratic process, secret trials, the Guantanamo concentration camp, domestic political and religious spying, perpetual warfare, trampling the Bill of Rights, cynical media manipulation, rule by executive order and politicization of routine government services. Had it not been for 9/11, Bush probably would be facing impeachment today for securities fraud committed while he was head of Harken Energy.

If you believe we can't lose our democracy, then you'd better think again. Several historical democracies have failed, a fact of which the framers of our Constitution were well aware.

The Federalist Papers make it plain that the framers especially were concerned about the runaway expansion of federal power at the expense of the states, a condition that prevails today and has sparked several civil wars in the past. They were also keen to limit the power of the executive to start wars, since one of the chief complaints made against kings was that they dragged their unwilling people into ruinous wars that destroyed lives, ravaged the countryside and bankrupted the treasury.

As things stand today, the war on terrorism is the only issue Bush has. Since peace means trouble for him, he will drag us into one conflict after another just to save his own political skin. He wants us to occupy Iraq even though the war in Afghanistan is far from over.

Bush appears not to care how many innocents die in his wars. His hubris and lust for power are limitless, and he brooks no opposition. He must be stopped, and only the American people can stop him.

It sometimes is said that our generation has lacked the opportunity to prove itself. That opportunity now has arrived. If you care about this country and the freedoms that past generations of Americans fought for and died to preserve, then you must not remain silent while right-wing fundamentalists undermine our democracy.

The future of the world is at stake. Take a stand at the next demonstration 12:30 p.m. Jan. 18 in the South Park Blocks.

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