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Speak Out

The scold shoulder

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm enjoying Marty Davis' Feb. 7 editorial, "Give a Little Bit"! I'm amused by your assumptions about your readers and your not-so-gentle scolding of our apparent apathy to the plight of less fortunate folks.

We all don't live in the "Ward and June Cleaver World" that you seem to. Not all of us can afford the insurance for a trendy SUV, much less the payments. Nor do we all live with the man/woman of our dreams, with no children to feed, and go golfing on the weekends like you claim.

GLBT Portland is one of the most giving communities I've ever lived in. That's one of the reasons I settled here.

I guess the three or four million dollars this community has given up for anti-gay ballot measures isn't enough for you. Nor is the \$20,000 we put into two floats in the Rose Festival Starlight Parade to gather some much-needed positive visibility. Perhaps those folks who give 10 percent of their gross income to Metropolitan Community Church of Portland are just fooling themselves that they're actually helping anyone.

How about those \$100-a-plate fund-raising dinners for the Lucille Hart Foundation and the Pride PAC Garden Parties, the million or so that the McKenzie River Foundation will give away this year or the Audria Edwards Scholarships that will help some 20 worthy students get a good education? How many hours of volunteer time did Portland Pride 2002 entail? How about all the food that has gone through Esther's Pantry or, for that matter, your own income from *Just Out*?

Where, exactly, do you think all that money comes from? If your community can do all that and manage to enjoy a round of golf as well, God bless them for it and shame on you for trying to make them feel bad!

The reason your kids are not going to get a good education, AIDS patients are going to suffer from lack of housing and medicine, and your house is going to burn down for lack of firefighters and equipment is because no one making funding decisions in Salem will have to face a pay cut like the people they are inflicting those cuts upon. No one making those funding cuts will dare to tax a multinational corporation at the same rate they tax you!

This isn't about apathy. This is about a bloated state government refusing to live within its means and refusing to do what it can do to provide those means.

It's about a state that is throwing a tantrum, like a spoiled child, expecting us to capitulate because it steadfastly refuses to do what it knows needs to be done. Personally, I think it's time for a good old-fashioned spanking!

Guilt trips piss me off and I'll tell you why, Ms. Davis. They use the goodness in people to manipulate them into giving more than they can afford and bludgeon them into undervaluing the contributions they already make every day.

Shame on you (and Salem, too)! If you're having a personal fit of guilt about how little you may, or may not, be giving to your community, I'll thank you, on behalf of loving, supportive, civic-minded and compassionate GLBT people in Portland, to kindly keep it to yourself!

GREGORY FRANKLYN
Portland

Trim the fat

TO THE EDITOR:

Feb. 1 marked a sad day for the state. About 18,000 Oregonians now do not

know where or how we will get life-saving medications.

Due to the magnitude of the budget shortfall, the Medically Needy program has been shut down. It paid almost \$1,600 a month for medications that took me from an emaciated, 135-pound skeleton of a man to an almost 180-pound relatively healthy-looking member of the human race.

Those of us who depend on these drugs take many faces. We assume positions in all walks of life.

We even might be your next-door neighbor. We might have taught your children or raked your lawn. We even might have years of productivity ahead of us that will lie untapped because we now cannot afford the medications that keep us alive.

We, as members of a civilized society, must have a sense of civic responsibility. That personal responsibility then must be extended to local, state and federal governments.

I wholeheartedly agree that we must limit government in its roles and its spending. However, we must strike a balance to cover basic human needs (vital services) in a civilized world.

We cannot depend on charities for everything. It is the responsibility of the government to make sure a certain standard of livability is met.

Now that I have demanded things of citizens, I must demand actions by our elected representatives. In my eyes our representatives are no better than spineless jellyfish.

We elect our representatives to do nasty and thankless jobs. We expect a lot of them.

In turn we expect them to show leadership and courage in the face of despair. Our representatives failed in numerous attempts to approve a workable budget.

That means cutting excess spending (non-vital services) and even raising taxes when needed. Our representatives dropped the ball on both accounts.

There has to be waste in the budget that can be cut without signing death warrants for patients around the state or reducing the amount of class time for our students. Once that fat has been trimmed, if taxes need to be increased, then so be it.

But both conditions have to be met. At this time, neither has been met.

Although Measure 28 certainly was not a cure for Oregon's ills, it would have floated the state for a few months to allow our lethargic legislators to get back into the swing of things and try to come up with a bipartisan solution. The voters didn't even have a good idea what the measure did but increase taxes.

No one wants their tax dollars wasted. But we, as citizens, must be prepared to cover the costs of an effective and just government that is truly "of, for and by the people."

We must demand more of our representatives and hold them accountable. We must be vigilant and keep in touch with these individuals to keep them informed and in touch with how the public feels about important issues. We must stand up and be counted.

R. DAVID MEADOR
Portland

Child's play

TO THE EDITOR:

I am deeply offended by your article "Amazing Grace" printed in the Jan. 3 issue of *Just Out*. Covering a story about two white, presumably middle-class gay men coercing a poor woman to give up her child requires some exploration of the class and gender dynamics at play.